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Socialist OUTLOOK

Defend Clause IV
poster inside

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Issue 75 ● 50p ● January 7, 1995 ● 30BF ● 5FF ● \$1 ● 2DM ● 1500 lire ● f1

Let's scrap the lot!

Private schools



Private medicine



Privatisation

Kick out the Tories!



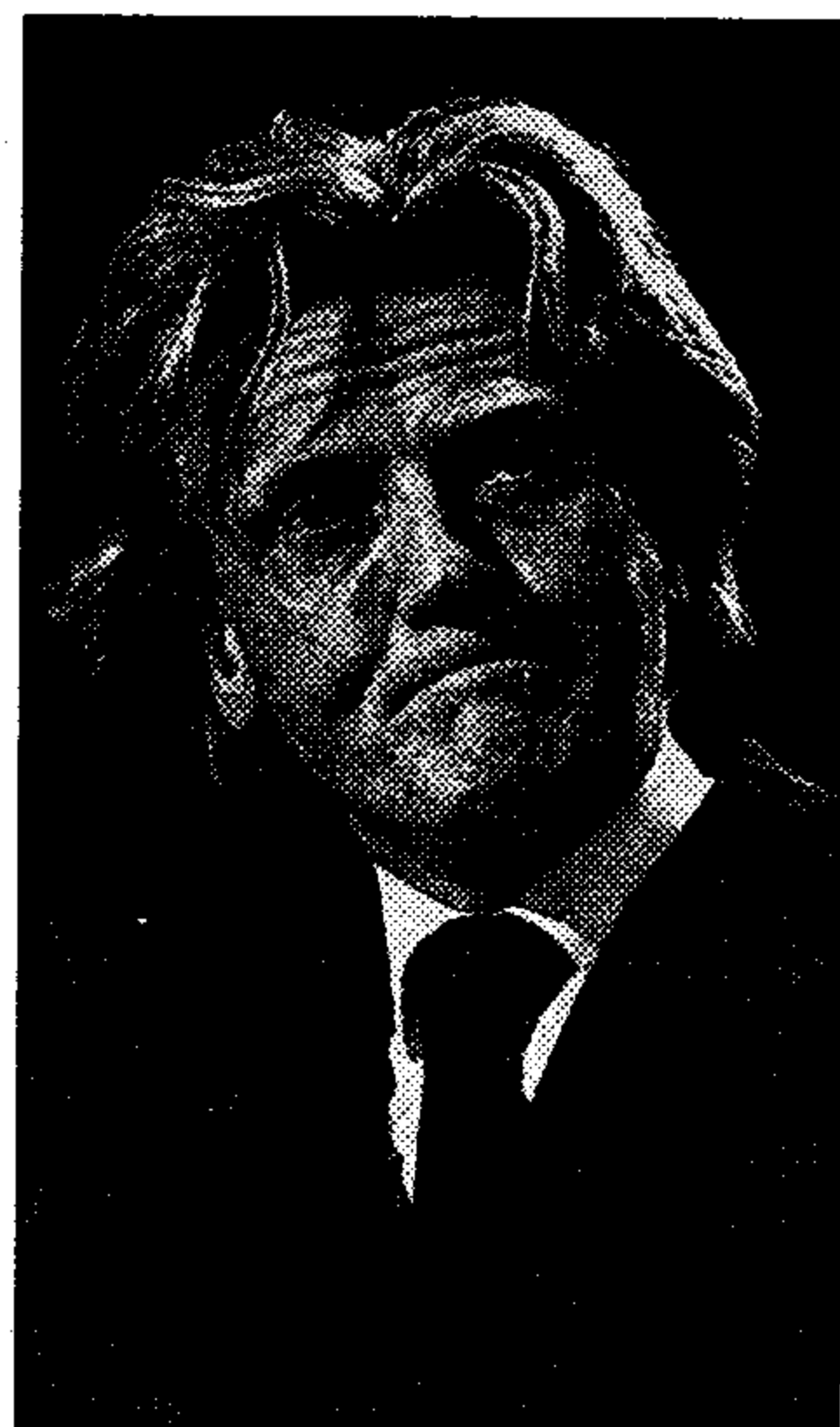
CHRISTMAS DAY VIGIL: December 25 saw a vigil outside the notorious West Midlands police headquarters in Birmingham in support of the Bridgewater Four, and other innocent prisoners. Among the protestors was Anne Whelan (centre), mother of Michael Hickey, one of the Bridgewater Four.

Oxfordshire unions link up to fight council cuts

CUTS of almost £12m in Oxfordshire's education budget – over £100 per pupil – are being fought by the Labour Party in alliance with teaching and public sector unions.

The cuts arise from the Tory government's hefty cuts in the standard spending assessment of Oxfordshire County Council, leaving a £25m gap.

In addition to the threat to education, with the prospect of further increases in class sizes and the sacking of up to five teachers from some larger schools, social services face damaging cuts in domiciliary care, and the fire service and libraries are also under the axe.



Oxfordshire MP Heseltine

The County Council admits that numbers of school pu-

pils, and numbers of frail elderly requiring community care are increasing, meaning that more rather than less cash is required. But he points out that it had to spend most of its reserves to avoid cuts in 1994, and faces cuts from central government.

School governors across the county are threatening to resign rather than implement the new cuts, which amount to 7.5% of the current budget. Some of them joined a 100-strong lobby of the County Council before Christmas.

The council's Labour group has linked up with teaching and public service unions to mount a campaign against the cuts, launching with a January 4 public meeting.

Fight the school test sell-out!

By Gill Lee

THE NEWS that the National Union of Teachers intends to ballot its members again, recommending them to cooperate with the Tory SATs tests will anger teachers throughout the country.

The boycott of SATs put national action back on to the union's agenda, in response to the Tory strategy of breaking up national resistance by the abolition of national pay bargaining, introduction of Local Management of Schools, opt-outs, and the City Technology Colleges.

The NUT leadership has refused to meet most demands for national, or even regional co-ordinated action. But the boycott of SATs stood in their way, allowing primary and secondary school teachers to unite in concerted action against tests.

The wording of the ballot is not yet known, but it seems likely that the NUT Executive may have difficulty getting the result it wants. The Socialist Teachers Alliance has already begun a vigorous campaign against the sell-out, although the short timescale for the ballot will make campaigning difficult.

NUT policy, unanimously agreed by Conference, is complete opposition to SATs and to League Tables.

Over 90% of NUT members who responded to the union's recent survey disagreed with the Tory claim that the government has now met teachers' central concerns over testing and assessment.

Only about 20% of secondary schools and 48% of primary schools, where members are relatively isolated and open to pressure, returned SATs results last year. This shows that in practice opposition to SATs is wider than the NUT's own membership.

THE NUT Executive is justifying its about-turn by quoting Gillian Shephard's offer of 'consultation' and an assurance that 'the purpose of test results at KS2 was not ... the selection of pupils for admission to secondary schools'

But the NEC's capitulation has more to do with the policies of Blair's 'new' Labour Party than any concessions the Tories are likely to make.

Right wing pressure within the NEC has been reinforced by David Blunkett's recent statements supporting the publication of national test results, making it clear that an incoming Labour government will not willingly abolish SATs.

But the SATs represent a return to the 11-plus. They are a wholesale attack on comprehensive education. They must be vigorously opposed – and scrapped.

Gains for Lewisham NUT strikers

UNOFFICIAL strike action has won concessions from Lewisham Labour Council in the fight against education cuts.

NUT members at two secondary schools defied the Tory trade union laws in protest against redundancy letters due to be sent before Christmas. Nearly 140 Section 11 teachers who work with bilingual pupils had been targeted.

Lewisham NUT has been campaigning against the redundancies and for Lewisham to ask for £1.4 million to cover the full cost of its current section 11 project with central government.

Lewisham's first bid was rejected and its second attempt was so low as to threaten the loss of at least 40 jobs – thousands of bilingual secondary pupils would have been left

with no support at all.

The council's "dented shield" policy has been decisively rejected. Lewisham has been forced to ask the government for the full amount needed to maintain the current level of service. Their commitment to equal opportunities will continue to be tested by this crisis.

The action was spurred in part by Lewisham's shabby employment tactics.

Teachers know that the real battle is only just beginning.

The response of those who took unofficial action shows what can the NUT can achieve with a vigorous campaign of co-ordinated strike action.

Instead of sell outs – like over the SATs – the leadership of the NUT should be launching an offensive against a deeply divided and crumbling Tory government.

HOME NEWS

A NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
AGAINST
RACISM

Saturday 4th February 1995 10am-5pm
York Hall, Old Ford Road, London, E2 (Bethnal Green tube)

Plenaries and workshops

Speakers include: John Monks, general secretary TUC; Diane Abbott MP; Joan Lester MP; Piara Khabra MP; Joan Ruddock MP; Jim Murphy, president NUS; Leela Ramdeen, Cardinal Hume's Committee for the Caribbean; Harry Cohen MP; Kashmir Singh, British Sikh Federation; Society of Black Lawyers; National Black Caucus; Indian Workers' Association (GB); Ken Livingstone MP; Kumar Murshid, Tower Hamlets Anti-Racist Committee

No new year resolution to Tory crisis

LASHING out viciously like a wounded predator, John Major's crisis-ridden Tory government is beginning the new year in the way it ended the old: piling on the agony for millions of the poorest and most vulnerable people.

Undeterred by a stream of sleaze scandals, and a succession of humiliating defeats in the courts in which ministers including Douglas Hurd and Michael Howard have been shown to have acted unlawfully and incompetently, the cabinet clings shamelessly on to the reins of power.

Brushing aside the appalling evidence of their unpopularity in the Dudley West by-election – the worst such defeat at the hands of Labour for 60 years – and even *Daily Telegraph* opinion polls suggesting up to 60% would vote Labour, they are hatching new schemes to rob the poor and benefit the rich.

Smarting from the parliamentary defeats they have suffered at the hands of their own back-benchers on Post Office privatisation and on VAT on heating fuel, Major's team is taking revenge by pushing through Rail privatisation, tax increases and the most sweeping attacks yet mounted on the welfare state.

Ignoring the pundits who now almost universally predict his demise as leader in 1995, Major himself has decided to make an electoral issue out of 'patriotism' – described by Dr Johnson as the last refuge of the scoundrel – and opposition to any form of democratic assembly in Scotland or Wales.

Chauvinism

This reactionary line will appeal to some layers of English chauvinists in the Tory heartlands, and dovetail neatly with the overtly racist policies of Major's government: but such rabid defence of the integrity and sanctity of the British 'Union' sits oddly with the Tory government's embarrassing impotence to decide and uphold its own policies within the post-Maastricht European Union, as shown by recent decisions on fishing rights, and rights of part time workers.

Major's strength for the time being is precisely the depth of the divisions within his own party. The varying factions that want to see him removed hate each other almost more than they now hate Major. Though the terms 'left' and right seem bizarre in the context of the Tory party, there are rival camps which are most easily described as 'centre left' and right wing.

Each side has scored significant victories which underline their potential to disrupt the government: the centre-left killed off Post Office privatisation and VAT on fuel, while the right wing Euro-sceptics went further and defied a vote of confidence; nine of them have been punished by exclusion from the parliamentary whip.

The two wings of Tory opposition are themselves at loggerheads. Many of the



Major: from despair to oblivion?

Euro-sceptics are Thatcherites who angrily denounce Major and Heseltine for retreating on Post Office privatisation, support VAT on fuel, and favour hefty spending cuts to pay for more tax reductions. The centre left includes Euro-enthusiasts, and their leading figures are the most pro-European ministers.

Major is therefore still able to play one group off against the other.

Tory MPs campaigning to force a leadership election in November failed by only three votes to get the necessary number of signatures. But the reason these names were missing was because supporters knew their favourite potential candidates were not yet ready to step into the open.

The 'centre left' backs Kenneth Clarke or Michael Heseltine: but both were freshly tarnished with recent fiascos. Clarke is the architect of the VAT disaster, while Heseltine steered the ship of Post Office privatisation onto the rocks.

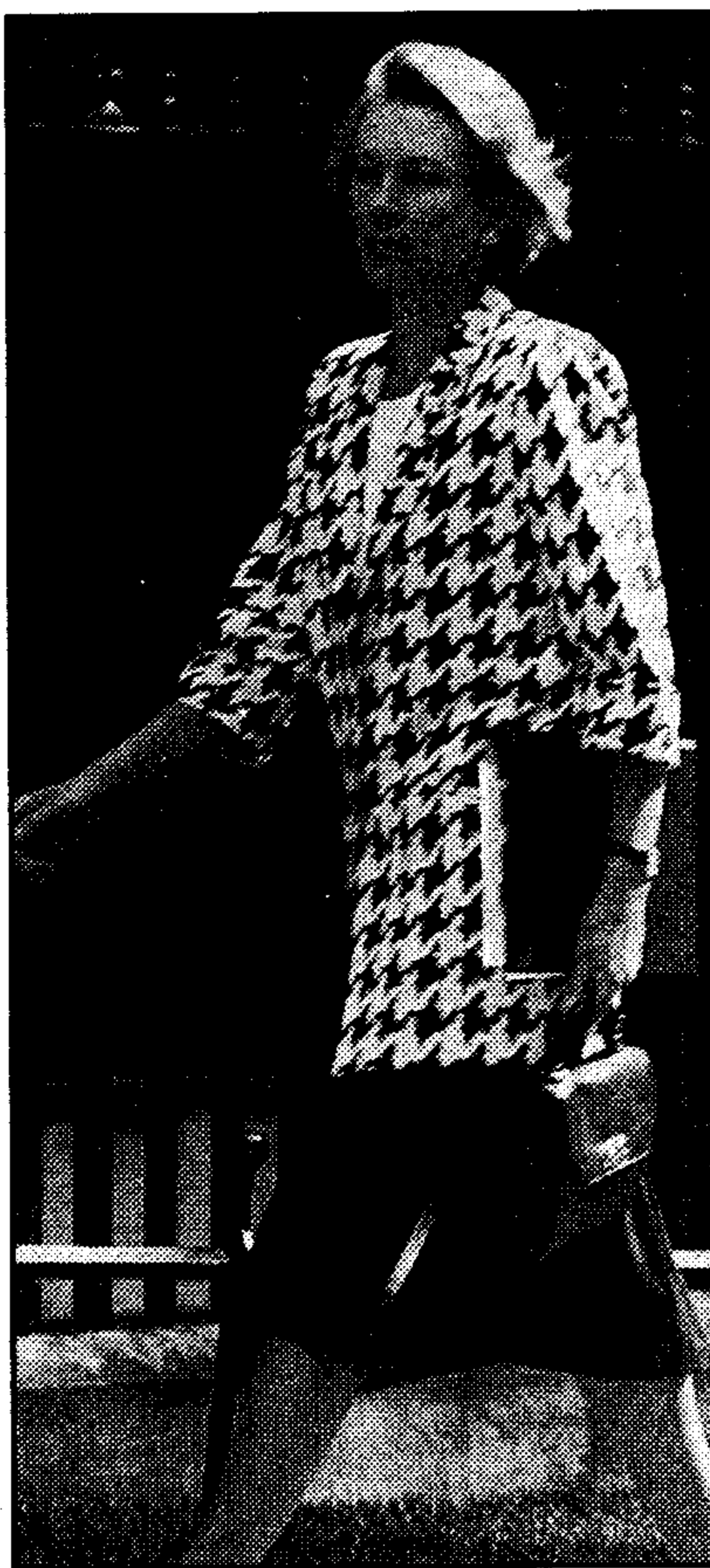
The Thatcherite right's man in waiting is Michael Portillo, but he is more popular among party hardliners than among the general public, and there is no reason to believe that amid such widespread popular rejection of Tory policies Portillo would deliver any more votes than Major.

