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Socialist OUTLOOK

Tory plan lays base
for workfare - p2

Britain backs dirty war
in Turkey - p13

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up the fight - p 14

3 million march in Russia - p12

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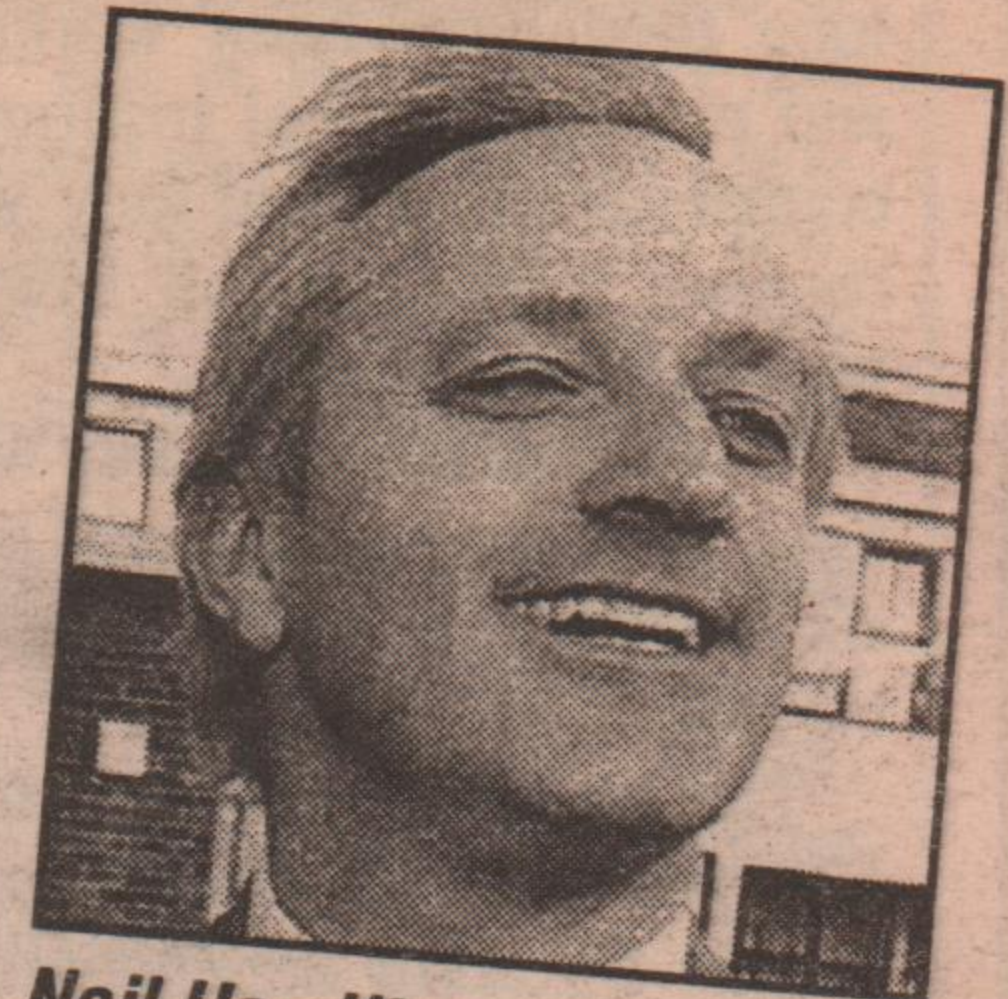
SLEAZY TORIES PLUNDER WELFARE STATE



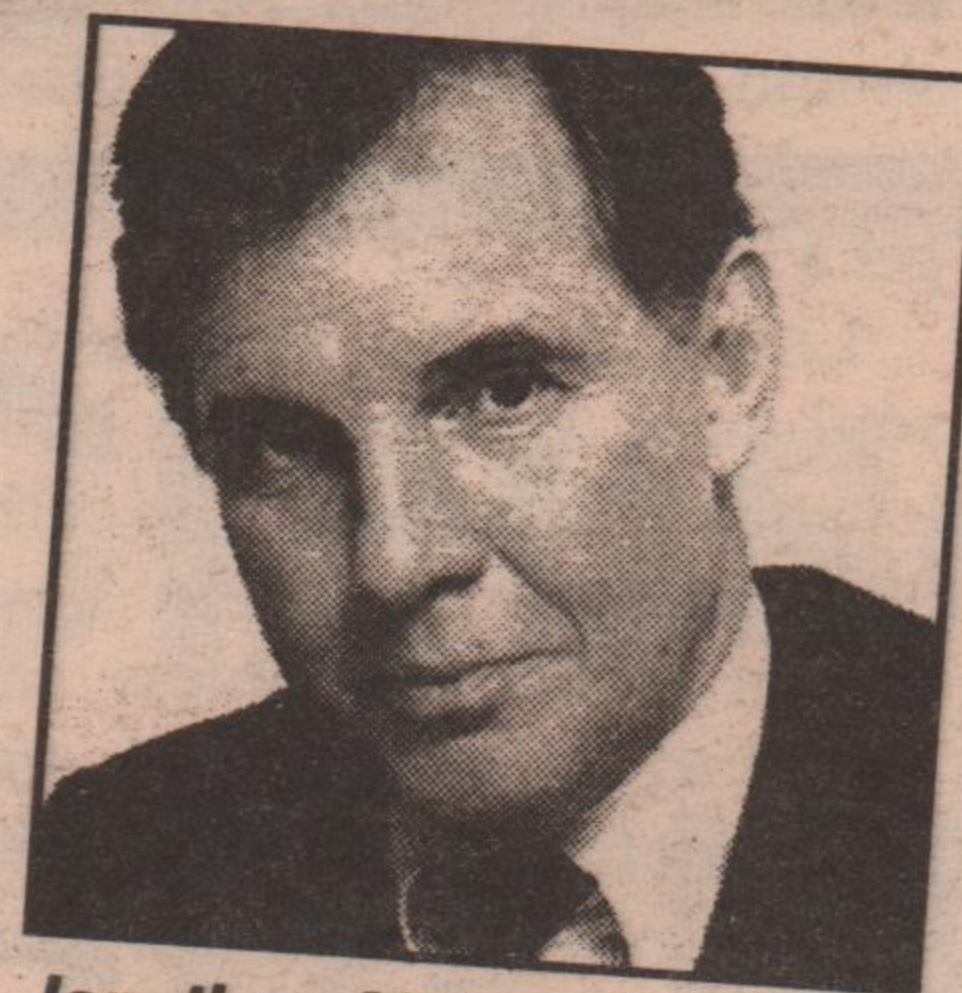
Michael Howard helps police with their inquiries



Angela Rumbold



Neil Hamilton



Jonathan Aitken

INSIDE
A WORLD
IN CRISIS
theory+practice
supplement.

JONATHAN AITKEN, at the centre of the latest sleaze allegations, is a millionaire.

He lives a life of luxury, including stays at the £1,000-a-night Ritz Hotel in Paris, for which he assures us he paid the bill himself.

He is a member of John Major's cabinet, where he sits with other millionaires, who also live lives of luxury.

But Mr Aitken is also Chief Secretary to the Treasury, and with co-thinkers Peter Lilley (Social Security Secretary) and

Michael Portillo (Employment Secretary), a key player in moves to destroy the welfare state.

They divide the responsibilities between them. Aitken, with Chancellor Kenneth Clarke, holds down spending on social security, health and education; Lilley cuts back on pensions, sick pay and benefits for claimants; and Portillo devises ways to throw the 2.6 million unemployed off the register and press-gang them into low-paid and part-time jobs.

They all have a common purpose: to cut welfare state provision far enough to enable

Clarke to offer new tax cuts in the hopes of buying another Tory election victory.

This is government *by* millionaires, *for* millionaires - at the expense of tens of millions of working people. It's worse than sleazy. It's capitalism.

To fight capitalism, we need an alternative.

That's why *Socialist Outlook* supporters are campaigning in defence of the welfare state, and fighting in the Labour Party and in the unions against Tony Blair's retreat from Clause Four.

Join us.

'SOCIAL
JUSTICE'
Labour's new
poverty plan -
page 4.

REVIEWS
Tarantino's
Pulp Fiction.
Walter Hill's
Geronimo.

Tories put boot into jobless millions

New 'contract' paves the way for workfare

by Harry Sloan

THE NEW Tory plans to scrap unemployment benefit and income support, and bring in a 'Jobseekers Allowance' are a body blow to millions of today's and tomorrow's unemployed

The present 12-month entitlement to unemployment benefit is to be slashed to six months, while pressure will be stepped up to press-gang the unemployed into low-paid jobs.

The government itself predicts that as a result of the new policies 90,000 will lose all benefits and entitlements in the first year, while another 150,000 will find their benefits cut back and subject to new means-testing.

Young workers

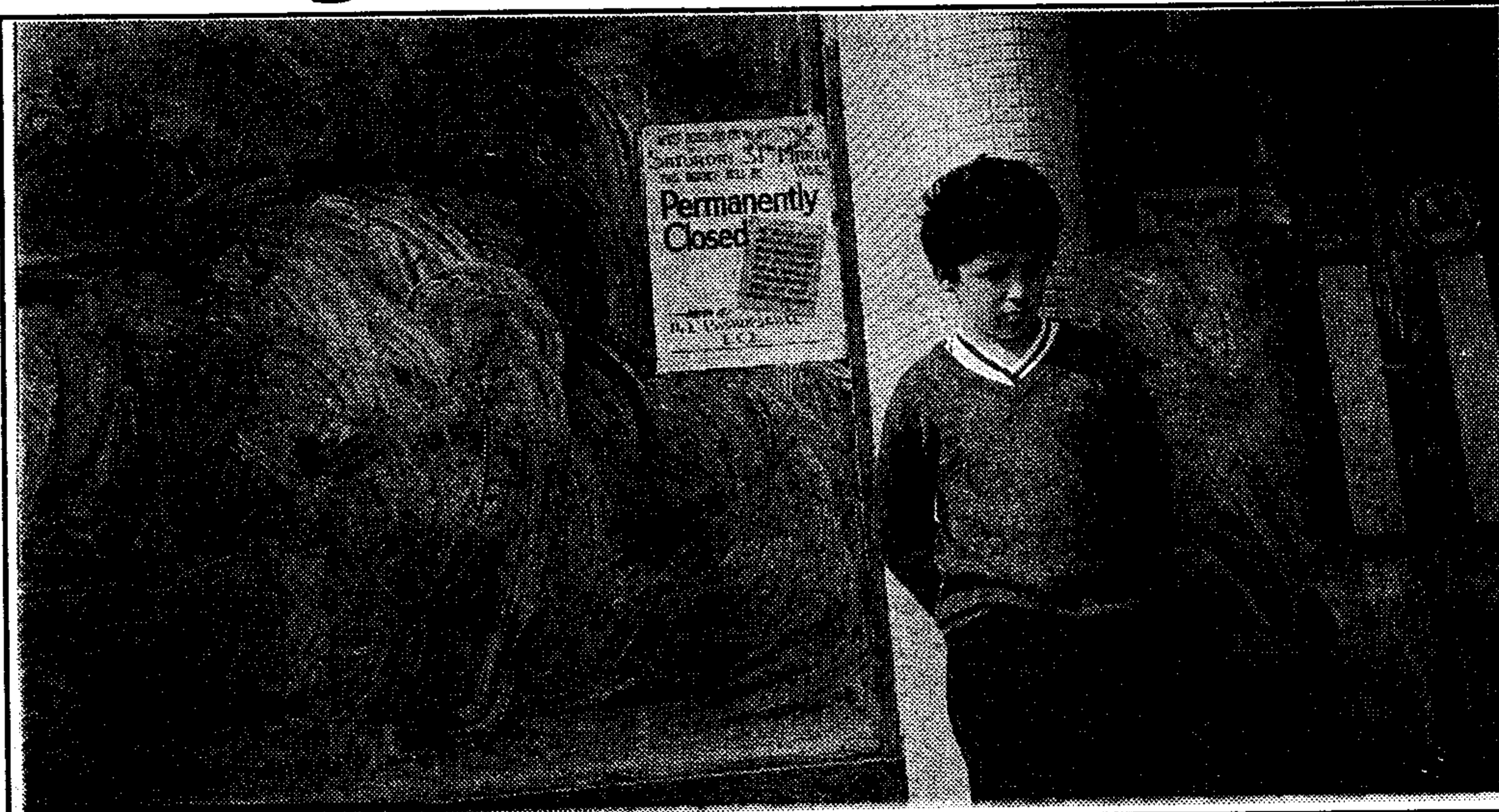
Hardest hit will be young workers aged 18-24, who are made redundant. They will no longer be entitled to unemployment benefit, no matter how long they have been working and paying National Insurance contributions. Instead they will receive only a much lower, means-tested benefit.

Women made redundant who have working partners will lose six months of non means-tested benefit.

The automatic entitlement to £28 per week unemployment benefit for adult dependents is also to be scrapped, forcing workers made redundant to submit immediately to means testing.

But benefit cuts are only a part of the brutal Tory package, which is designed to make life misery for those on the dole.

The reduced amounts paid out under the Jobseekers Allowance will be conditional on the claimant signing a 'contract' with their dole office, which tightens even further the re-



Grim prospects for tomorrow's young workers as full time jobs disappear

quirement on them to be 'actively seeking work'.

This new policy runs alongside Employment Secretary Portillo's decision to 'crack down' on the unemployed by doubling to 135,000 the target for claimants to have their benefits stopped for allegedly not seeking work.

Dole staff will be given draconian new powers to vet the dress, appearance and behaviour of claimants.

Low pay

Social Security Secretary Peter Lilley made it quite clear that the objective is to force more unwilling claimants into low-paid and part-time work:

"The new rules will make it crystal clear. Those who pay taxes and National Insurance should not have to subsidise people who make no attempt to get a job."

Lilley and his Thatcherite soul-mate Portillo have both identified themselves with calls for a US-style 'workfare' system in which the jobless are forced to do menial work for their benefits.

The Jobseekers Allowance 'contract' could form the platform for introduction of a work-



Under Portillo even Jobcentre and dole staff face the axe

fare system.

In the meantime Lilley is promoting the concept of a 'Back to Work Bonus' scheme under which the unemployed would work part time for little or no actual wages, but build up 'credits' to be cashed in when eventually they find a job.

Lilley claims that up to £1,000 could be stored up in a lump sum bonus, though how long it would take a part-timer on poverty pay to earn this much is not revealed.

Bribe

Perhaps the claimant could then invest the cash in bribing a Tory MP to ask a question in parliament.

With so few full-time jobs

available, it is unlikely that many claimants would voluntarily enter a scheme that offers absolutely nothing today, and only the specious promise of a big pay-out some time in the indefinite future.

Dumped

Stranded in the midst of this onslaught are 500,000 unemployed who are aged over 50, with little or no hope of finding work, and countless individuals dumped through redundancies onto the scrap heap.

The recent launch of the Welfare State Network as a campaign to link all those fighting the Tory offensive against health and welfare rights offers an opportunity to reach out to

Lilley has another nasty idea

The Back to Work Bonus is the latest of a series of schemes thought up to harass the unemployed.