Straddling

The contest was postponed: but the crisis continues. Major awkwardly straddles the pro and anti European factions, while targeting hefty cuts in welfare spending with the hopes that tax cuts will again buy enough votes for a majority at the next election.

And on many of these cuts, he knows he can count on support right across the Tory back benches. 1995 will be a year of frontal assault on the welfare state.

● Around 250,000 unemployed men and women will face cuts or outright loss of benefits under Kenneth Clarke's new Jobseekers Allowance, which will replace unemployment benefit. Thousands



Bottomley: walking liability

more are being denied benefits every week under a crackdown by Portillo's Department of Employment and Peter Lilley's Social Security department.

● Over a million claimants currently receiving invalidity benefits will be subjected to compulsory medical checks, face a complex questionnaire and ruthless new criteria designed to strip tens of thousands of their entitlements under the new Incapacity Allowance.

● With over 400,000 people now homeless in Britain, at least 50 projects for homeless people will have government cash cut off, with many more facing a 50% cut. Clarke's Budget cuts will slash housing association house-building

The welfare state is a crucial battle ground; and welfare rights offer winnable issues to rally mass opposition to the Tories.

by 40%. And with 1,000 families a week having lost their houses through repossession in 1994, the Budget changes will strip mortgage payers who lose their jobs of state support to cover interest payments for the first nine months of unemployment.

● Local councils all over the country are running out of cash to fund community care for the frail elderly, and this will get worse as each year thousands more patients are added to the queue for care. Meanwhile pensioners are already being forced to spend their life savings and sell their homes to pay for their own care in private nursing homes in one of the most cynical of the Tory privatisation schemes.

● Government-imposed cuts on council budgets are again savaging education services, with thousands of teaching jobs at risk. Students face a further squeeze on poverty-line grants.

● Health authorities are still forcing the pace with plans for hospital closures and the threatened cost-cutting massacre of the Blood Transfusion Service.

These cuts will all hurt, and hit hardest at those least able to fight back. They are all immensely unpopular. But in a sense they can all be seen as aimed at soft targets: Tony Blair's Labour Party, preoccupied with courting the prosperous middle class with endless pledges not to increase taxes or public spending, has shown no interest in fighting on any of these issues.

No answers

There has been no Labour campaign in defence of benefits; no Labour policy to tackle homelessness; Labour shamefully supported the Tory community care reforms and has done nothing to campaign on the issue; the Party's education policies are in total confusion, reeling from the double blow of the arrival of the disastrous David Blunkett and the notorious decision of Tony Blair to endorse opt-out schools; and the Party has been tongue-tied on the NHS since Margaret Beckett took over in the autumn.

Yet the last 12 months have shown that campaigning can force some retreats.

It was not Labour's leadership but the valiant campaigning by pensioners groups across the country which kept the VAT issue alive and eventually forced a Tory defeat.

And strident public campaigns against hospital cuts have notched up important victories in Bristol, in Surrey and most recently in London, with a retreat over the closure of the casualty unit at Central Middlesex Hospital.

Now a new government policy document on the workings of the NHS 'internal market' has been drafted to include 'get-out' clauses allowing ministers to over-ride market criteria and block closures of 'popular' hospitals.

The welfare state is a crucial battle ground; and welfare rights offer winnable issues to rally mass opposition to the Tories.

Rather than wait for the Tories to collapse of their own accord, campaigns must be built which exploit the obvious divisions and unpopularity of the ruling party, and which mobilise and organise the working class.

That offers a useful new year's resolution for every socialist.

EDITORIAL



Tories offer no hope for young homeless

Rising tide of young homeless

By Terry Smith

AS THE traditional Christmas flurry of concern for the homeless fades again into a new year, more young people than ever are being forced onto the streets in the social crisis of John Major's Tory Britain.

In 1988 the Tories acted to stop benefit payments to 16 and 17 year-olds, at a stroke forcing hundreds deeper into poverty and homelessness. Benefits for 18-24 year olds were also cut, and will be cut again by the Job-seekers Allowance in 1995.

The result is that once they fall into the homeless trap, there is little way back out. Housing charities are now demanding that benefits be restored to jobless youth, alongside an increase in affordable rented accommodation, supported hostel places and other measures to care for those sleeping rough.

A survey of 1,500 homeless young people by the housing charity Centrepoint published

last month showed that a massive 42% were aged 17 or younger. Nearly half were black or from ethnic minorities.

Two out of every five were women, with nearly half of them in the younger 16-17 age group, compared to a third of the men.

The vast majority had been forced to leave home. 30% had been told to go, 27% left because of family arguments, and eight percent left because of physical or sexual violence.

London

Unlike the pattern in the 1980s, when many young homeless people gravitated to London from other parts of the country, Centrepoint now finds an increasing proportion are from the South East.

Yet two thirds of the youngsters had gained some educational qualifications, and most said they were looking for work.

There is no doubt that the rising tide of misery on the streets is linked to growing unemployment, overcrowding and the social pressures of a society divided by Tory policies.

Build demo to defend welfare state

Put some concrete in the rhetoric!

STEVE FRENCH reports on the December 3 conference of the Campaign to Defend the Welfare State (CDWS)

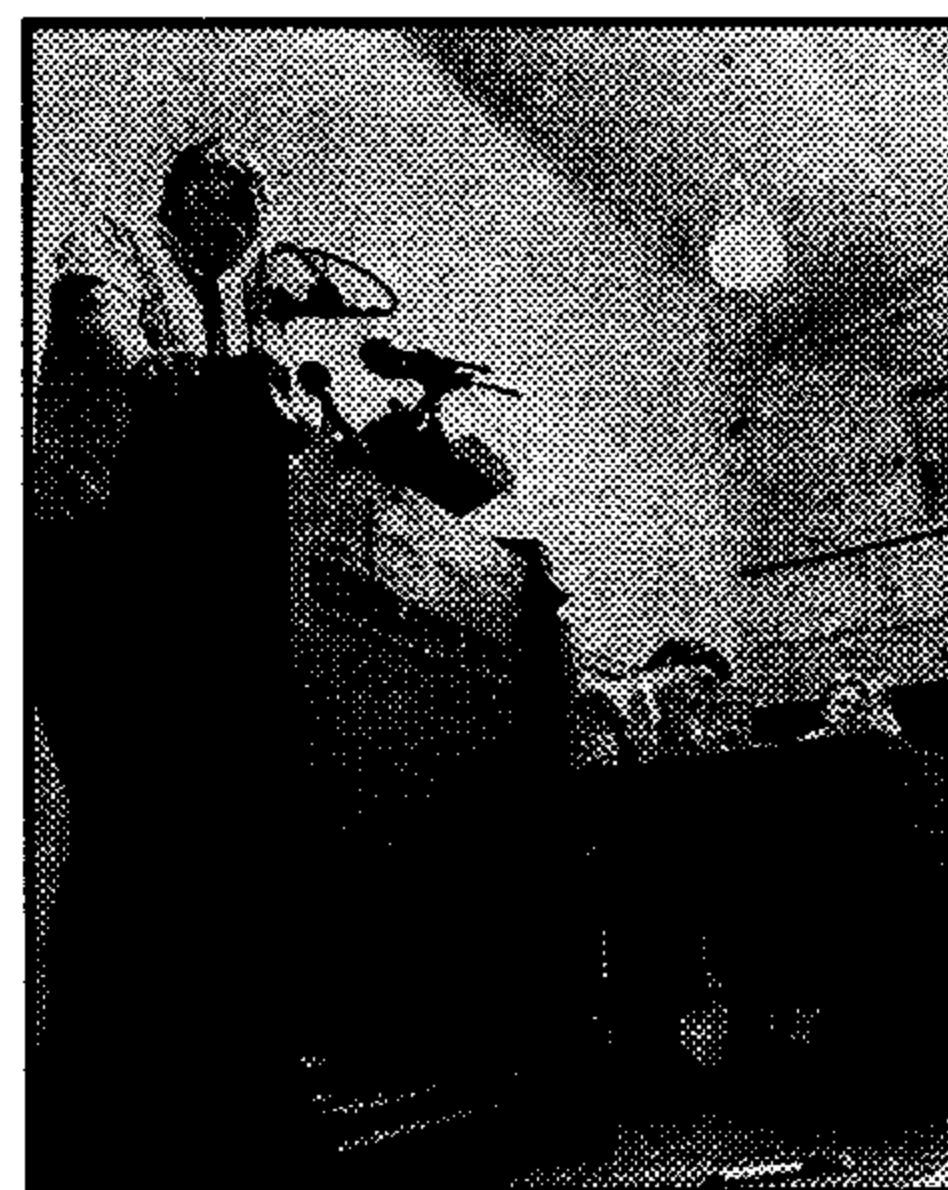
The CDWS Conference lacked any campaigning edge, though it showed its ability to attract important forces from the labour movement.

Over 200 attended, and platform speakers gave a thorough statistical analysis of the Tory offensive; but unfortunately no debate was allowed in the plenary sessions, and no speakers were called from the floor.

GMB union leader John Edmonds welcomed Labour's rediscovered call for full employment, and argued that 'concrete needs to be mixed in with the rhetoric.'

He advocated a major programme of public works, though neither he nor other platform speakers explained how this could take place without thwarting the Blair leadership's attempt to dump Clause Four, and the Gordon Brown's firm rejection of any commitment to increased public spending.

Morning Star editor Tony Chater called for 'action' to defend the welfare state, but was



John Edmonds

not specific. Former CP General Secretary Gordon MacLennan went further, and called for strike action to defend the welfare state.

Of course this raises wider issues. A week earlier at the 'Right to Strike' conference, Fire Brigades Union leader Ken Cameron had talked of the 'need to strike to defend essential public services'.

Campaigning

Strikes are needed: but they can best be prepared as the product of a big, active campaign in the labour movement.

Socialist Outlook supporters won support in one of the workshops for calling a national demonstration this spring in de-

fence of the welfare state.

Closing the conference, Ken Livingstone said that this proposal would be discussed by the officers and taken up with trade union leaders.

No new officers were elected, and this was less than a full-blooded campaign commitment. However it does offer an opportunity to press the CDWS to campaign actively rather than remain a talking shop.

Informally, conference organisers accepted the need to move the CDWS up a few gears. We must try to ensure this happens.

Activists should propose their organisations affiliate to CDWS, and declare support for a national demonstration.

Such initiatives can run alongside building the conferences and campaign work of the activist-based Welfare State Network, whose highly successful lobby of Parliament is to be followed by a programme of activities in 1995.

Leaders like Edmonds must be pressed to put some concrete into their own rhetoric. We need to see them at the rostrum of this year's Labour Conference moving resolutions to commit a Labour government to a major increase in public spending and common ownership.

New Left launched in UNISON

Fred Leplat
UNISON, Islington A
branch

UNISON has a new left.

Launched on December 3 in Leeds the first conference of the Campaign for Fighting and Democratic Unison (CFDU) was attended by 100 delegates and 30 observers from 60 branches. Five NEC members were also present.

Its friendly and cooperative spirit indicates that there is a large degree of agreement on the threats ahead and upon the response necessary.

The union is still only merged at national and regional level. Very few branches have merged. Members do not understand why.

Division

The continued division is allowing employers to push ahead with their attacks. The CFDU will argue for joint campaigns of branches and joint work in disputes in order to hasten the merger.

Behind the back of the NEC and Regional Committees "Senior Management Teams" are making all the decisions to reduce the deficit. A third of UNISON's staff are losing their jobs. Most of those who are

leaving are administrative staff - those who directly support the work of ex-NALGO branches.

Combined with the attack on facility time by employers and the centralisation of the control of resources of UNISON, the union bureaucracy is tightening its grip on branches and eroding union democracy by every means.

Nevertheless the left is in a good position to make a challenge and get a wide audience for its ideas. The elections to the National Local Government Service Group Executive showed that where the left stood it could be successful.

Now the CFDU has united everyone to the left of the Morning Star. The exception is the SWP, who do not support the CFDU and continue to organise in the union through "Fight-back", a front which it controls.

The Tories are deeply unpopular.

This gives us an excellent basis on which to rebuild the confidence of public sector workers to take action against these attacks. The CFDU must argue for UNISON to organise a fight-back now.

HOME NEWS

Action

for health & welfare

Newspaper defending the Welfare State

Bundles of 25 £6 (unions)/ £4 (pensioners) Individual subs £5/£3.

Union and LP affiliations £25, pensioners & unemployed £10

Write to WSN, c/o Southwark TUSU, 42 Braganza St London SE17

Welfare State Network Working Conference

□ Job Seekers Allowance □ Incapacity Benefit □ Benefits for Youth and Students □ Workshops and discussion

SATURDAY
February 18
University of London
Union
Malet St London

Speakers include: ● TONY BENN MP ● ALAN SIMPSON MP ● JILL MOUNTFORD (Welfare State Network) ● SARAH WELLINGS (NUS) ● KEVIN SEXTON (NUS) ● JOHN LISTER (London Health Emergency)

Credentials/details ring 071-639-5068

How the left should respond

MODEL RESPONSES to questionnaire which party members will be getting in January have been prepared by the Defend Clause IV Campaign. We re-print a selection of them here. For a full copy, contact the Defend Clause IV Campaign Tel: 071 274 8982.

Organise to save Clause Four

By David Thomas

APRIL 29 1995. That is day labour movement activists must focus on after they wake up bleary eyed after their New Year's Eve parties.

Last month's Labour Party NEC decided by 20 votes to 3 to organise a special conference on that date, to overturn 1994 conference policy and steamroller the leadership's proposals for a rewrite of Clause IV through the movement.

A rigged questionnaire will be circulated to party members in January with questions framed in such a way as to make it difficult for people to indicate their support for common ownership. At the NEC Dennis Skinner proposed that members be allowed to indicate whether they wanted to retain the Clause. This was defeated.

The April conference is clearly designed to exclude democratic discussion as most trade unions have their conferences in the summer. The reason is clear. Blair is worried that any such discussion would lead to a victory for those of us who want to retain Clause IV.

All the evidence points to a groundswell of support for the Defend Clause IV Campaign. A sample survey of CLP's shows that 59 out of the 61 surveyed have already voted to defend Clause IV. Peckham, Dunfermline East and Blackburn CLPs are among those who are in fa-

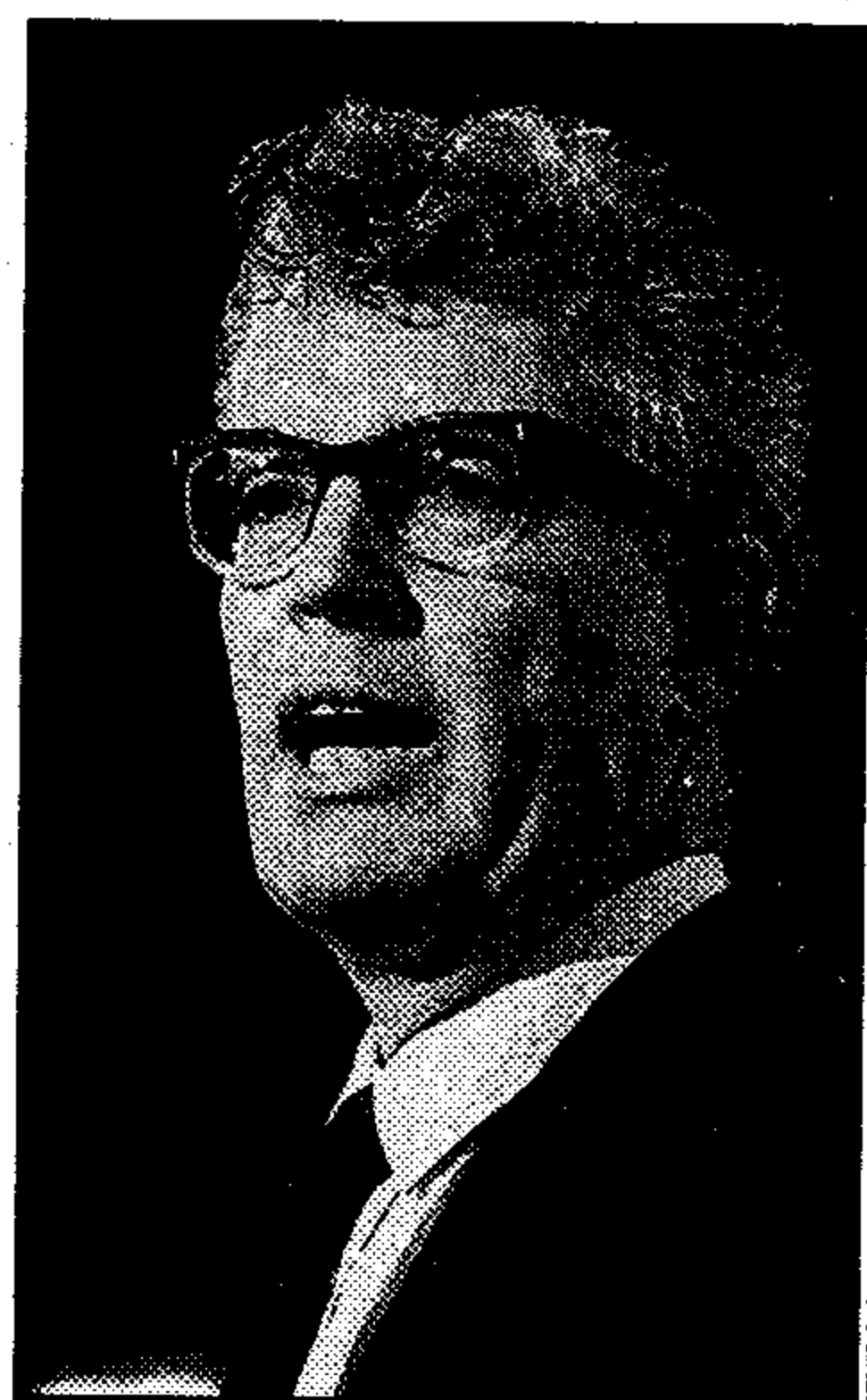
vour of retention to the considerable embarrassment of their MPs - Harriet Harman, Gordon Brown and Jack Straw.

Support

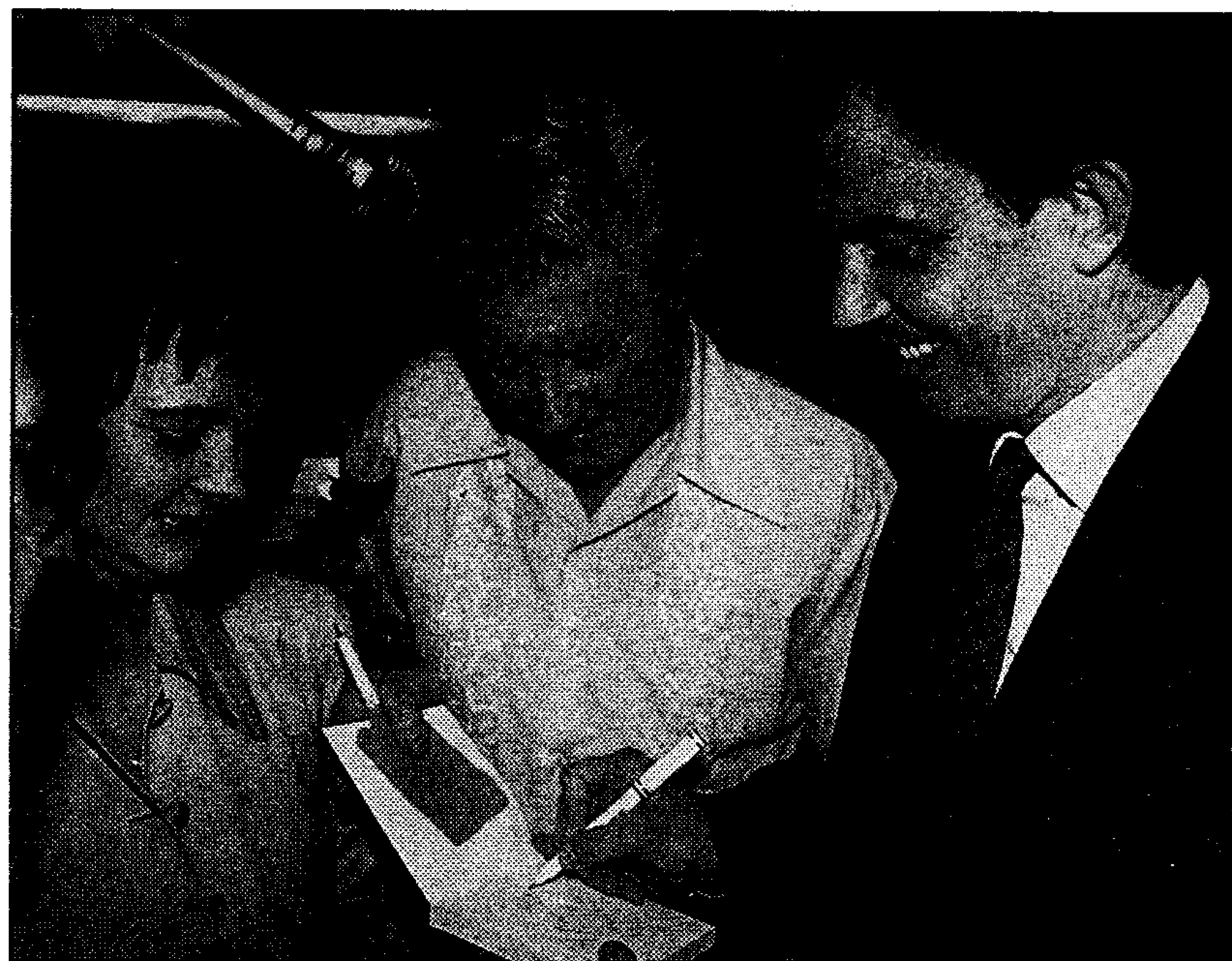
The majority of Labour MEPs have also come out in support of the Clause. ASLEF, NUM, BECTU, GPMU, FBU, EPIU have also committed themselves to the current constitutional position.

The RMT seem likely to support and NCU President Bill Fry has spoken publicly in favour of defending Clause IV.

Significantly the *Tribune* editorial of 16 December argues "Surely, the best advice available to the Labour leader is for him to quietly drop opposition to Clause Four, while persuading the party of the merits of an added aims and values docu-



Bickerstaffe: UNISON's a tough nut to crack



Tony Blair: signing up for Tory policies

ment".

Key to winning the fight will be the Regional Labour Party conferences set for the first three months of 1995 and the National Labour Women's conference in April.

At every regional conference the left must ensure that delegations are mandated to support resolutions which support Clause IV and common ownership. Fringe meetings need to be organised now. The centre-left unions MSF, TGWU and UNISON are vital and must be persuaded to support Clause IV.

Unhappy

London Region MSF have already voted in favour of the campaign and the T&G reps on the Labour Party NEC, Dan Duffy and Diane Holland are known to be unhappy with Bill Morris' compromise with Blair.

In Scotland there are more than twenty resolutions defending Clause IV for Scottish Labour Conference in March. The Scottish committees of FBU, UCATT and MSF are set against any change in Labour's constitution.

UNISON will be a tough nut to crack as the majority of the organised left are ex-NALGO and consequently will not have a vote on the question.

The next two or three months will be crucial. If we organise we can win, and ensure that Labour enters the pre election period with its commitment to common ownership intact.

It's the way he tells them ...

Tony Blair *Breakfast With Frost* transcript, June 12 1994.

FROST: "If there was in fact a sort of campaign or move to get rid of Clause Four would you actively oppose that?"

Blair: "I think the most important thing is for the Labour Party to state what its economic priorities are, and there has been discussion about Clause 4 over the past couple of years, and I understand why that is, but I think the most important thing at the present time, and I think where everybody in the party wants to see the Labour Party go, is to construct its policies for the next general election and make those clear before the British people."

Frost: "Do you have your own on Clause 4, I mean would you oppose its being dropped?"

Blair: "Well, I don't think anyone actually wants that to be the priority of the Labour Party at the moment. I mean, I understand why people have raised this, and there are people who have raised it across a whole spectrum of the political party."

Frost: "Jack Straw, Neil Kinnock..."

Blair: "Absolutely right. But I don't think that anyone is saying now, looking ahead to the next two years in the run-up to an election, that this is what we should focus on. And I think for the vast majority of British People, I don't think they sit out there and debate the intricacies of the Labour Party Constitution."

Two Model Resolutions

Get these passed at Labour Party and trade union meetings. Send a copy of resolutions carried to the Labour Party NEC and to the Defend Clause IV Campaign.

1. We support the decisions of the 1993 and 1994 Labour Party conferences to reaffirm Clause Four of the Constitution. We believe that the basic principles in Clause Four are still valid.

We call on the leadership and the NEC to abandon their pro-

posal to engage in a debate on the Party's constitution. Such a debate can only be divisive at a time when maximum effort should be put into campaigning against the Tory government.

2. We note that the Tories are now in total disarray and cannot be sure of commanding a majority in the House of Commons. This should give Labour additional incentive to step up their attacks on the Tories and keep them on the run.

We believe that Labour should not let anything deflect it from attacking the Tories and campaigning in favour of Labour's alternative policies.

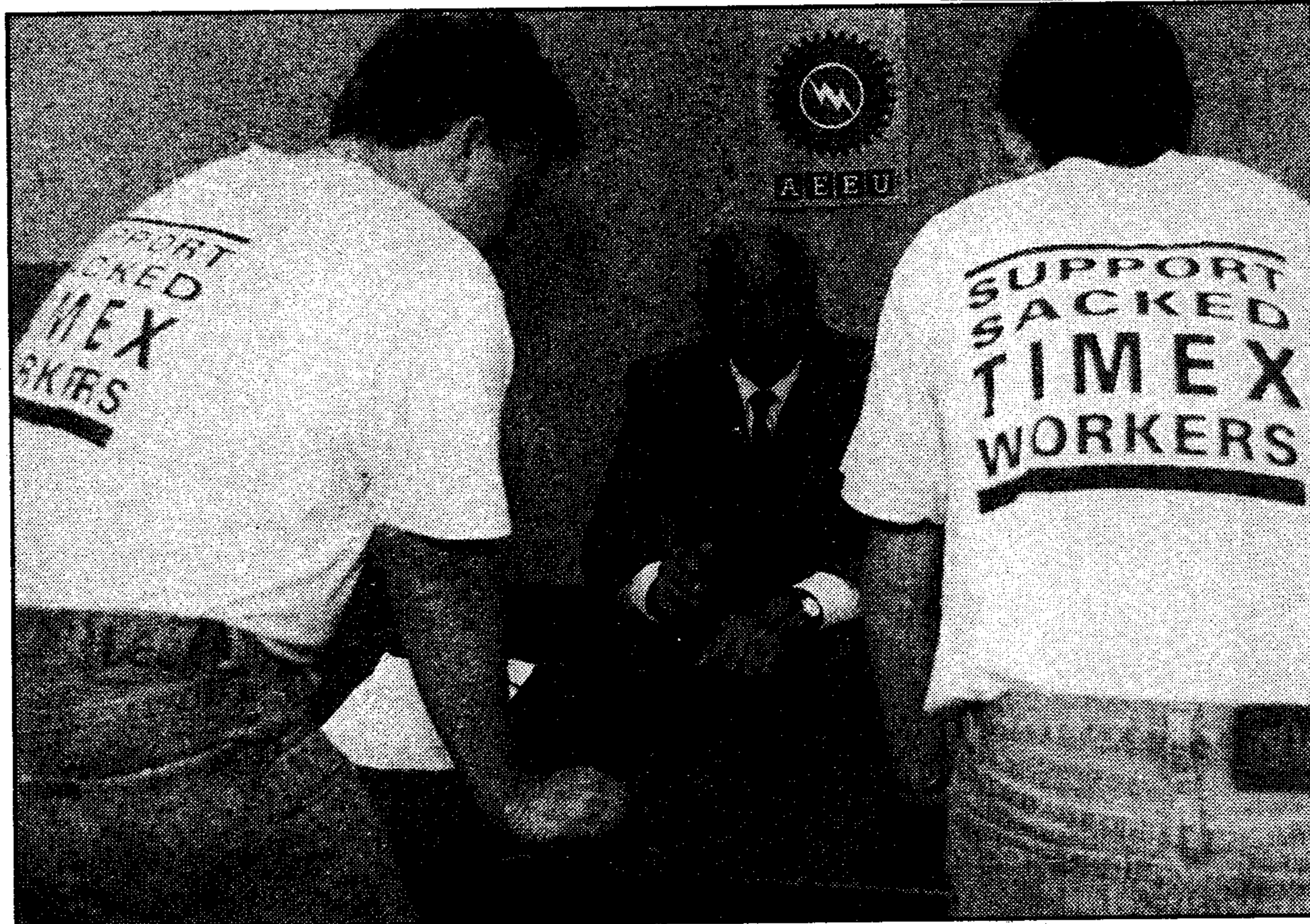
We therefore deeply regret the current proposals to re-examine Labour's constitution and are particularly concerned by the decision to hold an unnecessary and expensive special Party conference on April 29.

This prevents the conferences of Labour's affiliated organisations even considering the proposals. Also the Party should be concentrating on the forthcoming local government elections.

We therefore call on the NEC to call off the special conference in the belief that the Party's annual conference in the autumn gives ample opportunity to debate any constitutional reforms which will genuinely help unite the Party before the next General Election.

LABOUR PARTY

Sir Sellout stitches up Timex strikers



Now it's SIR Sellout!

GAVIN Laird, the Tories' favourite union leader has picked up a knighthood as the latest mark of appreciation from the capitalist class. After a lifetime on his knees, the ceremony will be a doddle.

With Laird as General Secretary, the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers has connived at all the Tory anti-union laws, merged with the strikebreaking Electricians and Plumbers (EETPU), signed single-union deals with multinationals, left the Timex workers to isolation and defeat, and helped successive Labour leaders attack the left.

Laird has been lavishly rewarded for his efforts. In addition to his generous union salary, he has picked up directorships from grateful bosses, sitting on the boards of Scottish Television, GEC Scotland and Britannia Life. In December he was appointed to the Board of the Edinburgh Investment Trust, picking up a cool £7,500 a year.

Trusty Gavin was even nominated by Margaret Thatcher for a term on the Board of the Bank of England!

Transport House for sale? Morris backs sacked bus workers

By Roger Welch

TGWU leader Bill Morris has told a rally in Chelmsford that he would sell the union's Transport House headquarters if it were necessary to help the bus workers win.

His speech is part of a developing campaign seeking the reinstatement of the 105 sacked by Eastern National for taking lawful strike action to resist unsafe working hours.

It has been gathering momentum in recent weeks as a number of the sacked workers have gone into workplaces to explain the dispute and ask for support. The boycott of Eastern National has also been supplemented by a free minibus to local bus users who need transport but want to avoid scab buses.

Support group

The support group established by the Trades Council has received broad backing from local trades unionists, the Freedom Network, supporters of Socialist Outlook and members of the SWP in Essex.