Since 1989, when the Tories tightened up the 'actively seeking work' rules, they have introduced:

- Compulsory Jobplan workshops after one year unemployed.
- Compulsory Restart after two years unemployed.
- A range of pilot workfare schemes
- 'Training for Work', designed to compel jobless youth into miserable and fraudulent 'training' schemes on pain of losing benefits.

those hit hardest by the Jobseekers Allowance.

Civil service unions, whose members have been called upon to act as Lilley's stormtroopers, and who themselves now face the loss of another 3,000 jobs from Job Centres and dole offices, must take the lead in organising resistance, backed by other unions and the wider labour movement.

A fightback could reach out to organise and mobilise support from the unemployed.

So far the Tories have felt able to attack the unemployed with impunity. It's time to turn the tide.

Action for health & welfare

Get the bulletin of the Welfare State Network!

Affiliation is just £25 for unions and Labour Parties, £10 for pensioners and unemployed groups. Individual sub's are £5 waged, £3 unwaged.

Send your cheque to Welfare State Network, c/o Southwark Trade Union Support Unit, 42 Braganza Street, London SE 17.

HOME NEWS

Welfare State Network
Budget day lobby of Parliament

defend pensions, benefits & education
Tuesday 29 November

Assemble 1.30pm at the lobby gate for meeting in the Grand Committee Room with Jack Jones, Kate Adams and MPs Tony Benn, Alice Mahon, Alan Simpson and Dennis Skinner.

Symptoms of a sleazy system

IN THEORY, nobody should be that shocked or surprised by the latest revelations of Tory sleaze.

The party of big business would, after all, be expected to reflect the values of big business — the grasping corruption, the ruthless profit-seeking and the secretive decision-making networks that are an integral part of the 'free market' system. Business chiefs who funnel money into the Tory Party will obviously expect a few favours in return.

As long as this is the case, then it is inevitable that every so often evidence of this nether-world will rise to the surface, like methane bubbling from a swamp.

But the disasters that have rocked John Major's cabinet in the past two weeks may have inflicted more fundamental damage on the credibility of the Tories.

As we go to press, two junior ministers have resigned; a vice chair of the Tory Party has resigned from a lobbying company and is under pressure to step down from her party post; a heavy cloud of unanswered questions and improper conduct hangs over the head of the Chief Secretary to the Treasury; and Home Secretary Michael Howard has been quizzed over his links with Harrods owner Mohamed Al-Fayed.

Soap opera

Perhaps in these post-*Dallas* days it is the tendency for politics to grow closer to soap-opera which grabs the public's anger and raises indignation. The Tories appear almost like Hollywood stereotypes.

Ordinary people have been given a horrifying glimpse into the jet-set lifestyle of MPs quietly pocketing lavish consultancy fees, with millionaire ministers routinely scoffing £200 dinners and allegedly 'forgetting' how they paid bills for £1,000-a-night hotel rooms (breakfast extra!).

Equally reminiscent of soap-opera is the outbreak of bitter feuds within the



Tea at the Ritz? Major shares a cuppa with sleaze row minister Neil Hamilton

Tory establishment. The latest round of revelations broke only because Mohamed Al-Fayed, a frustrated Tory, resented the fact that his £250,000 donation to John Major's election funds and his generous hand-outs of hospitality to what he thought were key players among MPs failed to produce the results he had paid for.

While Al-Fayed has vowed to wreak his revenge, the most significant factor enabling him to do so has been the extent to which sections of the Tory press have now turned against Major, and have willingly taken up this fresh evidence of his incompetence and the rottenness of his government.

Marsh site

This was why the heat was brought to bear on Tory vice-chair Angela Rumbold for her key role in a lobbying firm which helped persuade Transport Secretary Brian Mawhinney to site a new Channel Tunnel rail-link station on an obscure area of Kent marshland rather than the favoured site in East London.

Each time a minister bites the dust it creates new political after-shocks for Ma-

ajor: Jonathan Aitken is a Thatcherite right winger, as are Neil Hamilton and Rumbold. The in-fighting within the party and challenges to Major's authority further weaken his ability to control press coverage.

Despite the political repercussions, we should not get the latest 'sleaze' allegations out of perspective.

In relative terms the consultancy fees, hotel bills, bribes and sweeteners that have preoccupied the press since the 'cash for questions' row first erupted are peanuts.

The Ebbsfleet station project will bring not just a few grand, but tens of millions for developers Blue Circle. And for fifteen years British business as a whole has cashed in handsomely on its investment in the Tory Party, with most of the rewards openly carried out through the front door rather than the back.

Top-paid bosses have shared out tax cuts of £20 billion; Lloyds 'names' have been generously bailed out to the tune of billions; companies have exploited the barrage of draconian anti-union laws; others are celebrating the deregulation of the labour market and the scrapping of

wages councils, allowing them to force pay levels even lower; and City speculators have creamed off billions in profits from privatisation.

Tories are going through a rough patch: but they have remained dedicated to the class they represent. For all John Major's rhetoric about 'one nation' and a 'classless society', they know they are in office to line the pockets of the rich.

Breaking links

But what of Labour? While Major keeps faith with his class, Labour's leadership is in the midst of a turn away from any serious link to Party's historic base in the organised working class.

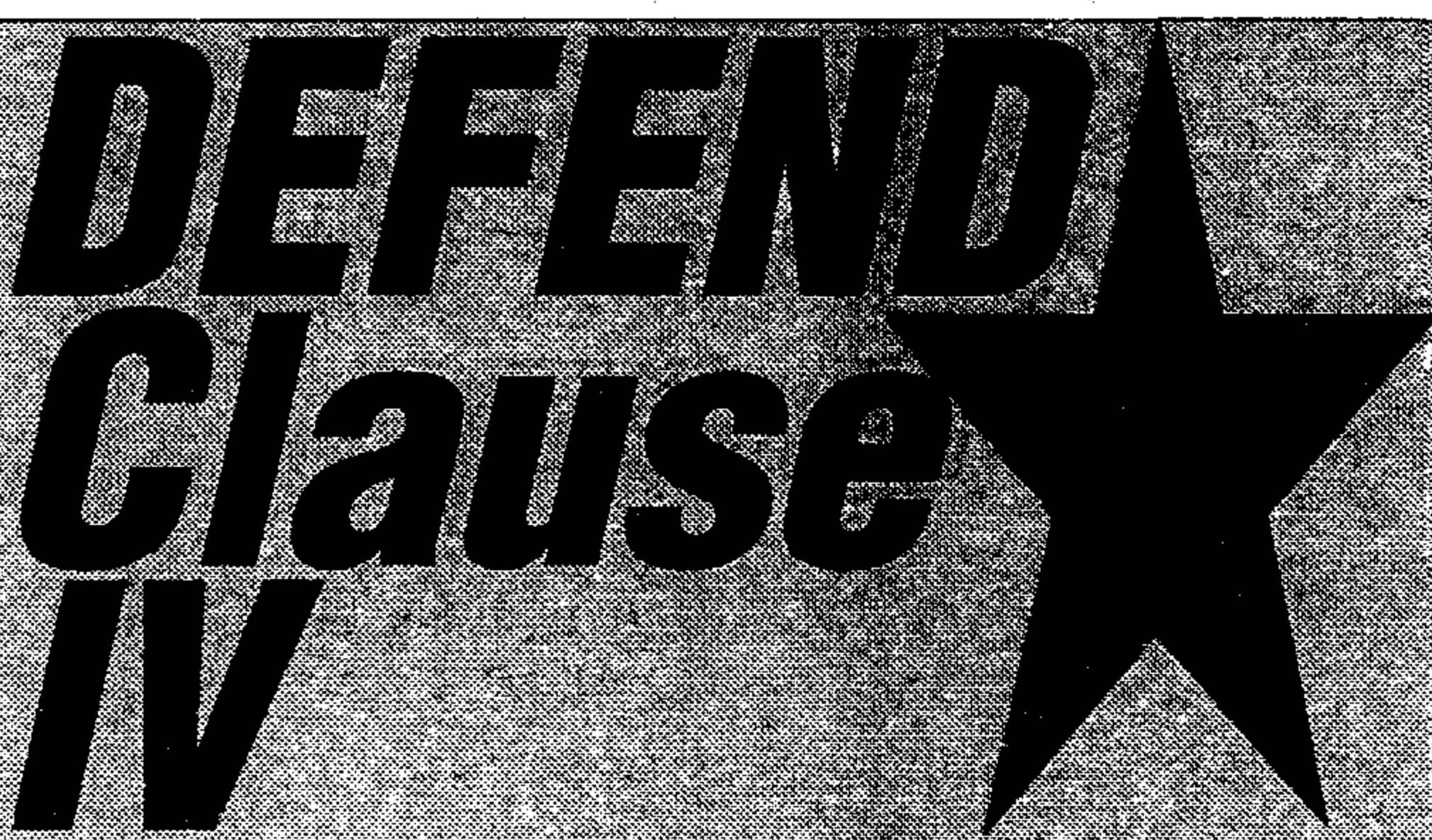
While class war Tories shamelessly feather their nests and plan more vicious attacks on the unemployed and the entire welfare state, Labour fosters illusions that 'consensus' and 'social justice' can be obtained under capitalism.

TUC and union leaders follow suit, abandoning any effort to co-ordinate resistance, and instead tamely inviting Tory ministers to their conferences.

Labour's policy pronouncements now not only accept the free market of capitalism, but set out to prolong it. Tony Blair wants to scrap Clause Four, which is the last vestige of a commitment to work through parliament for a different type of society.

Working class people are outraged and angry not just at the latest symptoms of Tory sleaze, but at the way they are abused, exploited and repressed by a system of crisis that benefits a wealthy few. Smug, grinning sound-bites from Tony Blair echo none of their anger and frustration.

That's why the fight to defend Clause Four, and for a bold programme of socialist policies to go to the root of a sleazy, brutal system, must be waged throughout the labour movement.



Defend Clause Four, Defend Socialism

Campaign launch rally
Saturday November 12, 1pm
St Aloysius Hall, Phoenix Rd., NW1
near Euston Station (Eversholt St. exit)
 Affiliations: minimum \$10; send to NUM, 2
 Huddersfield Rd., Barnsley, Yorks.

Take Clause IV fight into unions

By Aidan Day

TONY Blair's attack on Clause Four must be fought by all trade unionists.

Behind the leadership's media-friendly sound bites lies an attempt to get the rank and file of the labour movement to accept capitalism as permanent and unalterable.

Clause Four stands in the way of Blair's desire to convince the bosses that "capitalism is safe in our hands".

He sees it as an impediment to getting his friends in high places to understand that Labour is a pro-capitalist party.

The Labour leadership is trying to build a broad front

against socialism — involving everyone who has a stake in the present system.

In this context Clause Four is an important symbol, and the fight to defend it is key test of strength for the left in the labour movement.

Greed

At stake is the commitment to fight for a completely different type of society — not run by the greed of bosses, but based on an equitable shareout of the fruits of industry.

That's why Tony's friends in the City despise it so.

And it is why trades unionist must take a stand. Getting rid of the Clause is an attempt to

demobilise opposition to capitalism and to the bosses' offensive.

Blair's new constitution aims to break Labour from its working class base. This would be a backward step for all workers.

The removal of the Clause would be a victory for the rich and for all the "new realists" who have given up the fight against the Tories.

Pressure must be put on every trade union leadership, especially on those with a big membership in the public sector, to oppose the change in constitution and to back the campaign in defence of Clause Four.

EDITORIAL

No justice in Commission's feeble plan for Labour

Moving backwards from Beveridge

By Aidan Day

JOHN SMITH's brainchild, Labour's much-vaunted advisory body, the Commission on Social Justice, caves in to the Tories on every issue that counts.

Its recommendations mean more means-testing, less benefits for workers and the unemployed, cuts in pensions and cuts in student grants.

While Tory ministers are living it up in Paris hotels and bosses are getting million pound pay offs, the Labour Party's advisors are lecturing us on "responsible" wage rises and the need to decrease welfare expenditure.

This is a report that concedes all the ground we fought Thatcher for in the eighties.

Affordable

Most importantly it ties levels of welfare to what the bosses deem "affordable". When this is combined with more means testing it has an unavoidable result — the burden of the capitalist crisis is for the working class to carry.

It makes no challenge to the basic inequalities of class society and accepts that the market is the ultimate arbiter of what is affordable. This makes cuts inevitable.

Someone is going to have to pay for the crisis — and its going to be us.

When John Smith launched this commission he said it



Frank Field opens gate as Labour stampedes to market

would "think the unthinkable". The problem is that the Tories have been thinking the content of this report for two decades. No wonder the bosses' Institute of Directors has welcomed it.

Far from being a "New Beveridge" this is a tame justification for all the shifts in welfare that the Tories have sought to implement.

This is particularly true when it comes to tax on benefit. It is proposed now only for the "better off". But by advocating it the authors make possible a massive extension at a later date.

Costs

This must be what they have in mind for, as the Child Poverty Action Group point out, the present administration costs make it barely worthwhile.

The Tory attacks have proved beyond doubt that "targeting" means cuts.

The Tories have struggled long and hard to stop people

thinking of benefit as a right. This is what is behind the vocabulary of targeting. The report accepts the vocabulary, accepts the strategy, and accepts the result.

This is why the commission is a step backwards from Beveridge.

It surrenders the most significant things he fought for, not least of all a collective responsibility to the elderly.

Pensions

It backs breaking the link between pensions and earnings. Workers are to be asked to pay higher contributions to pay for an increase. It says nothing about ending VAT on fuel and even proposes to extend the retirement age of women to 65.