There have been two marches through Chelmsford in December. The first was a street party organised by the Essex Freedom Network in defiance of the Criminal Justice Act.

It tried to stop outside of the bus station to read out the names and service records of the sacked workers - which is over 2,000 years.

Although this would have only lasted a few minutes the police totally overreacted and attacked the demonstration - which the police later admitted

had been totally peaceful. They made three arrests.

This was not an entirely negative outcome however as the police panic led them to seal off the bus station for more than half an hour!

The second march was organised nationally by the TGWU and attracted the support of almost 1,000 trades unionists and activists from Essex and London. Although the turnout was reasonable, and has certainly increased the morale of sacked workers, it could have been much larger.

The march was followed by a rally addressed by Bill Morris. He referred to a letter from Badgerline threatening to sue the TGWU for claiming that it, rather than just Eastern National, was involved in the dispute.

Their denial is obviously false - the buses have the Badgerline logo sprayed all over them.

Nevertheless Morris promised to sell Transport House if it was necessary to defeat litigation and win the dispute. He knows that Badgerline has to date no basis for mounting legal action.

Just the same, sacked workers and rank and file members of the TGWU should demand he puts his money where his mouth is by calling for solidarity action throughout Badgerline to force it to reinstate the bus workers and engage in proper negotiations over pay and working hours.

Only then would the promise become more than rhetoric.

The TGWU is intending to organise another march early in the new year. It is important that left-wing union activists mobilise to make it as large as possible.

New union unites communication workers

By a BT worker

A NEW union has been formed uniting members of the National Communications Union and the Union of Communication Workers. It will organise 300,000 members, mainly in BT and the Post Office.

The UCW has had a unity policy for 70 years. The left has fought for it since the battle against the separation of the post office from British Telecom.

However, as with most recent union mergers, the main force behind unity has been the fall in membership of both unions - especially the NCU. UCW decline is now beginning to accelerate due to competition to the Post Office, commercialisation and electronic mail.

Falling membership inevitably

causes great financial problems - for the bureaucrats in particular.

The situation in both unions is balanced. The UCW has one of the most militant memberships of any unions in western Europe, as measured by strike days lost.

Right wing

But its leadership under Alan Johnson is not only highly bureaucratized and right wing, but riding high after the Tory climbdown over privatisation. The leadership are solidly pro-Blair and anti-clause IV. The left is weak and disorganised.

The NCU on the other hand has little record of industrial militancy outside the 1983-7 privatisation period. Local action is rare.

It is internally unstable and polarised owing to the existence of an electorally powerful Broad

Left which has been in office three times since 1983.

Its Broad Left is at a low ebb at the moment because a minority recently teamed up with the right wing and pushed through an agreement with BT for extended working hours.

The NCU's Labour Party and TUC delegations however are among the most left wing in the labour movement, voting to retain Clause IV at the Labour Party conference.

All the signs are that the combined leadership will now use the merger to undermine the relatively democratic regime in the NCU and to attack the Broad Left.

Already the right of candidates for national office to campaign for support is under threat.

The NCU left voted at its AGM to link up with the UCW left. The scene is set for a bruising battle.

NUJ march for union rights

It will be ten years this year since the Murdoch launched his onslaught on media workers.

The long bitter dispute set the tone of a decade of Tory attacks on the trade union.

Now the millionaire tycoon is now making friendly noises in the direction of Blair's "New Labour".

On January 21 the National Union of Journalists is organising a march to demand rights for all trade un-

ionists, including Maria Hoyle who was sacked from Murdoch's *Today* in November for organising for workers' rights.

The union wants to rebuild

organisation throughout the media and in every industry that has suffered similar attacks. It is encouraging support for the demonstration from all trade unionists.

**March for Union Rights
Saturday 21 January**

Assemble 9.45 Tower Hill
March to News International. Bring Banners

US aid budget faces axe

By Harry Sloan

THE POOREST countries in Africa could be among the losers from last autumn's Republican gains in the US Congressional elections.

Huge cuts in aid to Africa as well as cash for Boris Yeltsin's Russian economy are among the key proposals from the new chair of the Senate's subcommittee on foreign operations.

Republican Mitch McConnell, who takes over this month, has called for a 20% across-the-board cut in spending abroad, with aid payments restricted to countries which assist US security and economic interests.

Lined up the chop is the Development Fund for Africa, which has had a budget of \$800 million a year. McConnell's justifying argument is brutally frank:

"In the past, development assistance has focused on relieving the symptoms of poverty and despair. But by any standard the fact is that most poor countries are still poor."

McConnell is echoing the views of foreign relations committee chair Jesse Helms, who describes foreign aid as 'throwing money down a rathole'.

The prospects of the 'new world order' and the capitalist market system improving life for the African masses seem further away than ever.

Hawk protestors go beyond Jakarta's imagination

By Aidan Salter

IT WAS NOT quite business as usual for Manchester bosses invited by the governor of Jakarta to the "beyond the imagination" evening of food and entertainment at the plush Piccadilly hotel Peacock Suite.

Demonstrators from Stop the Hawk Deal (part of the national Stop The Hawks - No Arms To Indonesia Coalition) made sure that the boozy banquet designed as a sweetener to lure local investors to Jakarta left a sour taste in their mouths.

No doubt the guests were sold an exotic picture of Indonesia as the land of opportunity with abundant natural resources, a rapidly expanding market in one of the fastest growing economies in South East Asia. All lubricated by fine claret of course.

Business appetites may also have been whetted by the less savoury images of a cheap, industrious, docile, obliging, largely female workforce, kept in line by the government controlled S.P.S.I. union - slaving at the mouth they must have been.

Leaflets handed out by demonstrators spelt out the other side of the Indonesian experience: massive human rights violations under the Suharto dictatorship, genocide in the course of the 19 year occupation of East Timor, and a growing mass opposition facing increasing state repression.

The guests were forewarned that political instability and social unrest would jeopardise in-

vestment. But they weren't forewarned about what was to accompany the hors d'oeuvres.

A surprise awaited the diners inside the Peacock Suite. In a welcoming speech a protestor, who had somehow received an invitation, spoke out for several minutes to a stunned audience about the reality of Indonesia.

Only after delivering a blistering exposé was he escorted away by hotel security at the request of the Indonesian officials.

Another protestor was also ejected after talking about East Timor.

Stop The Hawk Deal, in tandem with the Preston Coalition For East Timor, will be stepping up action in the coming months, so overpaid overfed investors beware!

Contact: STHD c/o One World Centre, 6 Mount St, Manchester M2 5NS and PCET c/o Global Education Centre, St Peters Square Preston PR1 7BX.

PUBLIC MEETING
Feb 1st 7.00
Friends Meeting House
(opposite Euston Station)

Free East Timor!

Speakers include JOSE RAMOS HORTA, External Representative of the National Council Of Maubere Resistance.

Tide turning against Indonesian junta

By Paul Walker

1995 is going to be a difficult year for the Suharto regime in Indonesia.

The previous twelve months have witnessed a fundamental change in the political situation in regard to the occupation of East Timor and the developing democracy movement in Indonesia itself.

As reported in the last issue of Socialist Outlook the events of November 12th saw the emergence of both a more organised and deeper rooted resistance movement in East Timor, the first signs of support for that resistance in Indonesia, and the development of an international solidarity movement with the East Timorese struggle.

The panic measures adopted by Suharto to deal with the events in East Timor show a regime manoeuvring in an ever closing political space. The referendum at gunpoint and the forced demonstration and rally organised by the military in the capital, Dili (during which the assembled crowd was harangued by the military officials about the benefits of integration into Indonesia), have only resulted in a hardening of the civil resistance to Jakarta's rule.

Significantly the overwhelming bulk of the demonstrators in Dili on 12th November 1994 had not started school when the Indonesians invaded in 1975.

New generation

The generation educated in special schools where the regime banned their own languages and implemented a rigorous program of indoctrination have given their verdict on this process.

The youngest of the 125 detained follow the uprising are two 13 year olds, Albano de Jesus and Antonio Gonclaves. Most of the detainees are workers, peasants and students.

International opinion is also beginning to shift. East Timor is no longer just a small country, far away, about which people know nothing.

February will see the publication of the report to the 51st session of the UN Special Human Rights Commission by the UN special rapporteur on East Timor, Bacre Waly Ndiaye.

The report will refer to the Santa Cruz killings on Novem-



Demonstration outside Indonesian Embassy in London

ber 12th 1991 as a massacre. This will effectively undermine the continued Indonesian description of it as an "incident".

The Amnesty International report on the events of November 12th 1994 points to the excessive force and ill treatment used by the security forces in Dili. It also notes that, whilst under the gaze of the world's media, no one was actually killed, some demonstrators were beaten until their faces were "unrecognizable".

Additionally the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions has passed a resolution condemning the Indonesian occupation and widespread human right abuses.

True, these reports only add to the paper mountain reporting the long standing atrocities of the Indonesian regime: but they do add significant pressure to all those international leaders who are sitting on the fence.

Mandela

One of these is Nelson Mandela, who only a few months after being released from prison visited Suharto and accepted a cheque for \$10 million to pay off ANC debts.

The international solidarity movement has exerted enormous pressure on Mandela to speak out for the people of East Timor and to end his cosy relationship with Suharto.

Inside the ANC there has been a growing debate about the issue. During his opening ad-

dress to the ANC Conference in mid December 1994 Mandela called explicitly for support for the people of East Timor:

"We cannot be found wanting in expressing our solidarity with friends in need in other parts of the world including the people of Cuba, East Timor, Palestine and elsewhere."

Diplomatic words? Only time will tell.

Meanwhile the campaign to stop the delivery of Hawk ground attack aircraft to Indonesia and for a military embargo has gathered pace in Britain. The coalition "Stop The Hawks - No Arms to Indonesia" is organising a year of action in 1995.

Events will include a mass protest at the British Aerospace AGM in late April, trespasses, a mass day of action on November 12th and a mass lobby or Parliament on December 7th 1995 which is the twentieth anniversary of the Indonesian invasion of East Timor.

1995, is, therefore, a critical year for solidarity work with East Timor and the democratic movement in Indonesia.

One easy task is to get Labour Party and trade unions branches to sponsor the campaign - this is free but donations are welcome.

An action pack is available that outlines all the campaigning a possibilities for the year ahead.

Write to Stop the Hawks, c/o PO Box 2349, London E1 3HX with a cheque for £1.20.



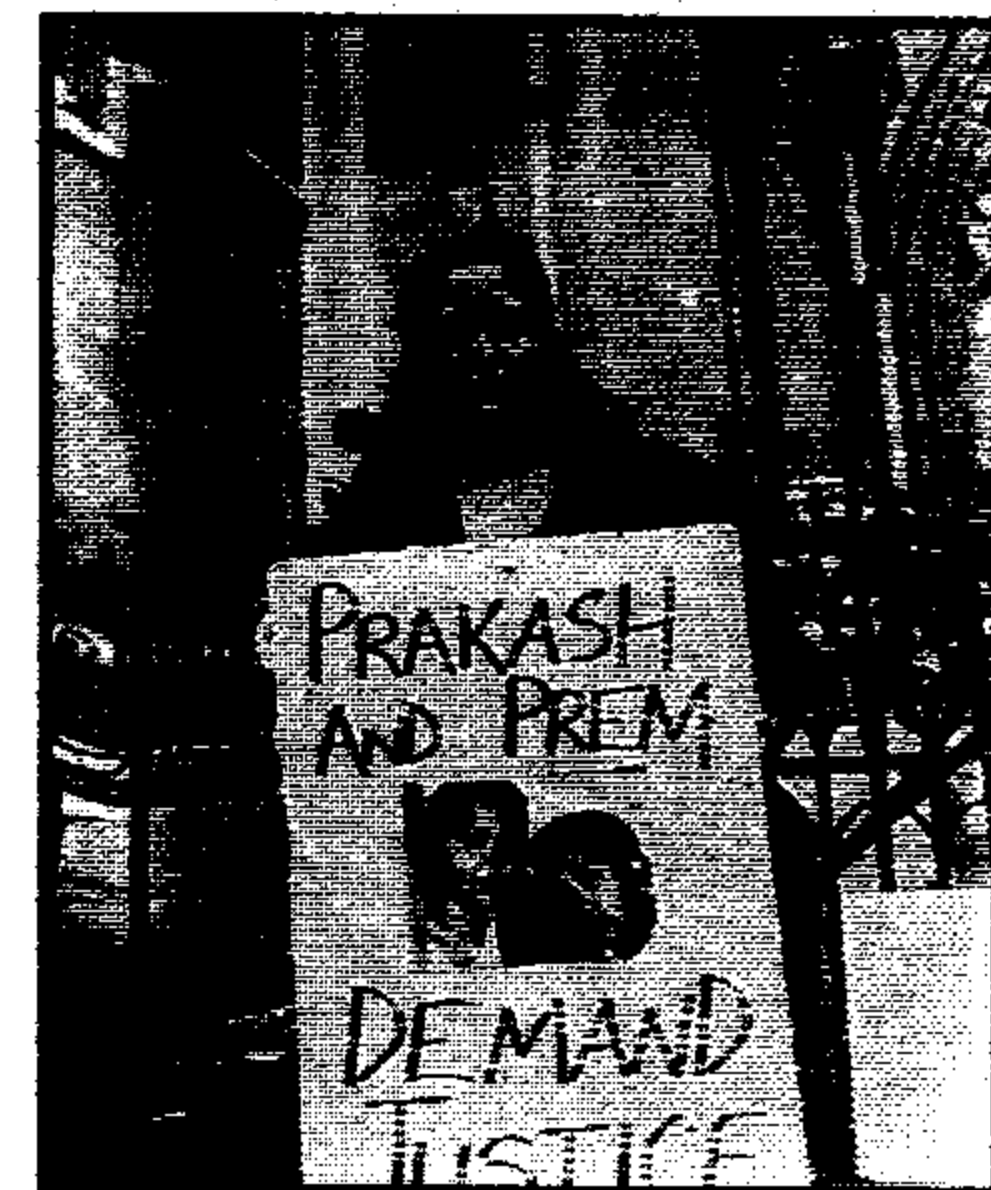
Satpal Ram campaign continues its struggle

Fighting on for justice

THE BATTLES against Britain's racist immigration laws and criminal justice system continue into a new year.

On December 13 the High Court refused Mauritian Prakash Chavrimootoo and her son Prem a judicial review against their deportation. Their case, backed by the West Midlands Anti Deportation Campaign has also been officially backed by her union, UNISON.

Prakash came to England in 1989 after marrying a British citizen. Her marriage broke up after a few months as a result of domestic violence. But the immigration laws stipulate that wives of British citizens must live with them for a



minimum of twelve months if they are to avoid the risk of deportation. UNISON is campaigning not only for Prakash but for the scrapping of the 12-month time limit and other racist immigration legislation.

The campaign for the release of restaurant worker Satpal Ram, jailed in 1986 after resisting racial violence, has continued to gather strength.

A judicial review scheduled for November 4 was postponed at the last moment to December 15, forcing supporters to reorganise what promised to be a large lobby at the High Court.

4,000 jobs at risk as services face axe

Teachers fight racist Section 11 cuts

By Ann Baye

THE END of 1994 saw a surge of action among teachers, especially in London, opposing the government's intended cuts in Section 11 funding.

Section 11 refers to special payments from the Home Office to local authorities considered to need to provide extra support for children from ethnic minority backgrounds 'whose languages or customs differ from those of the community'.

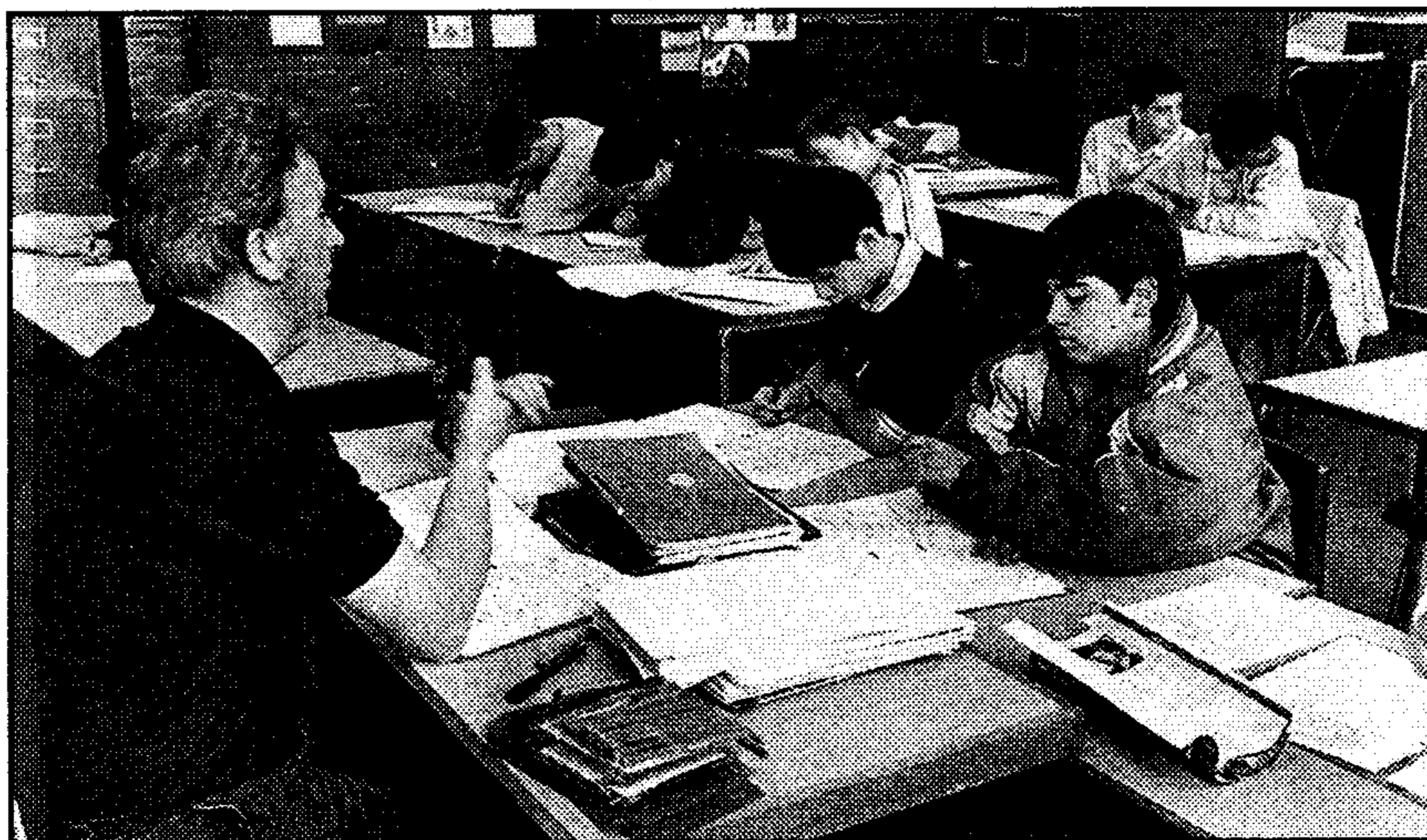
Section 11 teachers work in mainstream schools to support such children, many of whom are just beginning to learn English. The London borough of Waltham Forest alone has over 2,000 children needing Section 11 support.

These children are expected to follow the National Curriculum and participate in lessons in the ordinary classroom. Such integration is important socially and culturally as well as academically.

Interacting with children whose first language is English allows many of them to become fluent speakers of English quite quickly, although learning to read and write, especially for some refugee children who have learned literacy in different alphabets and particularly for those who have had no previous formal schooling, usually takes longer.

Many of those who need and have benefited from Section 11 support are not recent immigrants but members of communities speaking languages which have mistakenly been viewed as 'bad English' - including Greek and Polish.

Of course children whose first language is English also benefit from contact with other languages and cultures, and where there is support for bilingual students or those learning English in the



Section 11 funding is vital to ensure equality of opportunity for school students

classroom, teachers are able to devote more attention to the needs of the majority.

Racist

The threatened cuts to Section 11 are racist, and further undermine even the pretence of equal opportunities. They are part of a pattern of the government's drive towards a tiered education system, which aims to produce a well-schooled (rather than educated) elite, flexible, skilled workforce alongside an educationally-deprived mass - the future reserve army of unemployed.

The cuts will undermine all learning in multicultural schools, and will worsen teachers' conditions of service. The levels of need of students are rising in many areas, and demands on individual class teachers will inevitably increase, so that they have to spread their time and resources more thinly.

Thousands of jobs are at stake in London alone. 133 teachers were given

redundancy notices as a direct result of Section 11 cuts.

Some estimates put the number of jobs threatened nationally as high as 4,000.

Compulsory redundancy is being used in some areas, but the cuts are being administered unevenly. While Tower Hamlets is likely to suffer heavy losses under Section 11, Tory Westminster is able to make up the funding shortfall so as to avoid redundancies.

In the face of the NUT leadership's inaction, a group of twelve London NUT groups, with the Socialist Teachers Alliance taking a central role, organised a Day of Action on December 7.

Lobbying

This included an afternoon lobby of the Department for Education by some 300 teachers, putting their views to Education Secretary Gillian Shephard, followed by a lobby of the Home Office and a meeting with NUT General Secretary Doug McAuley.

The lobby and march involved open defiance of the new Criminal Justice Act. An evening rally featured speakers from the Anti racist Alliance and the NUT's Race Advisory Committee, while speakers from the floor warned that some Section 11 teachers could face deportation.

Speeches linked the fight on Section 11 with the need for a wider campaign to defend state education. The Tories have set the total standard spending assessment for local authorities this year at a level even lower than last year's meagre level, and councils are predicting that this will mean further job losses in education and higher pupil/teacher ratios.

Insecurity

Like other public sector workers, teachers face worsening conditions of service, greater job insecurity (linked to increased use of fixed-term contracts) and the imposition of performance related pay.

Of course securing adequate funding is not the only important ingredient of a recipe to save Britain's crisis-ridden education system.

Only a break from the divisive, market-oriented policies typified by grant maintained status for schools (the opt-outs now patronised by Tony Blair), the League Tables, the infamous Tory-imposed SATS tests and the existing National Curriculum can begin to undo the damage done to the future of Britain's youth.

NUT members are increasingly vocal in their criticism of the Labour leadership for selling out on these issues. Socialists should be supporting the efforts to win public support for alternative policies designed to allow equal access for all to a truly comprehensive, liberating education.

DEFEND CLAUSE 4

“To secure for the workers
by hand or by brain the full fruits
of their industry and the most equitable distribution thereof
that may be possible upon the basis of the common ownership
of the means of production, distribution, and exchange,
and the best obtainable system of popular control of
each industry or service.”

On April 29 a special Labour

Party conference may scrap

Clause 4 of the party's con-

stitution. Clause 4 commits

Labour to social ownership.

We want to keep Clause 4

and ensure a future Labour

government renationalises in-

dustry, creates jobs and im-

proves public services. A

national 'Campaign to De-

fend Clause 4' has been es-

tablished by a range of

important labour movement

figures and organisations -

like Jim Mortimer (former

FIIGHT FOR SOCIALISM

bour Party), Arthur Scargill

(NUM), Dennis Skinner MP,

Mildred Gordon MP, Doreen

Cameron (NATFHE), Ken

Loach and many others.

Local details:

Write to Campaign to Defend Clause 4, C/o The NUM, 2 Huddersfield Rd, Barnsley, S70 2LS.

Telephone: 0171 - 582 2955.

300 PEOPLE demonstrated outside the notorious Stoke Newington police station on 23 December to protest about the death of yet another black person in custody. ELLEN MOORE investigates a growing scandal of racist violence.

MR LAPITE was arrested on the night of Saturday 18 December by two police officers who are now suspended. He was dead within twenty minutes. His family say his face is unrecognisable and his body covered in bruises. They are calling for an independent inquiry.

This brutal murder of another black man in custody brings the focus back onto the notorious Stoke Newington police force who have already been the cause of record damages being paid to people in compensation for wrongful arrests and brutal treatment.

But its not just in Stoke Newington that black people die when in contact with the purveyors of 'justice'. The violence of the state within the criminal justice system is brutal and arbitrary but particularly targeted at black people.

Over the last ten years 84 black people have died in police custody, in prison or during police and immigration officials visits to their homes. All deaths in custody highlight the brutality of the criminal justice system, but deaths amongst black prisoners and detainees emphasize the institutionalised racism endemic within the system.

Black youth are harassed and stopped in the street on the basis of nothing more than their blackness (an event even more likely to occur with increasing frequency with the virtual re-introduction of the 'sus' laws in the new Criminal Justice Act); black people are subject to violent arrest because of the racist assumption of the police that black people are 'violent' and aggressive, and must be dealt with in kind. The deaths this year of Mark Harris and Oluwashiji Lapite highlight this brutality.

Contempt for black people on the streets is carried into contempt for black people in their homes. The deaths of Cynthia Jarrett, Joy Gardner and more recently of Kwanele Siziba and Joseph Nnalue bear witness to this process.

Black people are over represented as prisoners and patients in special hospitals. Again recent campaigns such as that about the death of Orville Blackwood bear witness to state violence meted out to black people within the mental health system. The 'unlawful killing' of Omasase Lumumba in Pentonville prison in 1993 illustrates the racist violence of the prison system.

How does this consistent murderous racism go on year after year? How is racist vio-

Black victims of blue murder



lence institutionalised into policy?

The police, prison service and special hospitals each in different ways manage to remain completely unaccountable to any public forum. The extent to which they are unaccountable, inaccessible and specialised serves to increase and makes their power more absolute.

The level of secrecy surrounding these institutions increases their employees ability to get away with abuse and even murder. Where there is no adequate forum for calling an institution to account in the public domain, abusive practices run rampant and racist police and prison officers literally

get away with murder.

Backed by unaccountable, secret institutions individuals within the police, prison service and special hospitals assume a stance of invincibility and a sense of being untouchable whatever they do.

Flouting

A recent inquest into the death of a psychiatric patient in police custody revealed a catalogue of failures on the part of the medical and police services, and deliberate flouting of the police instruction manual by one officer which led to the detainee's death.

When asked if those present in the court could assume that he would not flout those rules

again the officer answered 'no, they could not make that assumption'.

That police officer had heard that morning the Crown Prosecution Service had decided not to prosecute him for manslaughter. Supported by other high ranking officers, watched by members of the CIB and members of the Police Complaints Authority (PCA), he felt he could confidently assume that he could publicly declare he would ignore the rules and all he would receive would be some sort of rap on the fingers.

Structured like the military, the strict hierarchy of command which the police force and prison service fosters closes ranks when under at-

tack. The chain of command becomes the chain of cover-up.

The so-called 'independent' PCA is staffed by highly vetted civil servants who are as likely to work there as the Home Office - its independence is laughable.

Prisons and special hospitals are virtually unassailable. Closed and guarded by the Home Office none may enter without their approval and information is as closely guarded as information about 'national security'.

Deaths of black people - whether murder or suicide - are mere cold statistics.

Inquests afford little relief. The coroner's court is there to establish the cause of death, not the reasons why, or who is responsible. The coroner has complete control, allowing or disallowing questioning on behalf of relatives according to his own whim.

He is aided by the police; he alone has access to the findings of any internal inquiry (not even MPs have access to such information); he decides what to divulge to the court, which witnesses to call and in which order; and he alone can sum up and direct the jury on which of four very restricted verdicts they can bring.

Even in the unlikely event that a jury returns a verdict of 'unlawful killing', the only verdict which allows a chance to reopen the case with a view to prosecution and/or compensation, it is unlikely to be successful.

Out of 75 cases of black deaths in custody between 1969 and 1991 only one has resulted in a prosecution of the police.

Redress through the law is an illusion. The murder of Oluwashiji Lapite in Stoke Newington graphically illustrates the futility of seeking change through the legal system.

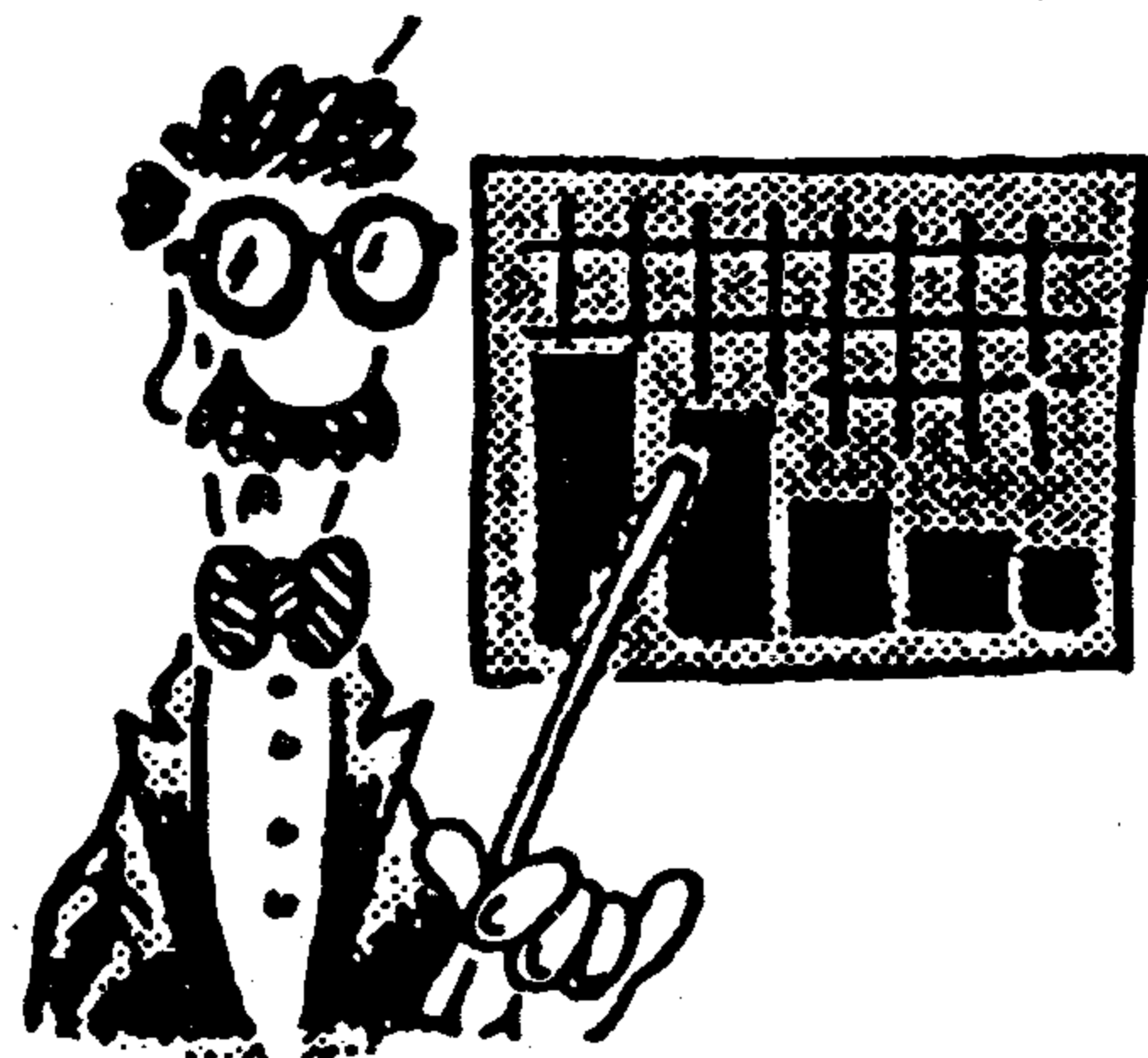
Stoke Newington police have been at the centre of controversy for years - and recently at the centre of a series of corruption scandals and allegations of brutality.