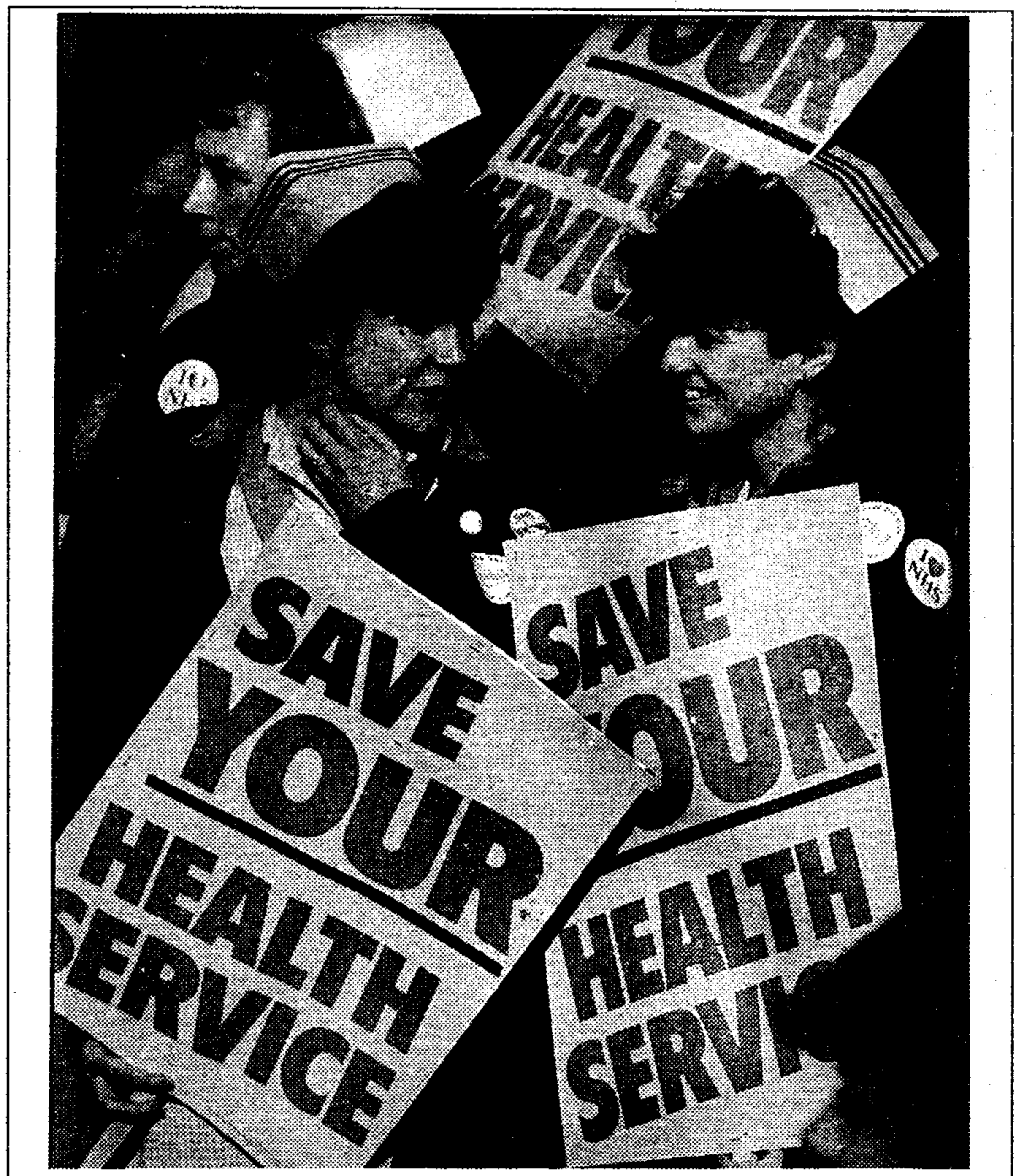
The private sector will become more involved, and the basic pension will be steadily devalued in favour of means testing. In other words, we've got to look after ourselves.

So much for social responsibility.

Instead of appealing to deep feelings of concern and generosity to the old the commission advocates individual insurance to pay for care. As Jack Jones the campaigner for pensioners said "millions of pensioners were looking to the report. There will be disappointment."

Pipe Dreams

Although there are a great number of fine phrases about



Fortunately nurses have been more willing than Labour to defend NHS

the "aim" of full employment, "redistributing joblessness" and making nursery provision a "high priority" this is all to be permitted only in the context of creating and developing a "dynamic market economy".

As the market shows less and less ability to provide for even the most basic of needs there is little chance of any of these wishes coming true. Without an economic alternative they become mere pipe dreams.

If you look at the authors this is no surprise.

It's the product of bosses Sir Gordon Borrie and Christopher Haskins, SDP splitter Bernard Williams and the Liberal Democrat Steven Webb. Why should the Labour Party get these people to make its policy?

Intimidation

There is no mention of bringing back into public ownership the privatised industries, repealing anti-union laws or cutting military expenditure.

There are no proposals for job creation.

Instead the report supports wage cuts to pay for the crisis:

"unemployment and inflation can be kept down only if the average increase in earnings is no higher than the average increase in productivity": in other words, work harder for less money.

While doing no more than "considering" a wealth tax it explicitly advocates making social security harder to claim. This is Portillo-style intimidation — frighten claimants off to save money.

It airs the figure of £3.50 for a minimum wage — significantly less than Labour's present £4.10. But simultaneously it warns "clearly a minimum wage which is set too high will produce job losses": another concession to the Tories.

As well as laying the basis for further inroads into welfare provision it backs a graduate tax and the ending of grants in favour of loans.

When average student overdrafts are hitting a record £2,500 Borrie declares that "the burden of expansion in higher education will have to be borne by... full time university students living away from home".

HOME NEWS

Birmingham Community Conference
A WORKING CONFERENCE FOR PUBLIC
SECTOR SERVICE PROVIDERS AND USERS

UNITE & ACT
IN DEFENCE OF PUBLIC
SECTOR JOBS & SERVICES!

Sat 19 November 10.30 - 4.30 Union Club,
723 Pershore Road, Selly Park Birmingham.
Entry £5/£1/50p. Details (0121) 451 2555.

Birmingham defends public services

By Bob Whitehead

Unite to defend the public sector!

That's the message of the Birmingham Community Conference on 19 November, which has attracted widespread sponsorship from trade unions, Labour Parties and health and community groups.

It will consider a statement demanding an increase in public spending and set up a

local campaigning body to call for a public demonstration.

The Tories are set on savaging the welfare state in the Autumn budget no matter how low their popularity sinks. Benefits, jobs and services are all in the firing line.

They can only get away with it because of the lack of resistance from the labour movement.

It is vital to coordinate the various campaigns and unite them with the labour move-

ment on a local basis — to unite the providers and users of services in dynamic campaigns of rallies, demonstrations and industrial action.

This is what we're trying to do in Birmingham.

If we can turn the declarations of support achieved so far into active support then we'll have gone a long way to building a part of a national campaign to put an end to these incessant attacks, and maybe the government as well.



Fighting for the Right to Strike

By Greg Tucker,
SMTUC Secretary

THE FIRST year of the Tory government saw the highest number of strikes for 50 years. This year had the least.

Vicious anti-union legislation has made it almost impossible to hold a legal strike — while “new realism” has made the union leaders unwilling to even try.

The Fight for the Right to Strike Conference on 26 November wants to turn this situation around. Despite all the restrictions it is still possible to fight to defend the interests of working people. At least five groups of workers have confronted anti-union laws in the past year.

■ College lecturers — walked out in spite of a legal

judgement forcing NATFHE to give a completely accurate (and therefore impossible) list of all balloted members before going on strike.

■ Postal workers — massive walkouts in Liverpool, Milton Keynes and all over London and the south-east in a battle against casualisation and excessive part-time overtime.

■ Firefighters — new contracts withdrawn in Merseyside after spontaneous “emergency only” industrial action and a mass demonstration of 10,000 FBU members.

■ Local government workers — Sefton UNISON action against privatisation leads to a withdrawal of council plans despite two branch officers being taken to court.

■ Signalworkers strike — despite legal restrictions hampering the broadening of the dis-

pute it becomes the longest in the history of the union and wins a partial victory.

Our movement is far from dead.

With Tony Blair’s back turned on working class struggle, and Tory talk of banning strikes in “essential services” it’s time to get organised.

The Socialist Movement Trade Union Committee has joined forces with Lambeth and Birmingham Trades Councils to organise the *Fight for the Right to Strike* Conference. It will provide a unique opportunity to discuss a strategy to unshackle the unions from Tory laws.

Barriers

In plenary debate and workshop discussion the conference will discuss how to overcome the present barriers to action and how to build solidarity action despite the anti-union laws.

We will be debating what sort of legal alternatives we want — and how we get a future Labour government to give us them, as well as how we block future Tory plans to impose further restrictions on our rights.

The conference is not just a talking shop. It aims to build a network of supporters taking up our demands and organising solidarity across our movement.

We urge all trade unions to promote and support this conference.

Decision time on post privatisation

By a postal worker

TIME IS running out on Post Office privatisation. After three months of talking, the cabinet is still divided.

The consultation period has shown widespread support for the public sector option. It has united all major opposition parties and a handful of Tory backbenchers.

Do the Tories risk the partial privatisation option, and face down all opposition with a watered down version of their proposals, or do they retain the Post Office in the public sector?

With pressure on the Tories mounting over sleaze in government the last thing they want is a bloody nose over this.

However it would not be the first time that the Tories have pursued an unpopular policy in the name of dogma: Heseltine’s Tory party conference speech appealed to that.

There is also significant support for privatisation from sections of big business and of course the Post Office board themselves.

An announcement of privatisation by the government should be met by an immediate response.

The campaign against privatisation has so far been concentrated on encouraging letter writing and lobbying MPs. There should be a massive demonstration against privatisation.

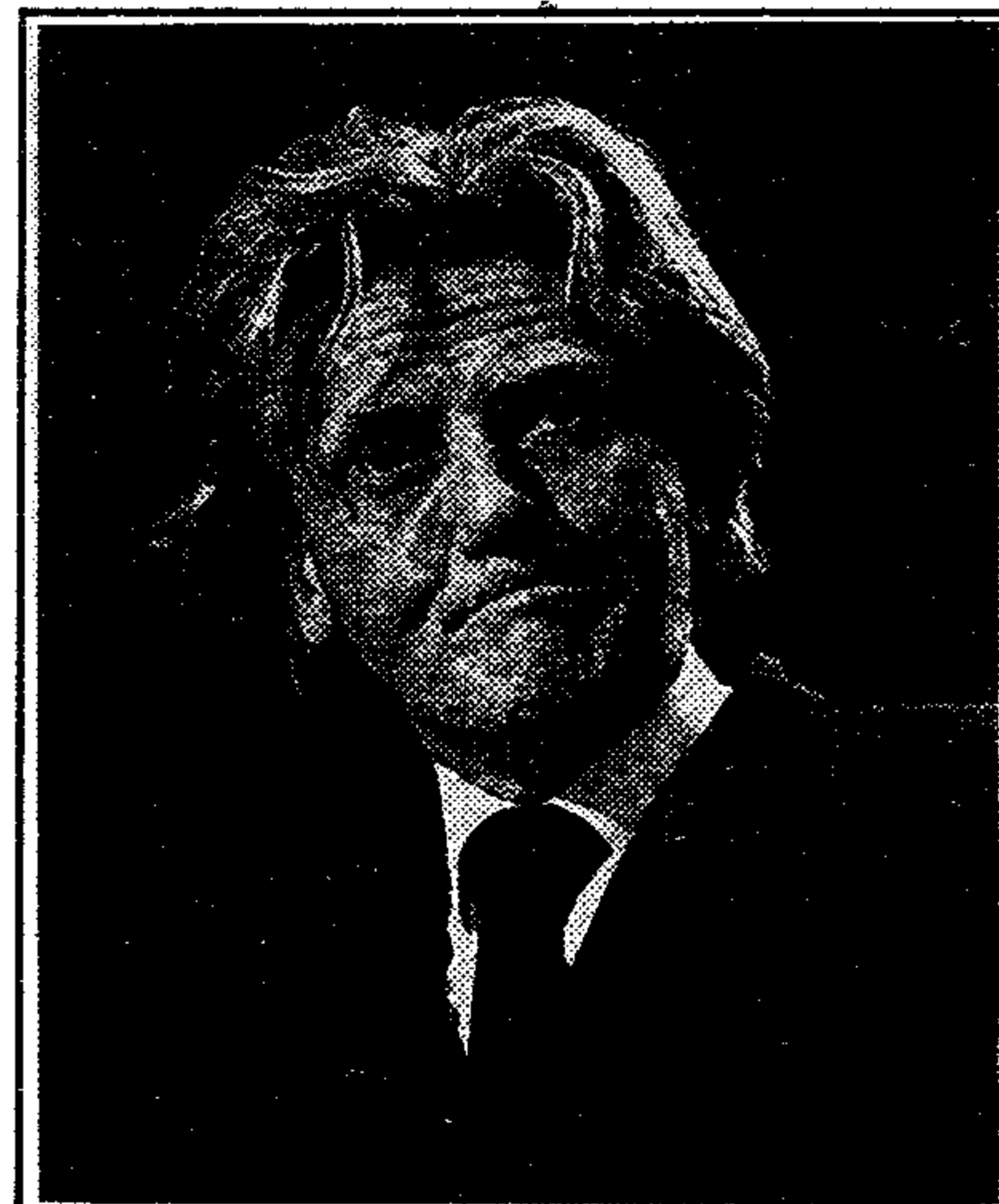
Throughout the summer there has been an impressive number of local activities. A national focus is now needed. As the demonstrations in support of the miners in October 1992 showed, hundreds of thousands can be brought onto the streets.

But we also need to draw the lessons of that campaign. When the mass demonstrations stopped, the Tory revolt crumbled.

The campaign will be won or lost by a successful mobilisation of all those in opposition in the first few weeks of any announcement.

It can give postal workers the confidence to use all options available — including strike action.

This kind of campaign is a million miles from the minds of leaders of the UCW postal workers union.



Lacking stamp of authority

It is likely that a major national demonstration would be called as an end in itself, with the tried, tested and failed methods of parliamentary procedure — petitioning and lobbying Tories — the next part of the campaign.

Any announcement that the Post Office will be privatised needs to be a rallying point of all those UCW members who want to fight.

Pressure needs to be applied by UCW branches on the leadership of the union to carry out conference policy of building massive opposition — including giving consideration to strike action.

Bosses pocket the difference

COMPANY directors have received an average 6.1 percent increase in pay in the past year, according to a new survey.

Top bosses have been awarding themselves rises more than three times the rate of inflation, while average pay settlements in the engineering industry have been running at just 2.65 percent.

Almost a quarter of all engineering workers saw their pay frozen during 1993.

Set the unions free!

TONY BENN has presented a Bill to Parliament which would give an incoming Labour Secretary of State the power to remove any laws or regulations which impose unfair restriction on trade unions.

As Benn says: “The wording of the Bill follows exactly the wording of the present De-regulation Bill which confers similar powers on ministers to remove burdens on business.” Benn is sending the text

of his proposal to all union general secretaries, seeking their support in winning endorsement for it at next year’s TUC and Labour Party conferences, and a commitment that the next Labour government would introduce such legislation.

This will scarcely delight Tony Blair or his supporters in the union bureaucracy, who have gone out of their way to disavow any intention of repealing the Tory anti-union laws, and would dearly love to keep their distance from the issue.

Fight for the Right to Strike

CONFERENCE
Saturday 26 November

10am - 5 pm The Union Club
723 Pershore Rd Birmingham

SPEAKERS:

KEN CAMERON Gen Sec FBU

DOREEN CAMERON Pres NATFHE

BOB CROWE Ass Gen Sec RMT

BILL WEDDERBURN LSE

Jointly organised by the Socialist Movement Trade Union Committee, Socialist Campaign Group Supporters’ Network, Public Sector Alliance, Trade Union News and the Birmingham, Oxford and Lambeth Trades Councils.
• £20 sponsoring organisations • £8 delegates • £5 individuals • £3 unwaged • Send cheques payable to ‘Right to Strike Conference’ to PO Box 6498, London N1 1QW.

TRADE UNION NEWS

Blood runs high as donors kebabed

By Terry Smith

200,000 people in the North West have signed a petition, and October 28 saw a demonstration in Liverpool opposing the closure of the city's Blood Transfusion Centre, which serves Merseyside and North Wales.

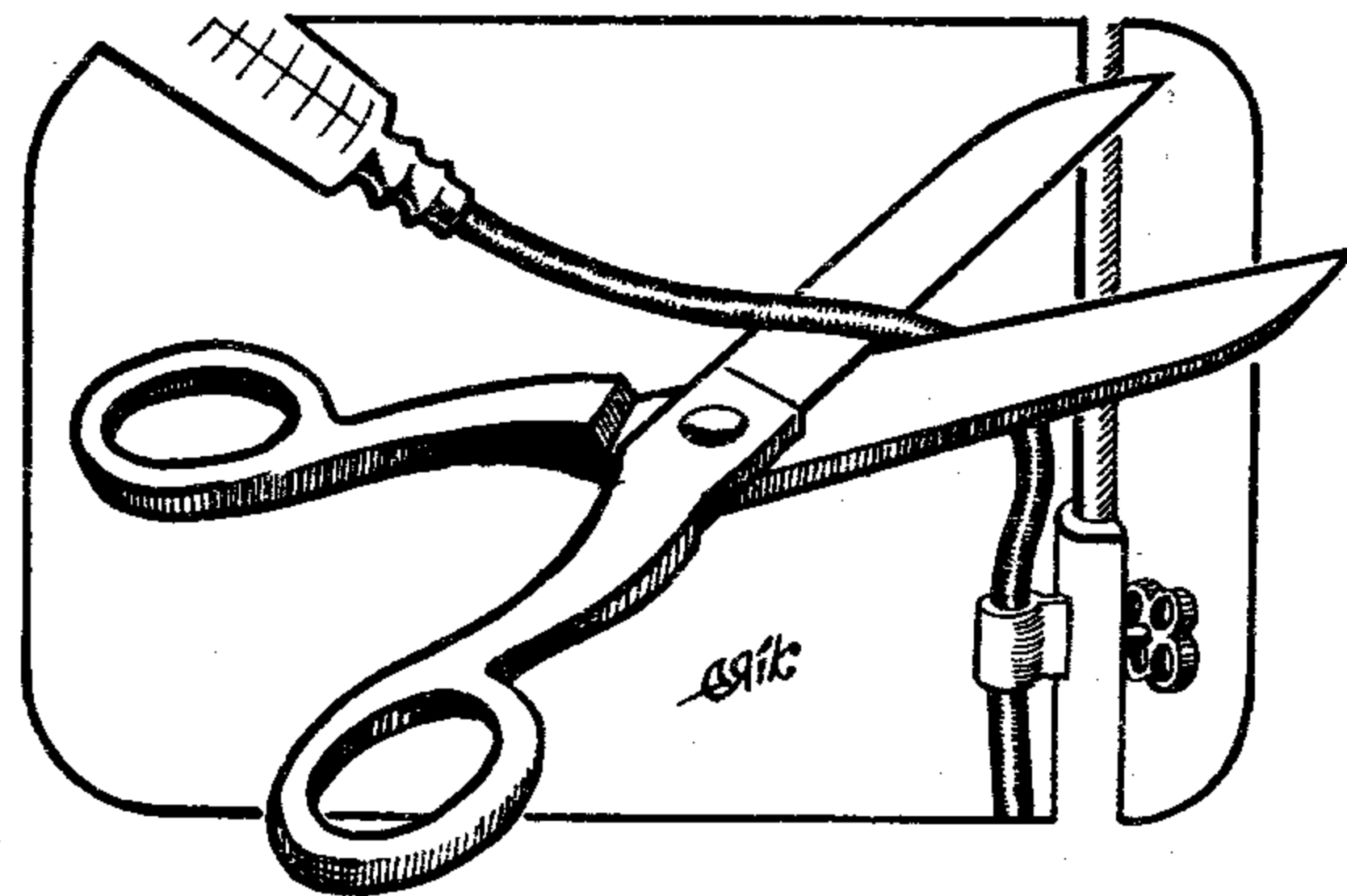
The Centre, whose work would be moved to Manchester, is one of five to be axed out of a total of 15, under new plans published in September by the National Blood Authority.

Other centres facing the chop are Lancaster, Oxford, Brentwood and Plymouth, as the NBA seeks to cut £10-£12m from a Blood Service budget of £135m, slashing at least ten percent of the 4000 workforce.

Slower deliveries

Though the NBA boasts that its new network would deliver blood supplies to any hospital within 2 hours, this would be a *worsening* of performance: most centres already do better.

The plans arise from a £600,000 review of the blood service by management con-



sultants brought in by the NBA's controversial chief executive John Adey.

Adey, until he took the reins at the NBA, was Chairman of Baxter's Healthcare, the monopoly supplier of blood bags to the NHS!

Health unions warn that the closure, linked with plans to run the entire network of blood donors from just three Zonal headquarters in Leeds, Bristol and North London, will break up skilled and dedicated teams, leave panels of donors unable to give blood, jeopardise the treatment of patients with blood disorders, and risk a total dislocation of blood supplies.

Though blood is given free by donors, under the new NHS

market system hospitals are charged for each unit of blood they consume.

European market

NBA chiefs have been sounding out internal management views on possibly extending this to selling British blood products on the European market.

The NBA closure package is theoretically open for consultation until November 11: but Adey has declared that it would 'take an earthquake' to change his mind.

Healthworkers and campaigners in all the threatened localities are doing their best to create one.

Fighting for our NHS

Sheffield steeled against cuts

● 85,000 people have so far signed the petition opposing plans to close one of SHEFFIELD's two busy Accident & Emergency units, as the Tories' hospital closure programme grinds on across the country.

All parties say 'no closure'

● In north London, 50,000 copies of a 12-page *Hands Off Our Hospitals* tabloid newspaper have been distributed by campaigners fighting the closure of EDGWARE Hospital by Barnet Health Authority. The paper has been funded through advertisements from local unions, community groups, political parties and small businesses.

Hundreds joined a lively demonstration on October 29 demanding the health authority drop the closure plan, which has been opposed by MPs and councillors from all three main

parties in all three boroughs affected.

Central Mid hits back

● Over 80 people turned out to a public meeting on October 25 to boost the campaign in defence of Central Middlesex Hospital.

The hospital is threatened under plans drawn up by the Brent & Harrow health authority, which would oblige patients from the deprived Harlesden Willesden and Wembley areas to choose between long and awkward journeys to St Mary's Hospital, Paddington, or Northwick Park in Harrow.

Islington queues lengthened

● Cash has already run out for non-emergency treatment at London's Whittington Hospital. The Trust has closed the doors on local waiting list patients five months before the end of the financial year as a result of spending cuts imposed by the Camden & Islington health authority.

Non-urgent cases will now join the Whittington's 3,000 waiting list until new money becomes available next April.

But in the meantime the pressure on the Whittington will intensify with the planned January closure of casualty Bart's Hospital

Local government pay deal Old wine in new bottles

By Fred Leplat
Islington UNISON 'A' branch

UNIONS representing one and a half million council workers accepted a pay offer on 14 October which differs little from the previous 'final' offer. It has been slightly repackaged to marginally benefit the low paid.

Under a two year deal, workers will get 1.5 per cent and £100 backdated to July this year and 1.4 per cent and £100 from June 1995. The old offer was 1.7 per cent and £75 this year, and 1.4 per cent and £75 next year.

For a council worker on £15,000 a year this will mean £6 more a week. Inflation and tax rises make this a cut in real terms.

Worst of all it is a two year deal which does not bind the employers to increase pay with inflation. According to UNISON, the employees accepted that the unions could re-open negotiations.

At a time of mounting dissatisfaction over pay at Jaguar and on the rail, and when pay settlements are around

four per cent local government union leaders could have organised a fight for a substantially improved offer.

However the UNISON local government service group executive trampled union democracy and settled without organising industrial action.

A special delegate conference had been organised to follow a 'consultation exercise' of the membership in August.

Yet when this 'consultation' produced a small majority for rejection of the 'final' offer, the special delegate conference was promptly cancelled!

Activists in UNISON urgently need to build a left in the union to defend democracy and win policies to defend pay, jobs and conditions. The CFDU conference on 3 December is a step towards that.

■ Campaign for a Fighting Democratic Union launch conference Saturday December 3. 10am - 4pm Swathmore Centre, 4 Woodhouse Square Leeds.

£5 delegates, £3 visitors. Details (0181) 464 333 extension 3273.



Will Tories bail out private hospital?

THE FINANCIAL and political scandal surrounding the building of the giant Health Care International private hospital in Clydebank refuses to die down.

As widely predicted, the £180 million hospital's opening was almost immediately followed by a cash crisis and the threat of bankruptcy: the shortfall this year is £15m.

Now there is even talk of the government stepping in to bail out the bankers by buying it for the NHS.

The hospital was built - in the teeth of huge public opposition and warnings that it would be a white elephant - with government subsidies totalling £30m.

In addition there was a £4m loan from the job creation quango Scottish Enterprise.

It now turns out this loan was unsecured, and that the final £1m was paid even after officials knew HCI was in financial trouble. In the event the hospital

has employed only 400 of the promised 1,800 new jobs.

Touting

Also contrary to early promises that the hospital intended to fly in private patients from abroad, HCI has been trying to solve its problems by touting for contracts to treat NHS patients - the latest being a £1m contract to treat waiting list cases from the West Midlands!

Now, amid international debate over the rescheduling of its huge debts, and appeals from HCI for exemption from its £1m VAT bill, it appears that Scottish Tories are pressing for a study of how much it would cost to buy up the hospital and convert it for NHS use.

Estimates suggest a bill as high as £40m: but who would get the contracts? And who would foot the bill?

With red faces bobbing in the clear blue water, the manoeuvres will continue behind the scenes.



Beckett

Replacing Labour's invisible man

● LABOUR's new Shadow Health Secretary, Margaret Beckett, has promised to take a higher profile than her inglorious predecessor David Blunkett. That should be easy.

Blunkett made little secret of his contempt for the post and the issue. He took nine months to come out with any clear opposition to the massive hospital closure programme in London.

Now all frustrated Labour activists need is a fighting policy to defend the NHS, in place of the insipid evasions of Blunkett's half-baked consultation document.

theory+practice

RAISING THE BANNER OF SOCIALISM

A WORLD IN CRISIS

Part one of a series by JOHN LISTER

JUST AS the capitalist market system reaches a global impasse, condemning billions to grinding poverty and exploitation, Tony Blair's right wing Labour leadership has set out to jettison the Party's historic commitment to an alternative.

The fight to uphold Clause 4 and for a socialist perspective and policy in Britain is part of a fight for an internationalist perspective on the overthrow of a system that long ago outlived its usefulness.

THE LOUDER the celebrations of imperialist leaders, the deeper the crisis blighting the lives of billions of working people around the world.

Even as it congratulates itself for outliving the miserable stalinist caricature of 'socialism', the capitalist system continues to demonstrate its total failure to satisfy the most elementary needs of the majority of humankind.

And as it does so, the market system continues relentlessly to underline the political bankruptcy of all political formations which depend upon it and act to implement it – whether they be British

Tories, US Democrats, Spanish Socialists, Polish Communists or ANC nationalists.

Exporting poverty

THE MARKET system brings daily misery to billions of people. Poverty, hunger, disease, homelessness are rampant. Absolute poverty is at record levels.

53 per cent of the world's population live in the poorest countries, with an average income of just \$330 per person, sharing only 4.4 per cent of the world's income.

The gap between these poor countries and the advanced economies is growing. The richest countries with 16 per cent of the world's population have average incomes 59 times higher, with 78 per cent of the total income.

The wealth of Africa, with double the population of the USA, and despite its huge natural resources, is little more than that of Belgium.



Deepening instability in the east: Akkuzian riots quelled by troops

again, there have been angry demonstrations against food and fuel price increases and currency devaluations ordered by the IMF.

Though privatisation has gone slowly in Africa, with less than a fifth of state firms sold off (and almost none of them the economi-

Much of Africa remains on the sidelines of the world economy. The total of foreign direct investment in the continent for 1993 was just £1.6 billion, less than three per cent of global flows of investment. The latest World Bank study does not even measure this investment or bother to assess its rate of return. China, not Africa, is the largest recipient of World Bank project funding.

By contrast, the IMF early in 1994 agreed a new £1.5 billion package to prop up the Yeltsin regime in Russia, and to reinforce a \$4 billion standby loan which is keeping capitalist wolves from the door who are demanding repayments on the old USSR's \$80 billion foreign debt.

With the main imperialist powers struggling to resolve their own domestic economic problems, and seeking maximum strategic advantage from the collapse of stalinist rule in the east, there will be less chance than ever that Africa or south Asia can attract the capital they need to construct viable capitalist economies.

For most imperialists there is simply not enough to gain in Africa for them to invest capital. The law of uneven and combined development, under which newly-emerging capitalist enterprises are forced immediately to compete in a world market with the largest and most technically advanced and experienced multinationals, makes it all but impossible for Africa, Latin America or much of Asia ever to achieve more than dependent status.

Only measures running directly counter to the capitalist free market can hope to rectify this imbalance: expropriating domestic and international capital and offering a cancellation of past debts; technical aid; educational programmes and a sustained programme for planned development on the basis of beneficial



Growth of economic migration: Refugees fight for entry stamp into Jordan

The problems of poverty are worsened by interventions of the IMF, whose patent formulae for establishing capitalist market economies – privatising state enterprises, cutting state spending, freeing up prices and stripping out subsidies – have brought abject misery to millions. Time and

cally vital ones such as airlines, mining, telecoms or electricity) lasting damage is being done by the western prompted reforms. In Zimbabwe, the imposition of charges at health clinics has been followed by a tripling of numbers of women dying in childbirth.

In Zambia, the end of price controls have brought ruin to peasant maize farmers, while the textile industry, stripped of government protection, has collapsed.

In Ghana, the price of western intervention has been the sale at a knockdown price of half the government stake in Ashanti Goldfields – leaving Lonrho as the largest shareholder. The \$1.4-\$1.7 billion expected for the shares would increase the capitalisation of Ghana's stockmarket by more than ten times. But still there are fears that if the World Bank pulled out, Ghana's fledgling capitalist development would collapse.

trade with more advanced economies.

To fight for this, marxist parties based on the working class and with a programme developing Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution are needed to lead the combined struggle for genuine independence from imperialist domination and for socialism, which will link working class and peasant struggles, and reject the blind alleys of collaboration with national or international capital which have led many nationalist movements astray.

Crisis in the East

THE ATTEMPTS to extend the market system into the ex-Soviet Union and Eastern Europe have so far led to a shocking increase of misery. There has been an horrific 40 per cent drop in industrial production in Russia, where nine per cent of enterprises are technically bankrupt, and economic and financial chaos throughout the ex-Soviet republics.

Yet the western bankers hail Poland's deal to repay most of its £13 billion unpaid bank debts as a success. Only Russia remains in default. Reactionary regimes seeking to roll back and privatise the nationalised economies in the ex-Stalinist states face not only political obstacles at home, but a shortage of capital for investment.

Imperialism simply does not have the resources needed to construct new capitalist economies on the ruins and wastelands of decades of bureaucratic mismanagement.

There will be encouraging words from the bankers, a few selected projects will be favourably regarded but, as the Poles have found, this will fall far short of promoting them to the big

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league. Overall, the lack of seriousness attached to investment in Eastern Europe was symbolised by last year's ludicrous scandal of Jacques Attali and his marble-lined investment Bank. He spent more on its headquarters than it lent to its target countries.