Despite this their harassment of the local black community continues, and two plain clothes police officers have just been involved in the brutal death of another defenceless black man.

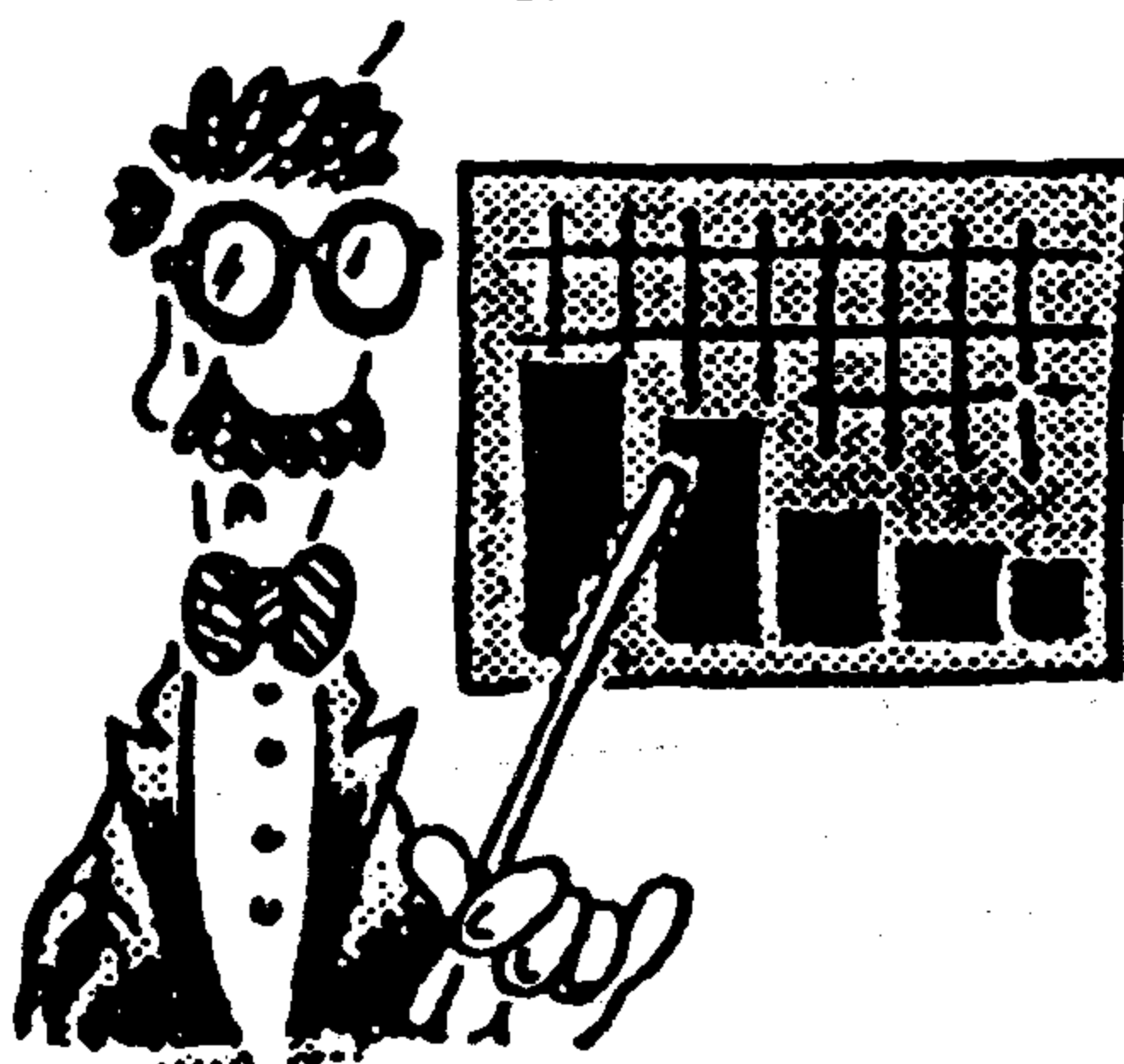
■ Contact Newham Monitoring Project for details of the Family Campaign Tel: 081-552 6284.

HOME NEWS

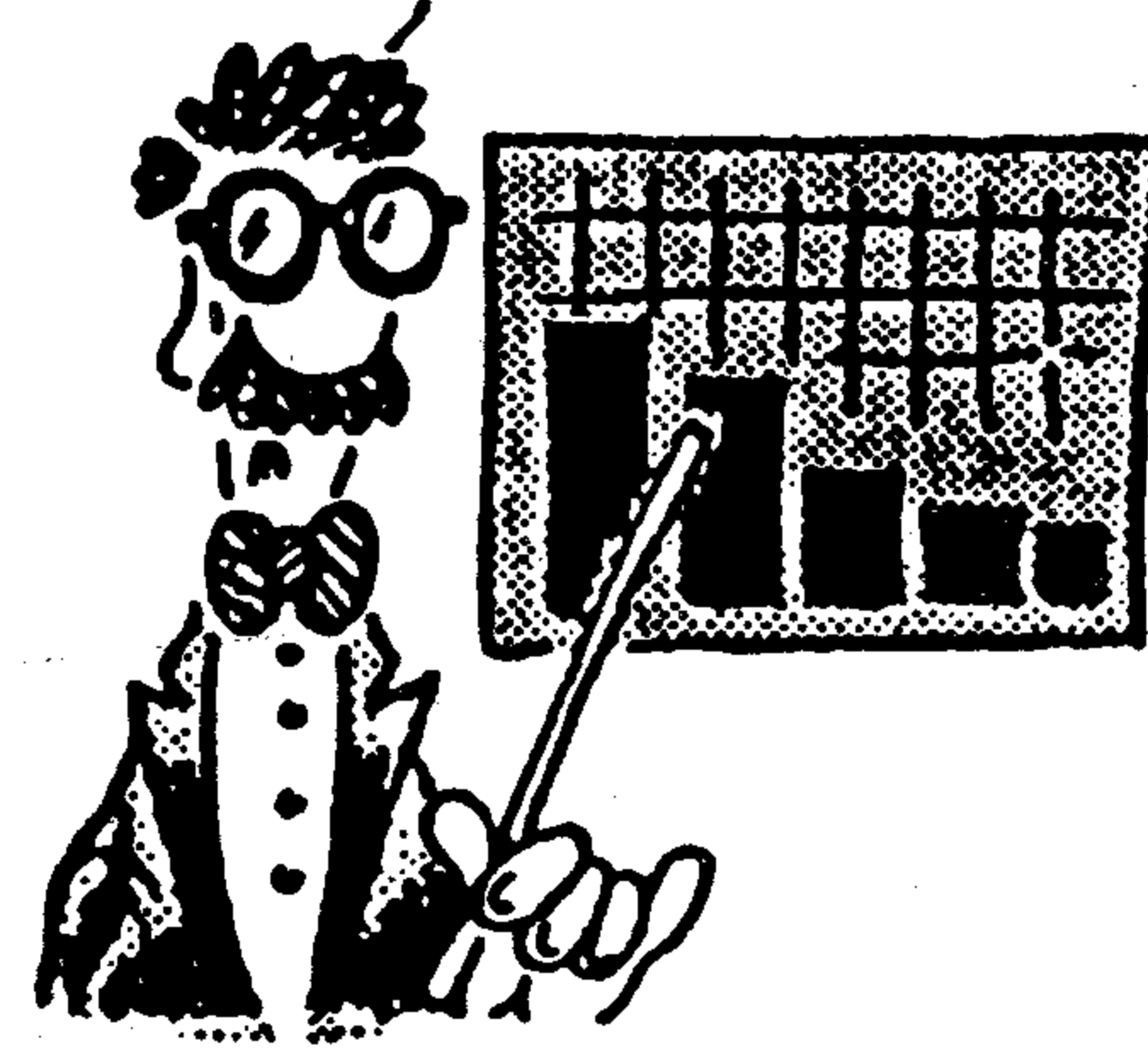
Countries must cut wages to stay competitive on the world market...



Thus, the USA cuts wages to compete with Japan, Japan does the same to compete with Korea and so on...



... with the result that workers everywhere no longer earn enough to buy what they produce!



Joining forces to fight GATT treaty

Socialist Outlook met with Sonny Melencio, a leader of Makabayan, one of the new mass socialist formations in the Philippines.

What is the political situation in the Philippines?

The government has been saying that the economic situation has improved,

and that the political situation has too.

They have been claiming that there is a one per cent growth rate in the economy. But this is because the comparison is with 1986 - a period of negative growth rate.

From that starting point, anything that is not backwards is forwards! In fact other island neighbours are attracting much more investment than the Philippines. A recent study showed that the value of real wages has gone down.

As far as the concrete conditions go, there has been a deterioration - a large number of unemployed; there are many

people on the streets, and prostitution.

The government has a project called 'Philippines 2000'. It says that it will make the Philippines a newly industrialising country by 2000, following in the footsteps of Singapore, Hong Kong and Malaysia.

We used to be more advanced than some of these countries, but now we are way way down the line. Indonesia has overtaken us and we're quite near to Bangladesh now in terms of the economy.

Philippines 2000 is posed in terms of the 'new world order' - meaning the order of the IMF and the World Bank, imperi-

alist powers and multinationals. We see no possibility that the Philippines will become a newly industrialised country - there is simply no room left.

We do not have anything of value to export. Our main export now is human labour. This is what is keeping the Philippines alive - migrant workers. All our traditional exports have been overtaken by technological development.

The free trade zone in the Philippines is a mess. It has closed down. There is a new one being built, but it is not attracting much investment.

In this framework there is no hope. That is why we think the future of the

All change on Philippines left

THE COLLAPSE of Stalinism internationally is continuing to generate a ferment of discussion and divisions in sections of the anti-imperialist movement.

The underground Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) is one of the last ones still clinging openly and ruthlessly to the old politics, with its exiled leader Joma Sison issuing a document in 1994 explicitly rallying the party to the banner and name of Stalin.

Re-formed in 1968, with strong Maoist influences, the CPP adopted and still adheres to the strategy of waging a 'people's war' and of 'encircling cities from the countryside' based on the Chinese experience under Mao Zedong. It emphasised long term mass work in the countryside, and the activities of its armed wing, the New People's Army (NPA).

Sison, who backed the Chinese Stalinists' brutal 1989 repression in Tienanmen Square, rejects any notion of a united front not led by the CPP, and has expelled opponents who challenge this line.

However CPP activists also played a leading role in the

broader National Democratic Front, which in turn played a key role in the development of the militant union federation the KMU (May 1st Movement), launched in 1980, which at its height claimed to organise over 700,000 workers. Though many of its original organisers were Communists, as a union, the KMU clearly had to reach out much wider than CPP members, and developed a degree of political independence.

KMU strength tended to be in the cities rather than the country areas, and the strategy of people's war is clearly inappropriate for long-term work in the unions.

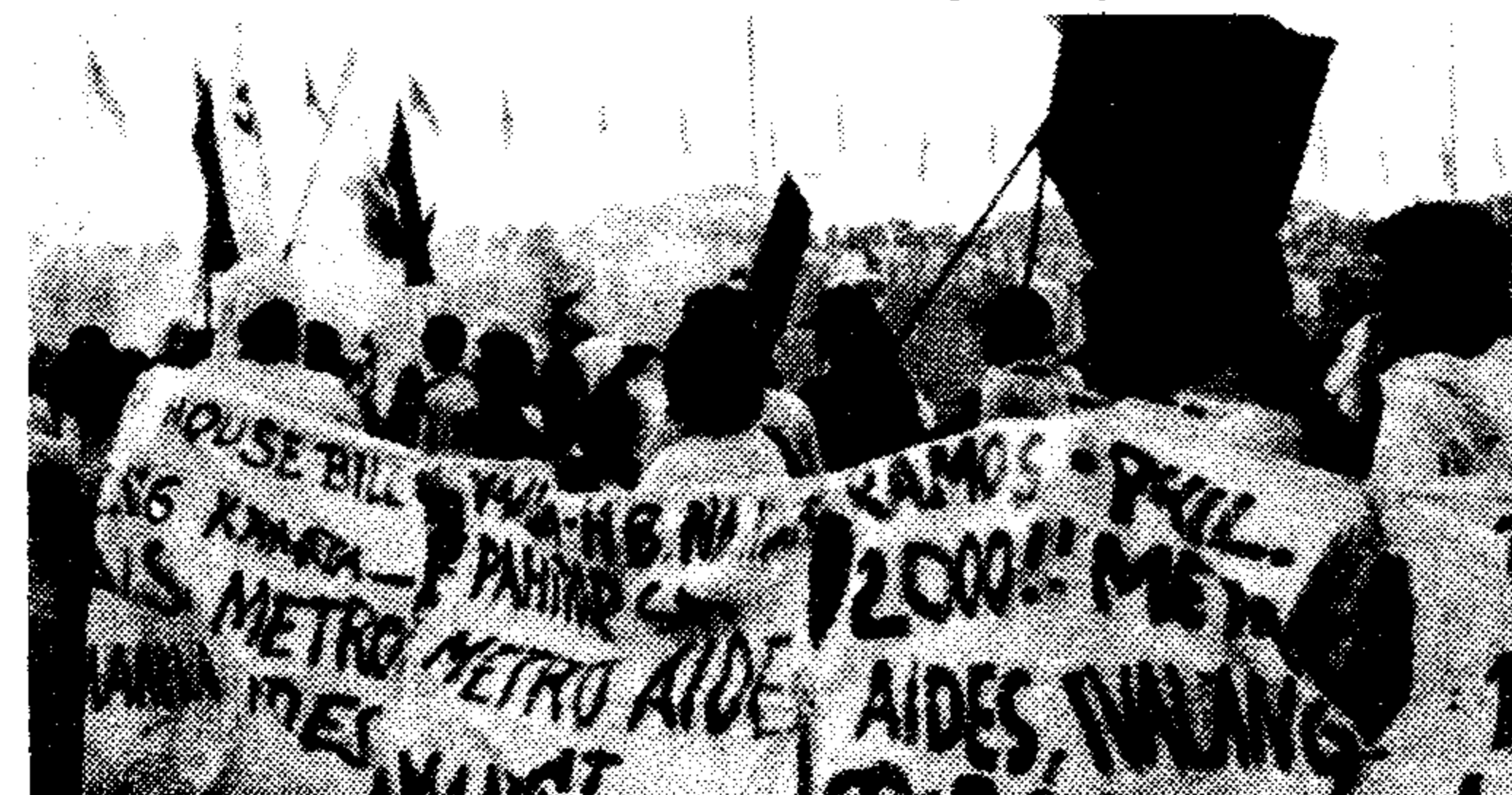
Failure

These problems were further underlined by the failure of the CPP or KMU to capitalise on the situation following the fall of the Marcos dictatorship in 1986. There were tactical differences between the NDF and the CPP leadership over whether or not to boycott the 1986 elections, the role of armed struggle and the united front.