Levels of direct investment from the west have been growing, but are still little more than a flea-bite in comparison with the tasks involved.

As the old system collapses into crisis and criminality, with wholesale theft and graft by the managerial layers of the new bureaucracy, the backlash of stalinist and conservative elements begins to link up with extreme nationalist and chauvinist forces. This is producing a growing political stalemate.

In more and more ex-stalinist states the old - often renamed - stalinist parties are moving back into positions of power, not to defend nationalised property or the social gains of the masses, but seeking themselves to oversee the transition to a new market system, and to grab in the process a share of the pickings, property to be privatised and the profits to be made.

Pieces of China for sale

THE CHINESE bureaucracy gives a good example of the readiness of stalinism to do far-reaching deals with capitalism.

The Chinese economy, which in 1989 was little larger in GNP than that of Spain, is growing rapidly. But it is jealously watched by bureaucrats unwilling to share more of the surplus than they have to in procuring western technology and capital, and intent upon establishing a new market system under their control.

With only 62 per cent of Chinese homes connected to electricity supplies, vast new deals are on offer to western power station manufacturers, but future potential profits are restricted to a 12 per cent return on capital. Big capital investments in China are still unlikely as long as bankers and industrialists remain nervous about the political succession to Deng Xiaoping, and anxious at the lack of any infrastructure of legislation to protect their capital.

It is clear that with a vast state bureaucracy seeking to exert its influence to maximise its own control over developments, the prospects of unfettered profitable investment and exploitation in China are not great for western capital.

The November 1993 Plenary of the CCP decided to take another step towards a "socialist market economic system" by setting up a new system of 'modern enterprises' as a staging post to privatisation. Some of these enterprises will be fully private, some limited corporations, and others will retain state shareholding.

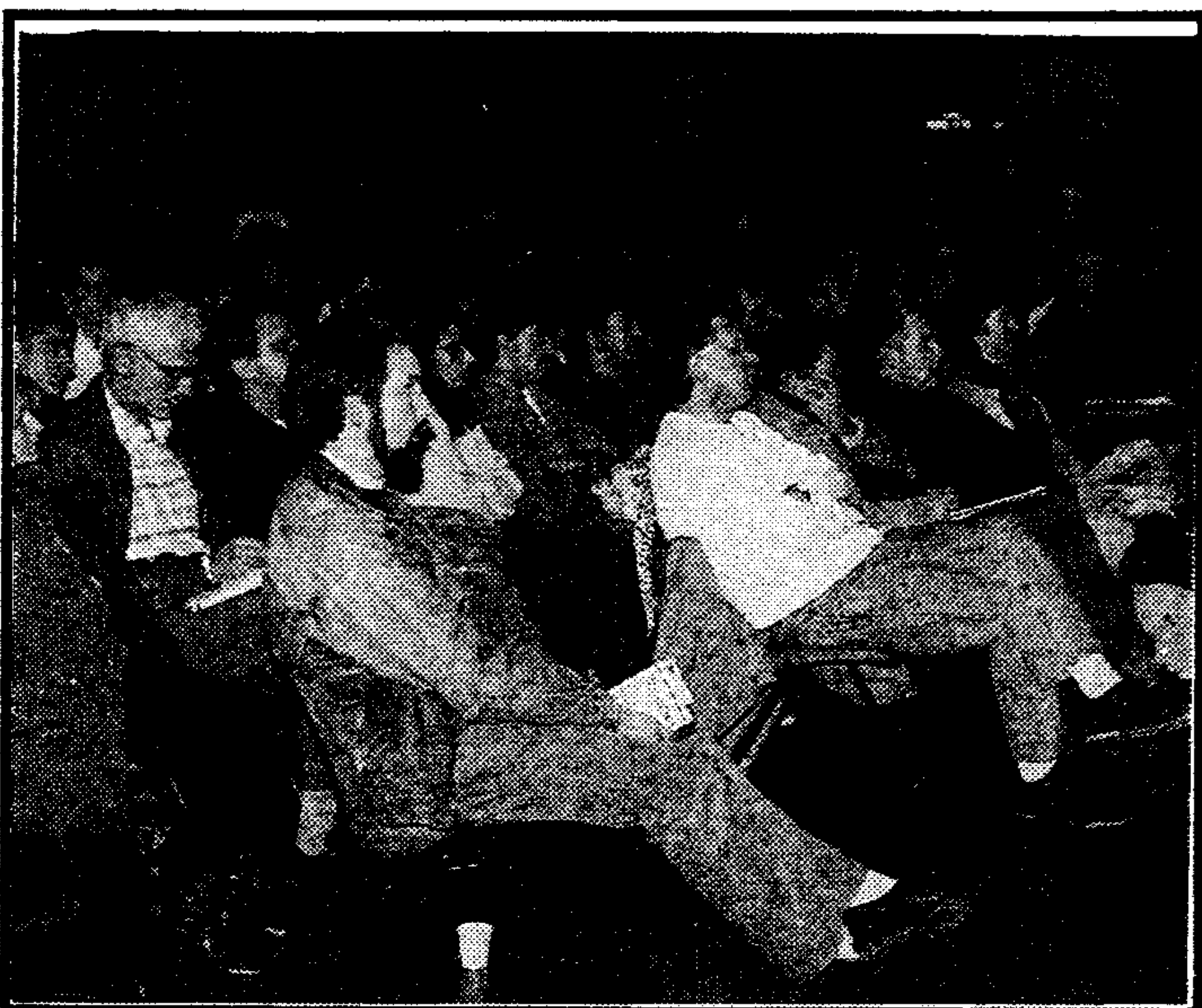
Already some of the most efficient and profitable enterprises have been sold off - leaving the least attractive in state hands. The CCP carefully distances itself from the consequences of privatisation, declaring blandly that "Enterprises should, in accordance with the demands of the market economy, perfect and tighten up their internal management, and rigorously enforce labour discipline."

The imposition of market disciplines on enterprises also involves an attack on housing, health care and pension funds previously funded by the firm.

Thus even the enterprises that remain in state hands are imposing capitalist-style redundancies and speed-up, overriding the power of workers councils and trade unions. Chinese urban unemployment is officially acknowledged to be four million, with a massive 130 million rural unemployed.

With the advent even of a "socialist" market in China comes the widening of class divisions and the spread of actual poverty. A recent trade union survey suggests up to seven million families could be living in poverty with less than 50 yuan per month to live on: by contrast a lucky one million families have hit the big time, described by the Beijing Daily as the "one million yuan households". The entrepreneurial top three per cent of the Chinese population owns savings of 293 billion yuan, compared with the 274 billion shared between 800 million Chinese peasants.

The bureaucracy has intervened to impose the traditional price controls to combat growing inflation, in order to prevent an explosion of mass anger.



Trotskyist ideas are confirmed: jam-packed London Socialist Outlook meeting

Political revolution

THE EVENTS in the ex-USSR, Eastern Europe and China serve to underline the basic tenets of the Trotskyist struggle for political revolution.

The 1980s, which began with the frontal challenge of Solidarnosc to the power of Poland's Stalinist bureaucracy, saw Stalinist regimes increasingly face a stark choice.

Even as they clung on to political power through increasingly desperate repressive measures, they were confronted with the stagnation and crisis of their economies, lagging ever further behind the technical advances in the West, yet forced to seek loans and credits from Western banks.

More and more regimes saw what at first had been passive working class resistance developing into the downright hostility of the masses.

Hoping to avert a showdown and retain control, sections of the Soviet bureaucracy attempted a risky programme of structural reform (Glasnost and Perestroika), which triggered a wholesale shift in bureaucratic policy throughout Eastern Europe.

The introduction of elements of marketisation only resulted in the

profound dislocation of the centralised 'command economy'. However, the limited democratic openings that the reforms entailed lifted the lid on the pent up anger of the workers, which, in turn, further propelled the disintegration of the state.

It became increasingly clear that the post-glasnost Soviet Union could not pose the military threat of intervention that had terrorised the working classes of Eastern Europe: the prison doors had been left open, and the masses took advantage to rid themselves of hated bureaucrats: a clear example was the events in East Germany which led to the fall of the Berlin Wall.

Without a revolutionary class party representing its interests, the proletariat was - not for the first time in history - cynically used as a battering ram against a discredited regime by alien political and class forces which subsequently turned against it. Facing mass unemployment, the workers in East Germany will have plenty of time to count the cost.

From then on, Gorbachev and Yeltsin's failed reform programme turned into a headlong, counter-revolutionary rush towards restoring capitalism, a process aped by the other bureaucracies and newly elected governments of

struction of real democratic socialist alternatives.

But there must be no illusions: the old 'Communist' parties, the state apparatus developed by sta-

warn the G7 against "imprudent dismissals which ignore the feelings of employees", and stress the need for redundant workers to be offered new jobs.



Austerity: Trotskyist youth lead Belgian youth movement against reform

linist parties in Eastern Europe and the degenerated workers' state apparatus in the Soviet Union, have proven themselves neither able nor willing to defend either nationalised property or the historic gains of the working class after the post-war expropriation of capital.

In Poland we have seen an old, discredited Communist Party return to implement a restorationist programme; in China we see a ruthless stalinist regime using its continued monopoly of political power to enforce the re-imposition of capitalist property relations.

The fight for socialist political revolution, for socialist democracy, for workers' control of industry and a workers plan of production, for democratic, independent trade unions, for defence of nationalised property against privatisation and profiteers, and for working class politics independent of the old bureaucracy and the new nationalists and pro-imperialists remains the key to the future: all other roads lead horribly and inexorably back to the dark days of exploitation and - as the proliferation of inter-ethnic conflicts show - barbarism.

The Detroit spinners

THE CENTRAL players in the capitalist market have key strategic structural problems still unresolved. The March G7 summit in Detroit showed the varying attitude of the governments of the seven richest countries to the growing tide of unemployment created by their policies at home.

Of 35 million officially deemed unemployed in the 'west', 20 million are in Europe, causing social tensions and potential problems for governments.

But while Bill Clinton and the British Tories press ruthlessly ahead with free market deregulation aimed at slashing wages and welfare spending to reduce overheads for employers, Japanese capitalism remains wedded to the Keynesian policies which everywhere else died with the post-war boom.

Cushioned by their vast trade surplus and competitive advantage in world markets arising from high rates of investment, Japanese ministers are still pumping extra cash into infrastructure schemes to boost the economy. They can

Best of a bad job?

UNDERLYING the global rise in unemployment is the rapid decline of employment in manufacturing industry, and of manufacturing as a percentage of the GDP of the advanced economies.

Of the advanced economies, only in Japan is the manufacturing workforce now larger (by 20 per cent) than it was in 1970. In Britain, by contrast, the decline has been dramatic, to just 45 per cent of the numbers employed in 1970. This demise has been accompanied by a worsening in the balance of payments, as consumer goods have been imported in ever larger quantities, while British firms have ever less variety of goods to export.

Just one British worker in five is now employed by a manufacturing firm, and one in six in the USA, compared with one in three in Germany and Japan. But this decline has run alongside a big increase in manufacturing productivity. In the USA, 90 per cent of the 1970 workforce produced almost double the 1970 output in 1992.

Many of these industrial jobs have been switched to plants in lower-paid developing countries, often by subsidiaries of the same multinational firms. 40 per cent of the output of British firms is now produced abroad.

Other one-time bedrock manufacturing industries have been eclipsed by competition from abroad: in Britain, textiles, motorcycles, cars, shipbuilding, much electronics and now even coal mining have been largely wiped out and replaced by imports. Millions more jobs have been eliminated by technological advances, decimating the skilled workforce in print and other industries.

Organise the unemployed

The scourge of unemployment is one of the most difficult to combat through normal trade unionism. It requires both strong organisation and a high level of consciousness about the nature of the capitalist market economy to stage strikes and occupations against an employer threatening redundancies, demanding the opening of the books and a pol-

icy of work sharing with no loss of pay.

Without such policies and fighting leadership, or even serious nationwide campaigns for a 35 hour week, workers can be persuaded to accept a seemingly large lump sum of redundancy money, rather than risk an uncertain outcome to a half-hearted fight.

The policy of work sharing and the 35 hour week is also important for organising the unemployed alongside the unions. This is anathema to the British union bureaucracy, who rejected any attempt at organising the unemployed in the early 1980s, threatening sanctions against Trades Councils which persisted in doing it. The consequences of this failure of the British unions are painfully clear for all to see.

In Europe, however, campaigns are growing again for the 35 hour week, and we should promote these while also attacking the TUC's abandonment of the unemployed. Local campaigns should be mounted aimed at mobilising and organising part-timers, casual workers and the unemployed.



Tensions in world economy: build-up on Kuwait border

Conveyor belt ends

Alongside the decline of manufacturing has come a relative expansion of jobs in the service sector, ranging from retail and catering, through to finance, computing and design. However the service sector is also suffering a squeeze on jobs.

Privatisation in Britain and elsewhere of what were state-owned utilities and services has triggered a new wave of job cuts and subcontracting, slashing jobs and working conditions for millions more workers.

The break-up of the historic centres of proletarian power, the big factories and centres of manufacturing, has struck a major blow at trade union strength. And while drastically reducing the numbers of traditionally 'male', full-time jobs, the rise of the service sector has created growing numbers of part-time, casual, often low-paid work to an increasingly unorganised workforce - many of them women.

The British trade union movement has been especially hard hit by this international phenomenon. Traditionally strongly organised, it has suffered a combined rise in unemployment and a rapid drop in union membership, down to just 38 per cent of the workforce, having lost four and a half million members since 1979.

Even this understates the *qualitative* weakening of most British

unions, where historically powerful industrial shop stewards movements and industrial unions such as the NUM have driven forward the wages struggle. The loss of these vanguard forces has yet to be compensated by the emergence of new combative elements in the organisation of workers in the service sector.

A range of New Management Techniques, like short term and individual contracts (now even 'nil hours' contracts offering no guaranteed wage week to week), and the abolition of most previous employment protection not only worsens conditions, but makes the fightback more difficult. Despite some important victories the pace of victimisations continues to increase, with a consequent loss of activists.

The problem is compounded by the relative strengthening of the grip of full-time union officials, as lay and unofficial structures have weakened and collapsed. This helps reinforce the grip of new realism and the defeatist right wing, and lay the groundwork for future retreats and betrayals.

The debt mountain

One of the reasons investment remains at a low level is that free market liberalism has largely failed to resolve the world fiscal crisis and clear up the huge state budget deficits - which include not only the crippling Third World debt but also the gigantic trillion-dollar US deficit and growing debts in Europe.

The long wave of stagnation and recession simultaneously increased the social security costs of growing unemployment while it reduced government revenues through loss of taxes. Further cuts in state spending - on capital projects and services - cut outgoings, but also increase unemployment and deepen the recession, so further undermining tax receipts.

In the USA, even the Reagan 'boom', pump-primed by colossal military spending, widened the deficit and forced up interest rates as the government was forced to borrow on the money markets to bridge the gap.

In Britain, the deficit has grown to such an extent as to threaten the bankruptcy of the state; only North Sea oil has prevented a crisis occurring earlier.

The problem has been exacerbated by the historic British bourgeois tradition of investing abroad. 60 per cent of British capital investment goes abroad - more easily since Thatcher's deregulation of the City. Forty five per cent

of British manufacturing activity takes place overseas.

GATTastrophe

FANFARES in January greeted the GATT agreements 'liberalising' world trade to the overwhelming disadvantage of the working class and peasantry in the underdeveloped economies.

They will be the prime victims as fledgling domestic manufacturing industries, agriculture and extraction industries are exposed to the bitter blast of global competition with multinationals, and raw material prices continue their downward spiral.

As the GATT director general admitted, "It is wrong to say that liberalisation is going to make the poor rich as a result of the opportunity offered to them".

In fact the USA, Japan and the European Union will continue to monopolise 80 per cent of world trade, leaving the poorest 20 per cent of the world's population to share less than one per cent. Poor countries are even asked to eliminate subsidies and protectionist measures, and to grow food for domestic consumption rather than try to export cash crops on the world market.

Indeed even the limited 'expansion' which has taken place in the OECD countries as key economies begin to clamber from outright recession, has taken place on the back of huge hidden subsidies from the oil-producing countries - where prices of £13 a barrel offer little more in real terms than the pitiful return before the oil shock brought 70 per cent increases in 1973.

It is clear from the realities of world trade today that despite deals to trade technology between South Korea and China, and whatever growth might take place in Brazil, in India or elsewhere, *there is no possibility of new industrial powers emerging to challenge the global domination of the present imperialist power blocs.*

There is no new golden age of capitalist expansion: simply more of the old misery until the working class organises to take power in its hands and smash the market system.

Costing us the earth

SHORT SIGHTED and reactionary regimes in OPEC states are pumping out irreplaceable assets at such a giveaway price that alternative energy or conservation measures are not considered economic, while bland governmental phrases about the environment have done little to limit the output of greenhouse gases.

Indeed it is not only the advanced economies but also those struggling to catch up with them which are polluting the atmosphere to alarming proportions. China and Brazil between them pumped almost a million tonnes of greenhouse gases into the air in 1987, while Japan, with a GNP four times as large as both combined, produced 220 tonnes.

The tide of pollution is even more serious when the leaks and discharges of radioactive and other poisonous waste products into the atmosphere, soil, rivers



The world is driven towards crisis by cost-cutting and the lust for profit

and seas are taken into account. The production of non-degradable plastic waste, consuming ever larger acreage in dangerous landfill dumps, is sowing seeds of disaster for future generations.

It is clear that as long as the world is driven by cost-cutting and the lust for profit these outrageous and short-sighted policies will continue to put the lives and health of millions at risk.

The environmental issue is above all one of planning, accountability and control: even in non-capitalist economies the disastrous legacy of environmental vandalism of the stalinist bureaucracies in the USSR and eastern Europe remains an unresolved problem.

Even while it fails to feed, house or educate hundreds of millions, the plundering market system is also taking a terrible toll of the earth's natural resources. Not only fossil fuels, but forests and fish stocks are falling prey to the unfettered drive for profits - even the free-market fetishists of the

Economist have called for global policies to control fish stocks.

But such policies are ultimately only enforceable through a planned food policy, which in turn demands an end to the competition of the free market, so that fishing crews, like farm workers, are guaranteed a decent standard of living without having to strip bare the natural assets of the oceans.

Building blocs

RATIONAL PLANNING and the market system are in constant contradiction with each other. So we find that behind the facade of growing cooperation displayed at the G7 summits, the basic thrust of the market is increasingly dividing the advanced economies into three main trading blocs, headed by the USA, Japan and the European Union.

Each bloc, and sometimes each major partner within each bloc, is primarily intent upon maximising

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its share of markets and preferential deals in the developing and underdeveloped countries. Each is seeking its own inroads into Eastern Europe.

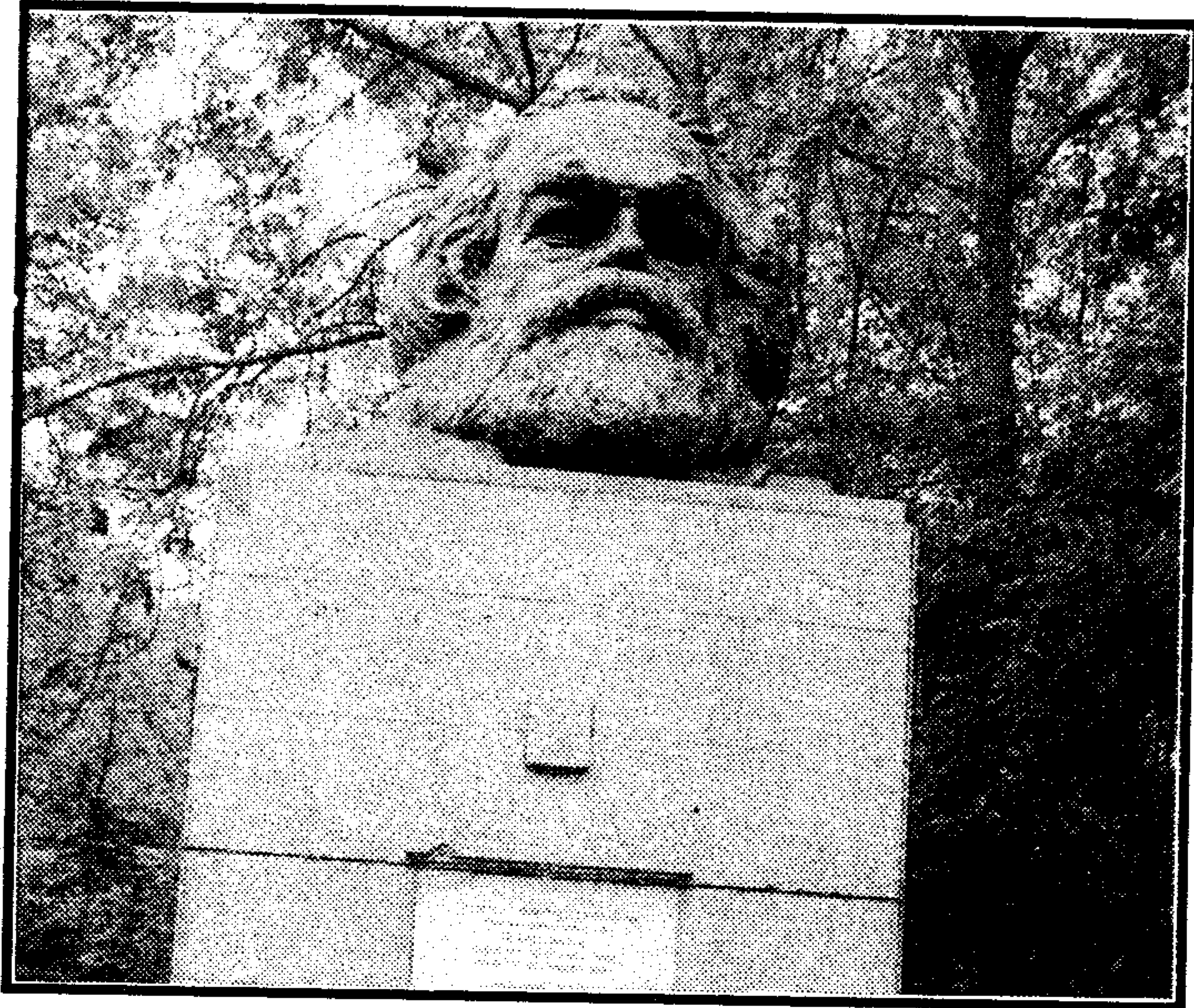
The North American Free Trade Agreement cements a US-led alliance of USA, Canada and Mexico. In exchange for lessening the pressure on Mexico to repay its \$100 billion foreign debt, and erecting protective barriers to ward off competition for Mexican firms from Europe and Japan, the deal allows US and Canadian monopolies privileged access to the Mexican market.

Under the guise of NAFTA, the USA is seeking to prise open restricted markets in Asia and around the Pacific Rim countries, previously seen as the preserve of Japan.

The Japanese remain the dominant voice of the increasingly powerful bloc of Asian countries where Japanese capital has played a key role in developing modern industries—notably South Korea, Singapore, Taiwan and Malaysia. Japan is currently funneling additional investment into Indonesia and southern China.

The most vexed of relations arise in the European Union, where the attempts to forge a common trading bloc wielding political clout comparable to its economic strength run repeatedly into the conflicting national interests of substantial national bourgeoisies.

Nonetheless, the fear of intense competition from NAFTA, together with the storm clouds from the dynamic Pacific-rim econo-



Karl Marx: his tradition provides an alternative to the capitalist crisis

mies dominated by Japan, reinforce the dynamic towards European integration. The capitalist project for Europe was frozen half way between a simple free-trade zone (which the British Euro-sceptics want to retain) and a real federal state (which they totally reject).

The Single European Act and the Maastricht treaty were attempts to move forward beyond this untenable situation with the creation of, amongst other things, a common currency. The creation of a political and military authority was scheduled for later.

The more far-sighted European bourgeoisies have aimed at economic rationalisation on a European-wide scale. They pressed for a European Monetary System (EMS) and a Europe wide curb on government spending to rein in

costly welfare states. Both North America and Japan have comparatively minimal social welfare programmes and larger, more efficient industries.

Though the ERM collapsed, the same programme is now being introduced through the back door, designed to bring the different states into line and further their integration, making the EU competitive with the other major blocs.

The ERM crisis and the subsequent attempts to defend the pound wiped out huge exchange reserves in Britain (at least £15 billion), with similar losses in France, Italy and the Spanish state. This exposes the weakness of national banks in the face of the floating capital of international speculators and bankers, of which \$900 billion is exchanged daily

(three times the combined exchange reserves of all the G7 countries).

It also brought into sharp focus the huge budget deficits building up in many European countries, making an onslaught on welfare spending inevitable if the EU countries are to meet the new Maastricht limit of three per cent of GDP.

The result of the Maastricht process is already making itself felt in the growth of mass unemployment, privatisations, speed-up, new management techniques, massive cuts in the social wage (even legally imposed limits to the levels of welfare spending), all of which compound the effects of the recession, and erosion of democratic rights.

This is why it is a major betrayal of working people everywhere that the Labour Party and union leaders fully support the creation of the EU, using the pathetic fig-leaf of the unenforcable Social Chapter as their justification.

Across the continent, the picture is the same. Workers' parties, whether social democratic or revamped communist parties, have been roped in to support the capitalist strategy.

This class collaboration has led to a further step away from any concept of socialism and open embrace for the capitalist market—a 'Euro new realism', which has failed miserably to provide any alternative to the capitalist crisis.

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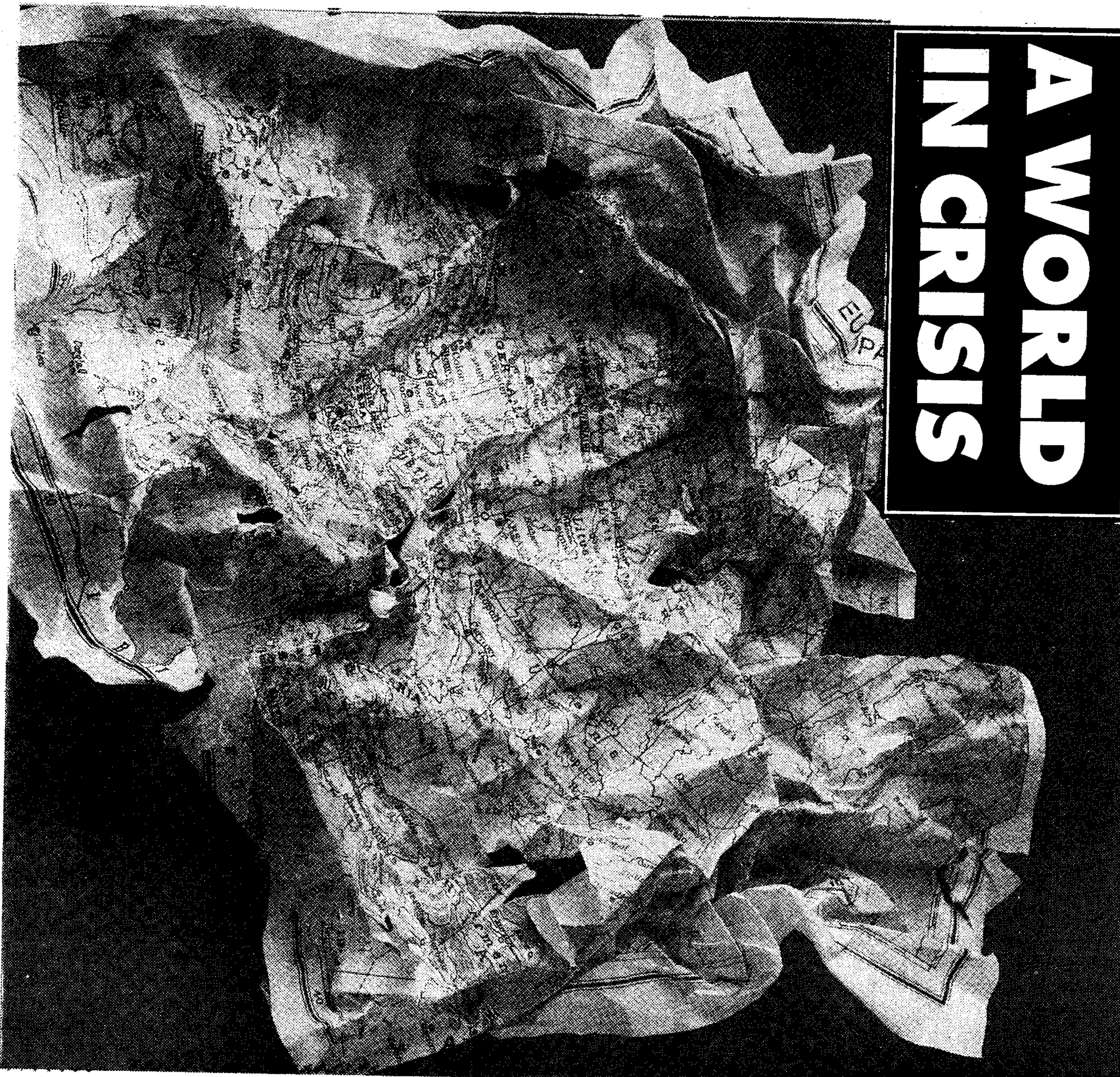
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Living through violence

Pulp Fiction directed by Quentin Tarantino

Reviewed by Steve Smith

VISCERAL and searing, but hip and hilarious, the brilliance of Quentin Tarantino's work can't be denied. It has transformed him from an unknown pop cultural train spotter into the world's most talked about film director.

His second film *Pulp Fiction* has just opened to a chorus of critical hype.

This will soon be multiplied by the release of Oliver Stone's *Natural Born Killers*, which Tarantino scripted. His *Reservoir Dogs* debut is still running after the censors refused to release it on video.

Pulp Fiction is set in the director's favourite world of the LA underclass. It tells two jumbled-up stories of three characters and their life of criminality.