Growing currents within the KMU, the NDF and the CPP itself have begun to reject the

traditional Stalinist strategy. The strongest challenge to the Sison line have come from the big cities, and in Manila the entire regional leadership of the CPP (Manila-Rizal) has split. Similar bitter splits have proliferated throughout the Philippines left and trade union movement.

The KMU's 1993 May Day



rally saw a clash between supporters and opponents of Sison, each shouting slogans at the other side.

As a result important forces adhering to neither side in the factional divide have pulled away from the KMU, and a range of new groupings have begun to take shape.

There are now at least four groups on the Philippines left

worthy of mention.

● SANLAKAS, based predominantly in the Manila working class, to which is affiliated a trade union federation United Workers for Change (BMP), and organisations of women, the urban poor, and students. The BMP is a split from the KMU, which mirrored almost exactly the split of the Manila-

nist organisation, and is committed to a national-democratic programme.

● BISIG, formed in 1986 after the fall of Marcos, brought together socialists who had long-standing disagreements with the (Maoist) ideological positions and (Stalinist) organisational practices of the Sison-led CPP. BISIG disagreed with both the CPP and National Democrats over whether capitalism could play a progressive role, and argued that the social question was 'not merely a democratic anti-feudal question, but the socialist anti-capitalist question.' BISIG influences the APL trade union federation, but is smaller than SANLAKAS.

● BAYAN/KMU - based upon the sections of the National Democratic Movement still influenced by the CPP. Its recent mobilisations have been smaller than SANLAKAS, and sometimes smaller than SIGLAYA and BISIG. It refuses to work with other organisations on the left, and has refused to condemn CPP threats to 'arrest' the former Manila-Rizal leadership and try them in a 'people's court'.

Rizal regional committee of the CPP. Also affiliated to SANLAKAS is the 'democratic socialist' political current Makabayan, whose politics are close to the Manila-Rizal committee.

● SIGLAYA, based primarily upon a breakaway from the National Democrat-led Filipino Peasant Federation (KMP). It also has a newly formed femi-

Philippines is to keep on struggling against the state. In the political arena now there is a popular struggle against GATT by the unions and by the farmers' organisations and by the urban poor.

The GATT treaty is up for approval by the Senate. Our organisation is planning to hold an international gathering of south east Asian trade unions against the treaty.

A number of employers groups are also against GATT and which have also joined the bloc against it. Even some local government officials have passed a resolution against the treaty.

This a new fight that is brewing up. The mass organisation is quite buoyed up by some recent victories. That is why the GATT campaign is attracting large support, and the urban mass movements are set to play a major role.

The guerrilla war which is still going on is being marginalised. Nothing is happening in the guerrilla areas. Many members and commanders of the New Peoples Army have come down from the mountains. Some have surrendered, and some have just simply gone back to their families. This trend has been going on for years.

The political development will be centred around the urban mass movement.

Tell us about the left in the Philippines

The formation which works closely with us is the BISIG. It is small and composed of at least three different currents. One current calls itself Marxist. There is a centrist current that is more or less left social democratic in its thinking. And then there is the another more right social democratic current.

What is exciting now in the Philippines is that some of the left groups have come together to form coalitions. One was formed as early as November of last year. It was called "People's Challenge".

It started off as a coalition against the Philippines 2000 programme. It is all these blocs together. There was even thinking at the time that a more programmatic unity was needed. We had a conference to get to know each other better.

Following various debates we stopped meeting. But the feeling for unity is still there. Our agenda is still to unite the left.

How do you build unity with workers who don't necessarily believe in the socialist project, but who are willing to fight, against, say, GATT for example?

Our project right now in the unions is reunification of the whole trade union movement. We are pushing for it through our trade union organisation the BMP.

The project is gaining ground because it was able to start off a coalition of trade unionists called 'the caucus for labour unity'. All the major trades unions joined except the KMU and the FFW (both on ideological grounds - the KMU because it is under the control of the Sison wing; the FFW because it is a catholic Christian union.)

This is how we manage to have a broader base among the unions. This kind of formation gathers all the unions around concrete political projects, around struggle against the government. This formation - Militant Fight - is directly in opposition to government policies. This means direct opposition by demonstrations and whatever forms are appropriate.

During the Marcos period in the 1970s, when Martial Law was imposed, it was very hard for unions to struggle. Demonstrations were banned. Strikes



were banned. The Communist Party did a lot of organising at the time, starting up underground unions. Most of the unions share this history.

This gives most of the unions on the left a certain radicalism based on the kind of education they had at the time: it is basically revolutionary, around the national democratic programme, but that is also revolutionary democracy.

With regards to the conception of the united front as a block of four classes: there is no organisation representing the national bourgeoisie.

There is no organisation of a revolutionary character, or even a progressive character, that represents the national bourgeoisie. There are tactical alliances with the employers group, with the capitalist group, against GATT and the tax increase, but these are tactical alliances not part of a united front strategy. The united front applies basically to the left.

It is funny - we had the idea that we would find a section of capitalists who are progressive, who would join the national democratic revolution. Then we even set up an organisation to gather these capitalists together!

All it gathered was some of the petty bourgeoisie. This is why we stopped using those terms. Because it doesn't mean anything at all to us. It just confuses us.

What are the main political debates between the left currents in the Philippines?

The main debate is basically on the question of party building. It is essential to rally round all the opposition groups who are opposed to the Sison CPP line. The question is how to unify the opposition in an alternative party.

The split in the CPP began around the character of the party - its Stalinist character. Only afterwards did it become more programmatic. Now it is entirely at the level of programme.

The Manila-Rizal region of the Philippines Communist Party (MR) and, I think, the other territorial organs, are

clear that there should still be a Marxist-Leninist party. But they are also clear that this does not mean the Marxism-Leninism that has been propounded by the Stalinists and Maoists.

It is basically the Leninism of the Bolsheviks that should be the model - one that is vibrant and alive. So this is to be party of the Bolshevik type, where you can have debates, that is very democratic. That is basically the MR view.

The other view wants to build a looser formation - more of a front. This view is advocated by comrades who are drifting towards social democracy under the ideas of developing a 'civil society' rather than building parties which are based on objectives of state power.

I understand that in Australia this sort of politics is sometimes called "post modernism". But in the Philippines it has no such name!

Some of its advocates identify themselves with the left of social democracy: they ask "what is wrong with social democracy anyway - is it not the same as national democracy?"

This is true - the national democratic

programme of the Sison wing of the Communist Party is basically social democracy. But this is the whole point of disagreement!

Our whole criticism is based on the belief that there is solely a national democratic struggle, not a struggle for socialism.

How have you approached international links?

One of our key debates was on the semi-colonial/semi-feudal theory. Manila-Rizal is now saying that the Philippines is basically capitalist.

We also have a critique of the protracted peoples war - against the guerrilla war strategy, which is not suited to the conditions in the Philippines. We returned to the Leninist position of opening up all arenas of struggle, including the electoral one.

The NPA units are not now the focus of our activity. Instead we emphasise the organisation of, for example, the farm-workers.

When we started going through the programmatics after the split we were looking first at the idea of internationalism. One of the ideas we repudiate is that socialism can be established in a single country. We see that as a Stalinist distortion.

We see socialism as a world project. This is why we have decided to be active in international gatherings; to link up with all international groupings. So that's why when we split up we were looking for an organisation that was anti-Stalinist, anti-Maoist and opposed to the national democratic conception of socialism.

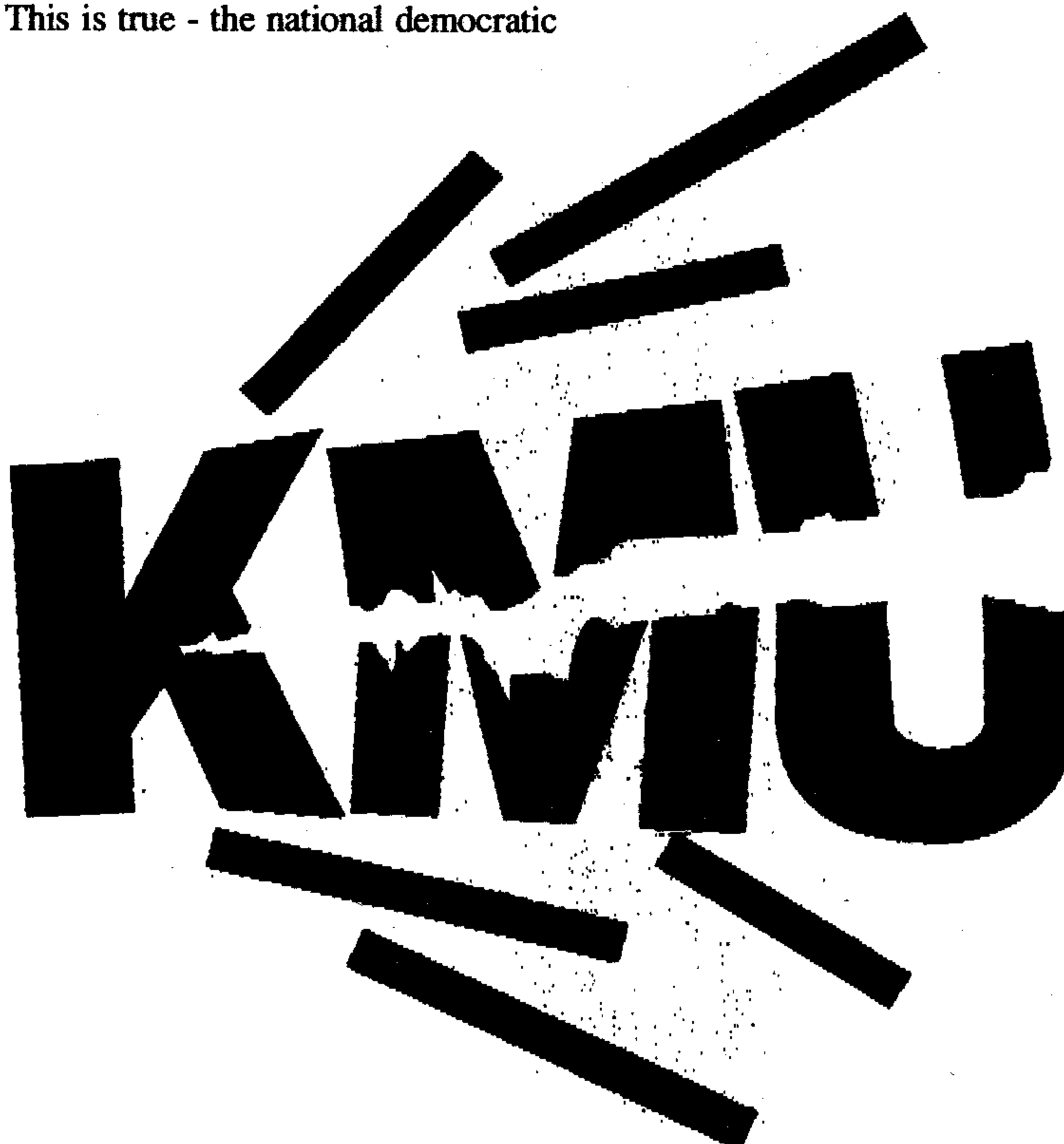
I have attended the Fourth International's Amsterdam school and was invited to its IEC to observe. Many things were clarified but there are still some questions left.

What is clear to us is that we would like to have joint co-operation, especially on a country to country basis, aside from the Fourth International groups. The way the struggle is developing right now is also national in character.

What do you think of Trotskyism?

Trotskyism is still a dirty word in the Philippines. It is better to first discuss programmatics and then use the word, so as not to close off debate.

I can say with some confidence that the comrades of Manila-Rizal would find it very difficult to understand Trotsky at this point in time, because I myself have not yet read a single book of Trotsky's. Maybe there is some resistance!



Opposition to republicanism unites new Irish coalition

All the colours of the rainbow

By David Coen

The description of the new Dublin Government as a "Rainbow Coalition" might leave you desperately casting your mind back to the last time you saw a rainbow.