Samuel L Jackson and John Travolta play two hired killers working for a domineering gangster godfather. Through

the course of a number of assassinations they come to differing conclusions about their lives and the world.

In the second plot line Bruce Willis is a boxer hired by the godfather to take a dive. Instead he double crosses his boss to pull off a betting coup of his own. His evasion of retribution gives the film its dramatic conclusion.

Tarantino had a lot of expectations to fulfil with *Pulp Fiction*. Many (including me) shared the view that his *Reservoir Dogs* was the finest film to be made since the heyday of Scorsese and Coppola more than a decade ago.



What am I doing here? Uma Thurman finds herself in a world of misogyny homophobia and racism

He has not let us down. It's a fine film. But there are serious limitations to his aesthetic vision which could spell

trouble for him when he tries to broaden his horizons beyond cops and robbers.

Pop Culture

If Tarantino champions anything at all, it is a view that pop culture has so taken over our lives that it is impossible to live outside its influence.

Our most basic interpretations are formed by it. Marxists should agree with him here — we need to engage with pop culture at every level, soap op-

masses, however heavily ideologically mediated it may be through the fiction factories of capitalism.

It is wrong to disregard its effects as "false consciousness". The lack of any substantial contemporary Marxist body of theory on popular culture is a result of our current minority position among the working class.

Drowning

But Tarantino doesn't just immerse himself in popular culture — he drowns in it. He doesn't write about the real world as it is lived, but as his own creations experience it through TV/video fantasy.

His scenarios are the result of his cannibalistic appetite for post-war pop culture — this is expressed in the form of an electrically charged pastiche of the highest order.

Brilliantly funny dialogue and wonderfully exaggerated characters are the outcome. But because he takes no stance of his own on it all there can be no meaning to his lurid reproductions.

Violence

Tarantino's films are also noteworthy because they run

straight into i) the British moral panic about screen violence, and ii) the language-centred PC obsession of the intelligentsia on both sides of the Atlantic.

His films are violent. Of this there is no doubt. But to suggest that they lead to violence is quite another matter.

The ethical centre of *Reservoir Dogs* is very firm. Its violence is shown to have appalling consequences.

In *Pulp Fiction* things start to get gratuitous — someone's head is blown off just for the sake of an extended jokey scene about the difficulties of cleaning skull tissue off car upholstery. This moral atrocity is a shame.

Tarantino's characters exist in a sub-culture of misogyny, homophobia and racism.

His method is to satirise these prejudices in a highly intelligent manner without clearly signposting his opposition. This allows (problematically) his audience to interpret the content as they please.

But this doesn't mean the opposition is not there: the language of the sub-culture is evoked by Tarantino to humiliate and expose the contradictions of its users, not as justification or encouragement.

"Jimmy Hill's on telly again". Travolta and Jackson react to popular culture.

Die on your feet – or live on your knees!

Geronimo: An American Legend Directed by Walter Hill

By David Thomas

FIRST, an admission. I love films about the American west.

The recent spate of films — *Dances with Wolves*, *Unforgiven*, *Wyatt Earp* — has been a pleasure. Unfashionable in the 1970's, the "western" reached its nadir with the financially disastrous *Heaven's Gate*. Thankfully it has now been rehabilitated.

Geronimo is by any standards a very fine piece of work. It presents a searing indictment of the genocidal policy toward native American people.

Removed from their land the Chiricahua Apache were forced to live on the San Car-

los reservation. Anyone leaving was hunted down. Traditional religions were destroyed.

Holy men were seen as particularly seditious. Their attempts to raise spirits were often a call for opposition to the authorities.

Those familiar with the bantustan system in South Africa will recognise this description by Briton Davis, a lieutenant in the U.S. Army: "San Carlos won unanimously our designation of it as 'Hell's Forty Acres'...it was almost continuously dry, hot, dust and gravel laden. Winds swept the plain, denuding it of every vestige of vegetation".

Fighting back

Geronimo fought back. His actions were reminiscent of La Pasionaria's words during the Spanish Civil War — "It is better to die on your feet than to live on your knees".

He frequently asks those

Apache who joined the U.S. army as scouts "where is your heart?"

The film is strongest in dealing with the resistance of the Apache. Director Walter Hill skilfully demonstrates that the violence of the Chiricahua is not indiscriminate but the result of years of oppression.

Murder

In a particularly moving scene Geronimo (Wes Studi) explains that after the murder of his wife and children by Mexican troops "I stood hardly knowing what to do...I could not call back my loved ones. I could not bring back the dead Apaches but I could rejoice in revenge."

In August 1886 Geronimo finally had to surrender. Many of his supporters were seriously ill.

The state would only accept unconditional surrender. Geronimo and his followers were exiled to Florida and



Getting off his knees. Geronimo in 1884

gave up their homeland to the government. The promise of return within two years was broken.

The removal of the Apache to Florida is haunting. In a scene reminiscent of the Holocaust the Chiricahua are crammed on to a train for the

journey south.

Thus is an inspiring and moving film. I would commend it to everyone.

One caveat: if I have to go to yet another film with a score by Ry Cooder I am going to scream...

REVIEWS

Russian workers march against market chaos

THREE MILLION Russian workers marched in towns and cities across the country on October 27 to protest at growing poverty, unemployment and economic collapse.

The attempt by President Boris Yeltsin and his government to force through market-style reforms amid the wreckage of the old, paralysed stalinist command economy, has brought predictable disaster.

One Russian enterprise in five is now bankrupt, with up to 12 million unemployed as the collapse continues.

Tens of millions of workers are owed months of unpaid wages. The latest tally shows that government enterprises owed workers a massive 4.2



Right on queue: Yeltsin's reforms have forced up prices

trillion roubles (about £1 billion) by October, with the debt rapidly increasing.

Some workers are still owed wages from the spring, while others are being paid in goods such as carpets or cloth for lack of hard cash, as the economy slides downhill into chaos.

The October 27 protests

were co-ordinated by the Federation of Independent Trade Unions, which claims 59 million members among the 66 million Russian workforce.

It coincided with a 'no confidence' motion in the Russian parliament moved by Communist and nationalist deputies against Yeltsin's Prime Minister Viktor Cher-

nomyrdin. The motion won a hefty majority, but fell short of the absolute majority

needed.

For Russian workers, neither a nostalgic turn back to the 'good old days' of ossified, repressive stalinist rule, nor the illusory promises of 'modernisers' to leap into a free-market capitalism offers any solution.

In the unions a fight for workers' control of production, of planning and of the economy as a whole offers the only real alternative to the reactionary policies of Yeltsin and the equally reactionary grasping of the old Communists seeking to recapture their lost power and privilege.

Russian Left faces the future

by Boris Kagarlitsky

MOSCOW — Despite a great deal of work the non-communist left has so far failed to establish a mass political organisation.

This is despite very favourable conditions. The government's neo-liberal policies have impoverished millions. There is a massive rise in anti-capitalist sentiment.

The Communist Party has shown itself incapable of taking advantage of the disillusionment. As well as failing to carry through any serious internal reforms it has resorted to nationalist rhetoric in favour of "national capital". The new left has to fill this vacuum.

In response the Federation of Independent Trade Unions of Russia (FNPR) has grown quite radical in words, but lethargic in its actions. The bureaucratic leadership has done nothing to build the Party of Labour despite its formal support and has stifled all initiative.

The complacency in the FNPR have been opposed by the United Social Democrats, and by many of the Party of Labour's activists

— the best of whom have had to leave their posts in the federation.

A big division between left and right has also opened up in the Social Democratic Party of Russia, which works mostly in the alternative trade unions. The right wing under Anatoly Golov is looking towards a unification with the "democratic centre".

A similar process is occurring in the Socialist Party of Workers.

Not ripe

It now argues that conditions in Russia have "not yet ripened for real left politics", and is staking its future on sectors of the state and managerial apparatus dissatisfied with Yeltsin.

In these circumstances new attempts to achieve unification from above can only make matters worse, since the programmatic basis for unifying the new left movement remains unclear.

While the leaders of the traditional trade unions show nothing but caution the rapid growth of the Spring 1994 strike movement shows how much the situation is changing.

This is why both the Party of Labour and the United Social Democrats are trying to shift from operating through leadership structures to "solidarity from below".

It is on this basis that a new left movement in Russia has to be created.

A unification meeting is now due to take place on 26 November. The main aim will not be to establish a joint political organisation — a goal that must be addressed primarily by the Party of Labour and the United Social Democrats — so much as to lay the foundations for a mass movement "from below".

The future of the left movement in Russia now depends on worker and trade union activists.

Indonesia steps up repression

By K. Govindan

A WAVE of repression has been unleashed by Indonesia's military and civilian authorities against those critical of President Suharto.

Tempo, *Editor* and *DeTik*, three popular news magazines with a combined circulation of more than 500,000, had their permits revoked in June — an action equivalent to a ban.

The press has always been subject to state control and censorship. There are unwritten guidelines that reports critical of the President his family and the military are taboo.

Bolder journalists have tried to take advantage of a declared policy of "openness" that tolerates some muted discussion of government. This shift in the late 1980s was prompted by demands from the growing middle classes for political breathing space.

Fragile

The fragility of this arrangement has been underlined by the swift response to revelations in *Tempo* of an arms deal made by the Suharto protégé BJ Habibie with the German government.

The demonstrations which followed were violently dispersed by police and special military units.

Meanwhile the trial of four key activists of the illegal Indonesian Labour Prosperity Union continues. They are charged with involvement in labour or-

ganisation and orchestrating the protests that took place in the industrial city of Medan in April.

There have been numerous stoppages and protests by workers to mark their solidarity with the detained activists in spite of the risks they face — ranging from dismissal to arrest and torture by the military.

The government is now threatening draconian controls on Non-Governmental Organisations.

Focus

These have become a thorn in the government's side, and a focus for dissidents who despair of Suharto's kept oppositional parties.

Through their publications, seminars and activism the NGOs have highlighted human

rights, environmental issues, women's rights and matters of social justice.

They have been vocal critics of the state, and, through their international contacts, have provided an important source of information elsewhere on struggles within Indonesia.

Under a draft decree an NGO will be illegal if involved in activities which threaten "public security and order" or receive "foreign assistance without prior approval of the central government".

The decree extends this to anything which can be deemed "of a damaging nature to the state or national interests".

While small circles of activists try to develop genuinely alternative political formations the working class and rural poor continue the battle for survival.

Opposing Indonesian repression: Melbourne solidarity with East Timor as part of a recent Australian Day of Action



Palestine: Hamas grows as left fails

by Roland Rance

DURING his recent visit to Israel, Bill Clinton reaffirmed the eternal US support for Israel. He also promised to maintain current levels of US aid military and economic aid, which has now reached \$3,000 million a year.

This is evidence, for any who needed it, that Israel remains the USA's prime strategic asset in the Middle East.

It seems likely that Clinton's visit to Damascus, the first by a US president for 20 years, will succeed in its aim of bringing Syria into negotiations - thus scoring a much-needed foreign policy triumph on the eve of critical congressional and senate elections.

Treaties

Following the agreements with Egypt, Jordan and the PLO, this would fulfil Israel's long-standing goal of signing 'peace' treaties on its own terms with the other Middle East regimes.

Israel's agreement with the PLO, and the signing of the Declaration of Principles, have effectively co-opted the PLO to

a supportive role in the policing of the occupied territories.

This reflects the bankruptcy of the PLO's strategy, developed since the early 1970's, of attempting to integrate itself into the existing Middle East framework, and renouncing any revolutionary ideas or proposals which might threaten this framework.

Secular left

The Palestinian secular left - the Communist Party, the Democratic Front and the Popular Front - failed to develop an alternative strategy and con-

tinue to make pragmatic compromises with Arafat's Fatah, the dominant force in the PLO.

This has ensured that the only consistent, militant opposition to the PLO's compromise with Zionism and occupation has been that of the Islamic fundamentalists, notably Hamas.

The continuing Hamas attacks in southern Lebanon, in the occupied territories, and in the heart of Israel itself, show that agreements which explicitly ignore the central issue of the conflict - the dispossession of the Palestinian people and the carve-up of their land in 1948 -

have no chance of success.

They merely serve to tie the various regimes together, against the masses of the region, in the service of imperialist control of its resources.

The growth of Hamas resembles that of the PLO itself during the 1960's and 70's. At that time, Israel was trying to reinforce the traditional tribal leaders, and the PLO represented a radical break with these conservative forces.

Through a combination of confrontations with the Israeli army in the occupied territories, attacks on civilians inside Israel, and dramatic 'terrorist' acts around the world, the PLO established itself as the authentic voice of the Palestinian people.

When the supremacy of the PLO in the occupied territories had become clear Israel abandoned its original allies and began to sponsor Islamic groups against the PLO. These groups were the forerunners of Hamas, which was not banned by Israel until long after the outbreak of the Intifada.

Worse conditions

Hamas continues to grow with the realisation that the agreement is worsening the already appalling conditions of the Palestinian masses.

Gaza is, in effect, the world's largest concentration camp.

Close to one million people are crowded into a small area, devoid of natural resources, with no industry, little agriculture, and virtually no source of income.

Most of the population are refugees, ethnically cleansed from their homes to make way for the establishment of Israel in 1948. They live in sprawling refugee camps, dependent on international charity for their continued existence.

Until April 1993, about 100,000 Gazans - breadwinners for some three-quarters of the entire population - were employed in Israel. Latest figures indicate that only about 9000 are now permitted to work in Israel. Over 90% of the population is totally destitute.

With the PLO's betrayal, and the failure of the secular left, it is no surprise that Islamic groups are thriving. Even these, however, show signs of willingness to compromise with the Israeli authorities in order to achieve some measure of social control.

The main victims of such an agreement would be Palestinians themselves - women, non-Muslims, secularists and the left.



Fighting for food hand-outs in Jordan: Mid-East settlement has solved no real problems of Palestinians



A deal that has gone horribly wrong: PLO's Yassir Arafat

Britain backs the dirty war in Turkey

By Aidan Day

One hundred Kurds have gone on hunger strike in protest at Britain's jailing of Kurdish Workers Party leader Kani Yilmaz. A further 89 non-Kurdish inmates at Rochester, where he is being held, have gone on hunger strike in solidarity and appointed Yilmaz as their spokesperson.

The Home Office has given in to pressure from Turkey and jailed him on the grounds of "national security". This deprives detainees of rights of appeal and protest.

The reasons behind this are not hard to see - as well as being a big buyer of western arms Turkey is a key strategic asset in the middle east. The west wants to integrate it into its plans for the region. Stopping dissidents speaking in Britain is

part of the deal.

This comes in the same week that Turkey is investigated for human rights violations.

Human rights

The European Commission of Human Rights has agreed to investigate how 17 year old Devrin Berkday was thrown by police off a fourth floor balcony. In another case trade union activist Nebatahat Akkoc claims her husband was killed by security forces and that she was subjected to severe torture at Diyarbakar police station.

The Commission is to investigate six cases of indiscriminate killings, murder, disappearances and torture.

These are just the tip of the iceberg.

The Turkish government is pursuing a brutal policy of death and destruction directed at Kurdish areas which includes the burning of villages and the expulsion of their inhabitants. The

army has killed 300,000 people in its drive to eliminate opposition in the southeast of the country.

This barbaric war has a particularly ghastly reality for Kurdish women. The destruction of villages and forced displacement effects their lives most painfully and enduringly. During military operations women are stripped naked and raped in front of family members and men. Arrested women and injured women guerrillas are tortured, raped and often murdered.

Kurdish refugees have to live in insanitary internment camps with minimal or absent medical provision. Dozens of children die every day from preventable diseases.

The war is part of the government's final solution to the Kurdish question - the elimination of all linguistic and cultural diversity for the sake of a spurious "national" Turkish homogeneity.

This necessitates crushing all

opposition. Hence the forced closure of the pro-Kurdish newspaper *Özgür Gündem* and the imprisonment and murder of its staff.

The recent treason charges against eight Kurdish members of parliament is further example of the repressive nature of the regime. The eight are threatened with the death penalty for the crime of using the Kurdish language in a public meeting and suggesting that there is such a thing as a Kurdish people.

Elections

As was revealed in the March 27 municipal elections, the main parties have nothing to offer the Kurds but further repression. A poster of one of the big bourgeois parties declared "each vote for the DYP is a bullet against the PKK".

The rise of Turkish nationalism in reaction to the Kurdish resistance has allowed the right to maintain its rule despite the

extreme fragmentation of bourgeois politics following the 1980 coup. This explains why the semi-fascist National Action Party was able to double its vote to eight per cent. All the right-wing groupings employ chauvinist anti-Kurd propaganda.

Just when the austerity programme of radical restructuring needs a strong leadership the rule of the bourgeoisie shows increasing signs of weakness. The adopted austerity programme means mass privatisation, the closure of firms deemed unprofitable, tax reform, price rises of up to 100% and a semi-freeze on salaries. These may well provoke mass social revolt. When first mooted Türk-is, the main trade union federation, threatened to call a general strike.

How long this brutal regime can hold out depends a great deal on how much longer the west is prepared to keep pouring in the weaponry of repression.

WORLD OUTLOOK

New campaigns against racist detention centres Campsfield campaigners step up the fight

By Harry Sloan

TWO NEW campaigns against the Tory government's imprisonment of asylum-seeking refugees have been set up to run alongside the fight for closure of the Campsfield House immigration prison, near Oxford.

In Portsmouth, the Haslar Immigration Centre Campaign has been launched, with sponsorship from the local Trades Council. It is planning a public meeting for December 8.

And in Hull, the Trades Council has also played a central role in the establishment of the new Asylum Seekers Support Group, which will cover prisons in Hull, Lincoln and The Wolds.

The Campsfield campaign itself is planning to step up and reach out for support, with a Day School and a March to London to deliver the petition for the closure of the centre and an end to the detention of refugees.

These follow two recent local demonstrations, the September 30 'Sing Down Campsfield' event and a joint October 29 protest against Campsfield and the Criminal Justice Bill.

The Day School, to be held in



Harmondsworth Detention Centre will be visited by Campsfield marchers

Oxford on Sunday November 13, will feature Steve Cohen of the Greater Manchester Immigration Aid Unit, who has just published a pamphlet opposing immigration controls, and Charles Kukwikila of the Zairean refugees Association, COREZAG.

The first anniversary of the opening of Campsfield will be marked by a November 26 '1 year too long' demonstration.

And four days later, marchers will set out from Oxford to Lon-

don, holding meetings and socials on the way.

On Saturday December 3, this will include a noon demonstration outside the Harmondsworth Immigration Detention Centre in West London, and an evening social hosted by the Southall Monitoring Group at the Dominion Centre, Green Road.

On Sunday December 4, there will be an 11am march with floats and drummers from Putney Bridge along the King's

Road to a 1pm rally in Whitehall.

■ Portsmouth campaign, contact Chris Richards, 0705-698435.

■ Hull campaign, ring Guy Chaverton, 0408-898775.

■ Campsfield Campaign, ring 0865-724452, 726804, 722357.

■ Day School: November 13, 10am-5pm, at East Oxford Community Centre, Princes St, off Cowley Rd.

Britain tops EC list of shame

DEPORTATIONS from Britain are running 'out of control', warns the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants.

This year's figure is set to reach a record 6,000, far higher than other European countries.

The harassment of immigrants is also producing a growing toll of misery and deaths.

Last year Joy Gardner was killed while being forcibly detained, and more recently another victim fell from a window in north London.

Nigerian

On October 24 Joseph Nnalure, thought to be a Nigerian, also fell from a third floor window, while Home Office investigators visited his home in Clapham. He leaves a pregnant wife and two children.

The Home Office said they were following up a tip-off.

Chillingly, in the aftermath of Joseph's tragic death, they went on to claim that

"Immigration staff only visit a private address after careful planning and research."

FIGHTING RACISM

Brownshirts of the 1990s

Paul Clarke Reviews Channel 4's October 27 *Dispatches* on the BNP and Combat 18.

THE DAY Channel 4's programme on the neo-Nazi terror group Combat 18 went out, a 17-year old East End white thug, Nicky Fuller, was released after six months in jail for his part in a horrific attack on an 18-year old Bangladeshi.

Student Mukhta Ahmed was one of five Bangladeshis chased through Bethnal Green. Cornered alone in a dead-end, his face was kicked to a pulp.

So severe were his injuries that his scalp became detached from his skull.

Disorder

Fuller was bizarrely convicted only of violent disorder, carrying a maximum sentence of only 12 months.

Only one other member of the white gang has been found. Mukhta Ahmed will bear horrific scars for the rest of his life. Others have died in



The scum always floats to the top ...

the mounting tide of racist violence since the beginning of the 1980s.

But as *Dispatches* showed the attitude of the Home Office towards the organisers and inspirers of much of this violence, the British National Party and their Brownshirt flankguards Combat 18, is one of studied inaction.

Dispatches concentrated on exposing the lie that Combat 18 has been "proscribed" by BNP leader John Tyndall, showing film evidence that Combat 18 activists act as personal security guards for Tyndall himself.

Whatever the relations between C18 and the BNP, the BNP itself organises and inspires street violence. Deputy

fuhrer Richard Edmonds and former Millwall councillor Derek Beackon - an old Nazi who started his career with Moseley - are just two of the most prominent with recent convictions for violence.

Relations between Combat 18 and the BNP leadership have been strained over the last two years, but not because the BNP disowns racist violence and terror against left-wingers.

Attacks

Combat 18 leader Charlie "Ginger Pig" Sargeant ordered a series of attacks against BNP leaders thought to have "grassed up" C18 activists under police questioning.

Those attacked by C18 included Tony Lecomber, famed "mad bomber" of the BNP, done in the 1980s for trying to blow up the Workers Revolutionary Party in Clapham.

Lecomber has other convictions for violence, but all this is par for the course in the Nazi underworld; sterling service against the blacks and reds doesn't save you from your comrades!

The BNP recently took the initiative to smooth over the differences in the "nationalist movement".

Combat 18 however is a particular problem because of its targeting of victims and attacks on homes. This has led to people having to abandon their jobs and even move towns.

Yorkshire

Their terror is particularly widespread in Yorkshire. Combat 18 also plays a very special role for the fascists in organising football hooligans, and in the Blood and Honour Nazi rock movement.

The key group of football thugs which acts as C18's organising centre is the "Chelsea Headhunters".

Dispatches revealed the

frightening extent of the Nazi network among the football gangs; people who beat the hell out of one another on a winter Saturday, but unite against Troops Out marches and foreign fans.

Arms deals

Another aspect of the BNP's dark underworld exposed by the programme is the activity of a sinister character called Eddie Whicker - well known to anti-fascist activists - in supplying arms to Loyalist paramilitaries. Whicker hardly bothers to deny it, but of course has never been prosecuted.

Those with an experience in anti-fascist campaigning will not have been surprised by any of the programmes revelations. Fascist violence, and C18 in particular, are no longer a marginal problem which the left can ignore.

Terror tactics against the left, although deeply frightening for the victims, are small in scale compared with racist violence.

Self-defence of the black communities, actively supported by the wider labour movement, must be matched by concerted efforts to deal with the C18 thugs.

What's HAPPENING

NOVEMBER

Fri 4

Build the Peace In Ireland! public meeting 7.30pm Camden Irish Centre, 52 Camden Square NW1 with Tony Benn MP, Liz Curtis, Gerry O'Hara and Margaret Caraher £1/£2.

Sun 9

Women, Equality and Community Jewish Socialists' Group national dayschool 10am - 5pm Caxton House 129 St John's Way Archway London N19 Tickets £10/£7 from JSG BM 3725, London, WC1N 3XX.

Sat 12

INTERNATIONAL Day Of Protest to remember 1991 Santa Cruz massacre in Indonesia 12 noon to 1 pm Indonesian Embassy Grosvenor Square W1 details CAAT 0171 281 0297

SEMINAR - The life and resistance of Kurdish women 1pm - 5pm SOAS Thornhaugh Street WC1H details 0181 347 6095 or 0171 586 5892

LIBERATION! student supporters meeting 10am - 1pm central London

Sunday 13

Conference against racist immigration controls Called by Close Down Campsfield Campaign. 9.30am - 4.15pm East Oxford Community Centre. (0865) 724452.

LIBERATION! committee meeting 11am - 5pm London

Saturday 19

BIRMINGHAM Community Conference in defence of public sector jobs and services. 10.30-4.30 The Union Club, 723 Pershore Rd, Selly Park. Details 021-451-2555

Sat 26

Ireland: the politics of peace Troops Out Movement conference with Micheal MacDonnacha, editor *An Phoblacht*, Mary Nellis, Sinn Fein, and Louise Purbrick, Troops Out Movement. 10am-5.30pm ULU Malet Street WC1 £12/£6

Noon demonstration at CAMPSFIELD details 0865 726804

MANCHESTER Martyrs rally Longsight Library Manchester 2pm

Sun 27

After the Irish Ceasefire What Next? with Mary Nellis, Sinn Fein councillor, Halkevi Community Centre 92-100 Stoke Newington Road, London N16

Tues 29

Welfare State Network LOBBY OF PARLIAMENT meet 1.30pm by lobby gate MARCH to London, to mark one year of Campsfield immigration prison, starts in Oxford.

DECEMBER

Tuesday 1

MARCH to London, to mark one year of Campsfield immigration prison, starts in Oxford.

Wednesday 2

MARCH to London, to mark one year of Campsfield immigration prison, in Slough.

Thursday 3

MARCH to London, to mark one year of Campsfield immigration prison, arrives at Harmondsworth Immigration Detention Centre and Southall.

Friday 4

MARCH to London, to mark one year of Campsfield immigration prison, arrives at Westminster.

Sat 10

LIBERATION! committee 11am - 5pm Birmingham

Sun 11

LIBERATION! meeting 11am - 5pm Birmingham

ADVERTS

LIBERATION! - the winter 1994 special anti-racist issue of the new revolutionary and internationalist youth newspaper is available, for two first class stamps, from Liberation!, PO Box 1109, London N4 2UU.

SOUTH AFRICA - which road to freedom? book by

Neville Alexander. Send £7.95 cheque payable to 'Liberation Publishing Association' to PO Box 1109, London N4 2UU.

FOLK music cassette by songwriter Pauline Bradley. Send £5 cheque payable to 'Bob Smith Memorial Fund' to PO Box 1109, London N4 2UU.

HEAR Ernest Mandel speak! tape available - Mandel on fascism - send £6.00 cheque/PO payable to 'Bob Smith Memorial Fund' to PO Box 1109, London N4 2UU. Coming soon - 'Malcolm X speaks', 'Mandel on the Popular Front'.

Sylvia Bolgar

Sylvia Bolgar, an NUT activist and for many years Secretary of Camden Trades Council, has died aged 70.

After a lifetime of commitment to the workers' movement, which included her prominent role in the local Miners Support Group in 1984-5 and the Camden Stop the Poll Tax campaign, she will be greatly missed.

Donations are invited to the Sylvia Bolgar Fighting Fund, c/o Camden TUSU, 213 Eversholt St, London NW1.



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.

If 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 un-

ion 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 pension-

ers, 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.

Sectarianism

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!

- Please tell me more about *Socialist Outlook*
- Yes, I want to become a *Socialist Outlook* supporter

Name

Address

Phone

Age

Send to *Socialist Outlook*, PO Box 1109, London N4 2UU

SOCIALIST OUTLOOK

Socialist OUTLOOK

November 9: Students fight back

By Simon Deville

THE DEMONSTRATION called by NUS for Wednesday 9 November could mark an important step forward for student activists.

It should be built upon in every college — not just as an end in itself but as a means to building a mass democratic campaign against student poverty involving wide layers of students.

Last year the National Union of Students organised its first national demonstration against cuts in grants and student poverty for years. This was a result of growing pressure from within colleges.

The student left had managed to organise a demonstration of 10,000 students despite opposition from the National Union — members of the National Executive even phoned and faxed student unions to persuade them not to take part.

The union leadership has been following a "don't rock the boat" policy, in the naive assumption that demobilising student militancy and concentrating on taking Tory MPs out for dinner will convince the government not to cut grants or attack student unions.

The complete failure of this policy has become blatantly obvious with the 30 per cent cut in grants, further cuts in resourcing and increased pressure for larger intakes of students.

If NUS is to really fight for the interests of students a complete break is needed from the



10,000 students joined unofficial demonstration in February

strategy of backroom deals with right wing MPs.

This can only come about through active campaigning within colleges.

Activist groups must be built, together with local mobilisations and occupations wherever possible, linking up with

struggles in other colleges.

It is not just education that is under attack at present but many other welfare rights and provisions. The government is attempting to resolve the crisis by rolling back all the gains made through working class struggles this century.

Manchester United!

By Steve Hall

THE FIRST STEP towards a new regional liaison committee uniting trade union, labour and campaign activists was taken last month in Manchester.

The Build the Fightback Conference brought together over 60 leading activists from nine trades councils, North West NATFHE, the Socialist Campaign Group Supporters' Network and organisations as diverse as *Big Issue*, NACSA, Lancashire WAPC the NW Travellers Association, Manchester Freedom Network, the M65 campaign, Liberty and the Shut Sellafield campaign.

It called for greater unity and mutual solidarity at all levels in the fight against the Tories and the bosses.

A liaison committee was set up with one representative from each supporting organisation to unite all the various groups into a common front against the Criminal Justice Act. This law will restrict everyone's ability to fight including trade unionists, who have so far done little to oppose this legislation.

Such a broad based committee will also draw in others into action.

A law is only a law if it is enforceable. Organised defiance will make a complete mockery of the Tory offensive.

The conference also proposed:

- An agreement to pursue unity at a local level on the basis of the experience of the North West Miners Support groups.

- Support for those on the left in the Labour Party and the Trades Unions who are fighting to defend Clause Four.

- A campaign around homelessness, open-cast mining and against the privatisation of the Post Office, rail, coal and civil service.

- Support for *Trade Union News* with unions and Trades Councils

- To build for the Right To Strike Conference in Birmingham. To campaign for full employment by amongst other things a shorter working week, an overtime ban, early retirement and decent pensions.

The first meeting of the North West Liaison Committee is at 1.00pm on Sunday 13 November at the Bolton Socialist Club.