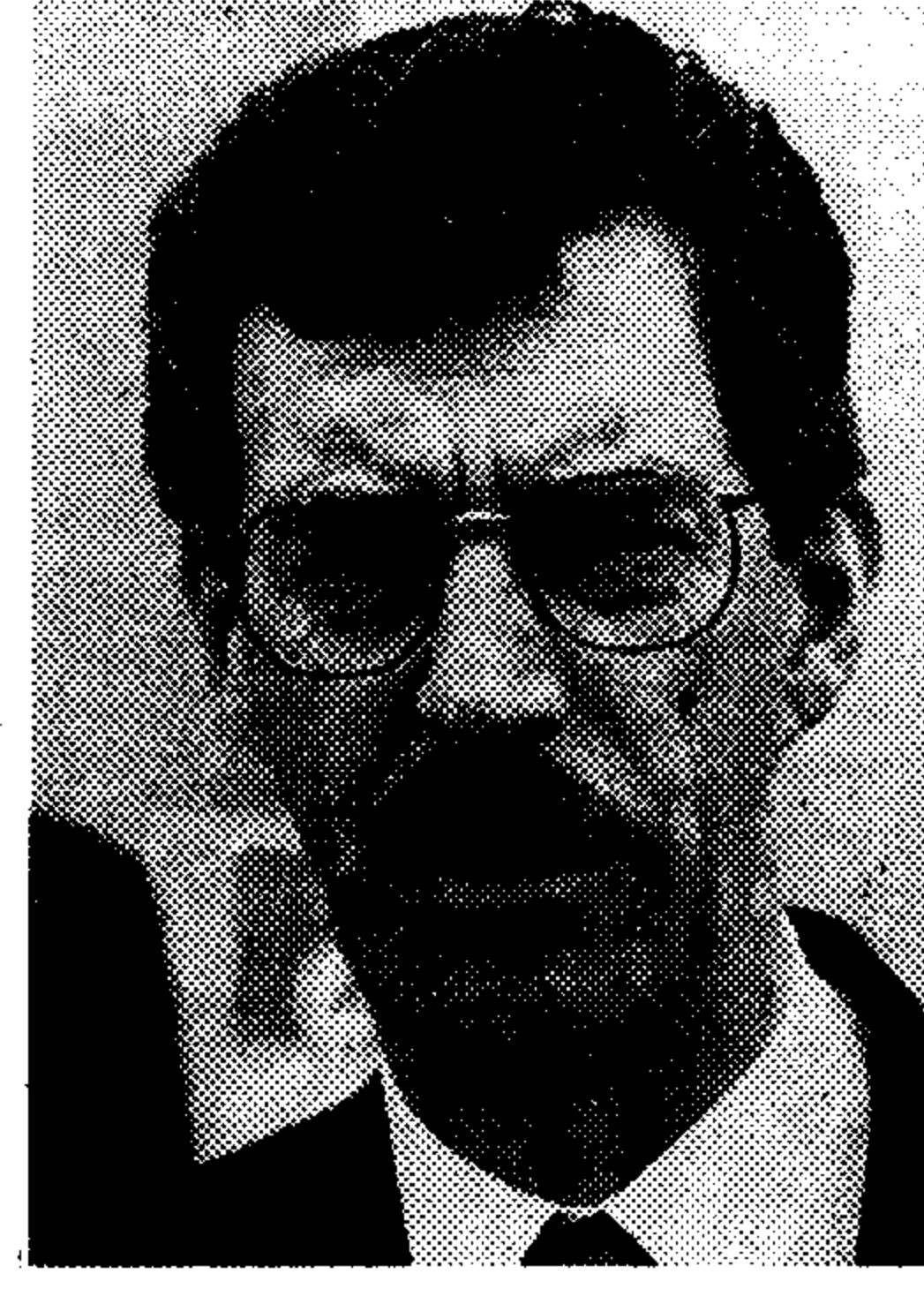
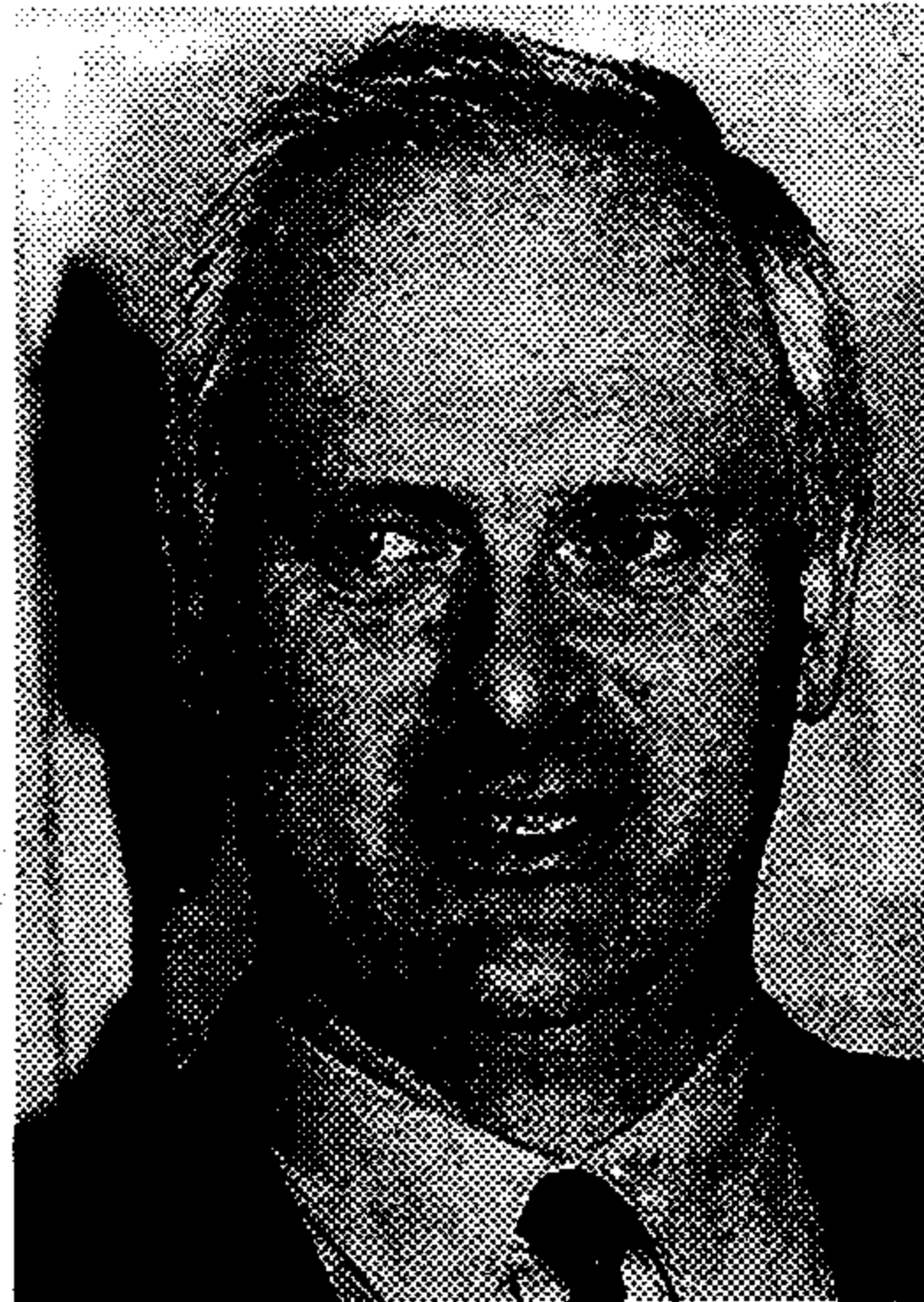
For red, what about Prionsias De Rossa, former Republican internee, former leader of the Kim Il Sung-admiring Workers' Party, now main man of the Democratic Left and Minister for Social Welfare in the "centre-left" Government dominated by Fine Gael.

Orange and blue are well represented by new Taoiseach John Bruton, who came back from political death after Dick Spring did the dirty on Albert Reynolds. Recent opinion polls showed Bruton ("Brutal" to his legions of enemies) to be in the John Major league of popularity - more than half his own party didn't want him as Taoiseach. Bruton got his reputation from his hardline monetarist policies in previous coalition governments. He is a unionist to his Blueshirt boots.

Yellow Spring

Kingmaker and Labour Leader Dick Spring couldn't be described as "green" in any sense - nor "red" for that matter. Yellow would be much more appropriate for such an opportunist.

The would-be hammer of Fianna Fail was prepared to crawl back into Government with Reynolds successor Bertie Ahern when the Irish Times published an old story about Fianna Fail duplicity. Spring



Rogues gallery: In the new Irish coalition government Bertie Ahern, John Bruton and Dick Spring are united against republicanism and for the fake peace offered by the Major government

promptly picked up his ball and went looking for someone else to play with.

Some paranoid people have even suggested that the scuppering of a new Fianna Fail/Labour Coalition might have something to do with the British preference for dealing with Bruton and Spring. The appearance of British Ambassador Blatherwick at Bruton's first meeting of the Forum for Peace and Reconciliation is surely a nod of approval from London.

The Brits can more easily negotiate with a new Dublin Government that is fiercely anti-Republican and which is more likely to agree an internal settlement in the North and to changes to Articles 2 and 3 of the South's Constitution. The problem for the British is that although Fianna Fail would have asked for a bit more, the new coalition will find it harder to deliver a deal - especially if Fianna Fail plays the republican card.

Sinn Fein's political strategy of relying on Reynolds (with Clinton's help) to pressure the British was a disaster even before Spring got Reynolds. The "Framework Document", now delayed to early in the New Year, will be wholly within the terms of the Downing St. Declaration of 1993.

gle because they still hanker after a military victory.

Provocation

The almost too-casual approach of RUC Chief Annersley, "predicting" the IRA ceasefire will last until Easter is virtually an invitation to a rematch which he believes the

Bruton got his reputation from his hardline monetarist policies in previous coalition governments. He is a unionist to his Blueshirt boots.

Limited powers

British withdrawal and self-determination for the Irish people as a whole were never part of the plan. Former Fianna Fail leader Reynolds may be right in his forecast of some kind of all-Ireland body with executive powers. But this will be confined to tourism, regional development and agriculture - areas in which it makes sense to co-operate anyway.

In return Dublin will agree to changes in Articles 2 & 3 of the Constitution, the effect of which will be to formally recognise for the first time British jurisdiction over part of Ireland. In the words of a disillusioned SDLP member talking about the Brook/Mayhew talks a couple of years ago: "it'll be less than we were offered in 1974" (the Sunningdale Agreement brought down by the Loyalists).

There is little chance in the short term of a significant split in the Republican movement. The much reported robberies and the Enniskillen bomb find are more likely to be the acts of those within the RUC and the British Army whose role is threatened by the ceasefire, or who wish to provoke the IRA into resuming the armed struggle

that the British cannot be driven out by force of arms alone.

But this impasse of Republican politics is above all an opportunity. Both the London and Dublin governments are weak and unstable. Neither is any position to make any likely settlement stick.

Major's reliance on the Ulster Unionists is the product of the chronic divisions in the Tory Party (and in the ruling class as a whole) on the European Union. More importantly, it mirrors the political crisis in the whole British State.

The British demand that Dublin recognises its sovereignty over the six counties appears completely at odds with the long retreat from empire - Hong Kong and Gibraltar being the two latest examples.

The Tory right limits Major's ability to throw even the smallest bone to Dublin while his preferred solution - a devolved government in Belfast - risks stirring up secessionist feelings elsewhere in the increasingly less United Kingdom.

Tories trapped

The Tories find themselves trapped in a situation where advance or retreat risks bringing the 200-year old edifice crashing down. The "Irish Question" was the occasion for some of the biggest splits in the British ruling class in the last century and it would be surprising if it doesn't figure in the break up of the British state.

Likewise in Dublin the installation of the new pro-British government under John Bruton and the apparent stabilisation of the economy gives the impression of stability.

But the ruling class remains deeply divided over the introduction of divorce legislation and the need to regulate the law on abortion following the Supreme Court decision a couple of years ago on the "X" Case.

Winning changes to the constitution will not be easy with Fianna Fail in opposition and the government led by someone as unpopular as Bruton. It is on these questions that Sinn Fein will pay a heavy price for its reluctant support for women's rights and its identification with the reactionary and clericalist Fianna Fail.

But there is no other way to independence and self-determination than by the linking forces who fight for national independence with struggles for workers and women's rights.

Our task in Britain is to build the withdrawal movement and to support the right of the Irish People to self-determination.

IRELAND UNFREE

1995 Bloody Sunday Memorial March
PEACE THROUGH BRITISH WITHDRAWAL!
 Saturday 28 January
 12.00 noon Platt Fields, Manchester

The last 12 months have seen dramatic political developments in Ireland. The continuing Irish peace process puts the responsibility on the British government to move forward towards lasting peace.

HEAR Labour MP's Jeremy Corbyn and Bill Etherington, Sinn Fein, a relative of one of the Bloody Sunday Victims from the Derry based Bloody Sunday Justice Group

Details: Troop of Old Movement: 0171-609 1743.

Berlusconi: from nowhere to oblivion

By Aidan Day

"The most reactionary government in Europe" was a title held by the British Conservatives for the whole of the 1980s.

Not until last year did they have a real challenger: inventing a party from nothing, building a governmental alliance from incompatibles, and taking political office in one of the continents most unstable countries. Silvio Berlusconi. Media mogul turns politician. The man from nowhere.

And it is beginning to look like that is where he is to return.

After 226 days in office Italy's 52nd post-war government has perished. Faced by a stack of no confidence motions - including most importantly one from his Lega Nord allies - Berlusconi has resigned, his political career strangled in its infancy.

On the face of it this latest casualty looks like just another mortality in the ritual slaughter that is Italy's political system - the country's governments have traditionally had a shelf life not much longer than Gorgonzola in the Summertime.

But behind all the blood and guts there is something more profound - the Italian ruling classes are in a deep crisis. This is primarily a crisis of restructuring. It takes the widest of forms. It is both economic and political.

Europe

Berlusconi was given a clear mandate - modernise Italy's political and economic structures in the context of the post-1989 European situation. He has been a dismal failure.

His first test was to put right Italy's massive budget deficit in accordance with European Union strictures. He floundered straight away. His bungling gave birth to a massive opposition movement.

Not only did he manage to unite the various wings of the trade union movement against him and draw them into explicitly political activity, but he also brought mass protest back onto the agenda. Over a million people demonstrated on November 12 against the proposed cuts in pensions and health benefits.

Victim

If the Berlusconi experiment was born as an attempt by the Italian bourgeoisie to begin post-Cold War modernisation so too has it become a victim of this process.

This is most apparent in the corruption charges now being assembled against him. One of the most striking things about the Italian political situation is the division that has opened up between the judiciary and the executive wing of government.

Although these days Tory politicians are regularly found guilty of serious misconduct - and even of illegal activity - it is mostly for their gross incompetence rather than an indication of a breach in the capitalist state machine.

The same cannot be said of Italy. After 1991 the systems of political administration were becoming redundant - there was no longer a need to structure the

whole of Italian political life around keeping out the Communist Party (PCI).

The blocs began to crumble. Big business wanted reform. It was no longer necessary to pay the high price of PCI exclusion - a deeply corrupt Christian Democratic party in permanent office, fuelled by the mafia, all under the benign approval of the church.

Pervasive corruption was becoming too burdensome. In a modern industrial western economy the need for constant pay offs and bribery slows down the turnover of capital and gets in the way of profit. Business becomes a bureaucratic mess. The empowerment of the judiciary to clean up the country was deemed unavoidable.

Disease

Someone was also needed for the second key strategic task: establishing a new centre right political formation. Because such a complete break with the past was called for the leading figure of the new government could not come from the diseased political classes. In stepped Signor Berlusconi.



With his band of middle management wannabees in a few months he conjured up out of nothing a fresh political party - Forza Italia. It was a remarkable phenomenon. A whole layer of the business classes became politicians overnight.

Now the party's over. The experiment has got out of hand.

The judges are beyond the control of the executive. After all, why should the prime minister be the only one in the country not to pay the price of business corruption?

Once it was announced that he was to be investigated his time was up as a political leader.

It has been precisely the fact of Berlusconi's newness to the scene that has been his undoing. He has not been able to shrug off his connections to his Fininvest business empire.

Similarly, the freshness of Forza Italia means he has no political base of any substance to fall back upon. The movement was a TV invention. Its fragility was



Regrets, I've had a few... but then again too many to mention

demonstrated back in July when the popular Milan prosecutor Antonio di Pietro was able to face down the government's proposal to limit the power of the magistrates.

Television

It is instructive that television has become a key issue in the protests. The November demonstration included tens of thousands of media workers angered at Berlusconi's proposals to reform the state network RAI. The plan was to distribute the seats on its governing body to the partners of the government coalition.

Political control over the means of mass communication was also the issue that brought to a head the conflict be-

now. With Berlusconi gone Forza Italia is more or less washed up. A new alliance is posed. And the obvious partners are the ex-communist PDS.

The PDS is trying to establish a popular front style of "constitutionalist government" that includes the small forces of the ex-Christian Democrats in the Peoples Party, some bits of Forza Italia (without Berlusconi), the Lega, and themselves.

Its leader Massimo D'Alema has accepted that some cuts in pensions will be necessary. In his haste to prove how "responsible" the new party is he has rejected all possibility of a bloc with the class struggle forces of Rifondazione Comunista.

The cross-class alliance sought by the PDS will probably never come off. There is too much residual fear of parties that have any historic connection with the workers movement - however tenuous or treacherous it may be. Already 60 Lega deputies have threatened to resign if a link is established with the PDS.

The other possibility is a government led by the far right. Fini the leader of the MSI is beginning to emerge as the one character not smeared by the betrayal or backbiting. This is the image he seeks - the man with a cool head in a crisis, a "post-fascist" statesman to lead a strong Italy.

This is what is behind the dissolution of his party into the broader force of the National Alliance - a formation of the right that has not the same fascist heritage. If there is a move to a more presidential style of rule, as some are touting, he would be an obvious choice.

This would be disastrous. An outright victory for the far right would be the herald of a massive onslaught on the workers movement. This is not yet posed however - the Italian bourgeoisie is not seeking this road at the moment.

There is then a striking similarity here with the debate going on in the political classes of Britain - how best to re-compose the centre right in order to marginalise the labour movement and workers parties?

And who is to be the Christian Democrat to implement the austerity? If this proves insufficient is it necessary to turn to the far right forces of authoritarian populism?

The situation therefore remains very fluid. The mass movement has not gone away. The deferral of the austerity measures to the Spring only postpones the necessary confrontation. What emerges from it will shape the future not only of Italy, but the whole of Europe.

tween the Lega Nord and Forza Italia. In a vote called by the Lega speaker of the chamber Irene Pivetti, Lega deputies voted against the government and opened up the fissure of the government bloc.

Future

The petit bourgeois regional populists of the Lega Nord remain at the centre of developments. With 117 of the 630 seats in the Chamber of Deputies - more than both the National Alliance and Forza Italia - they are now in a position to determine the future direction of government.

Up to now they have been able to look two ways - to their alliance partners who are implementing the austerity measures and to their base in the middle classes who want reform. Bossi has been a skilful enough politician to pull off the balancing act - and has along the way been denounced by Berlusconi as a "despicable traitor" for his inconstancy.

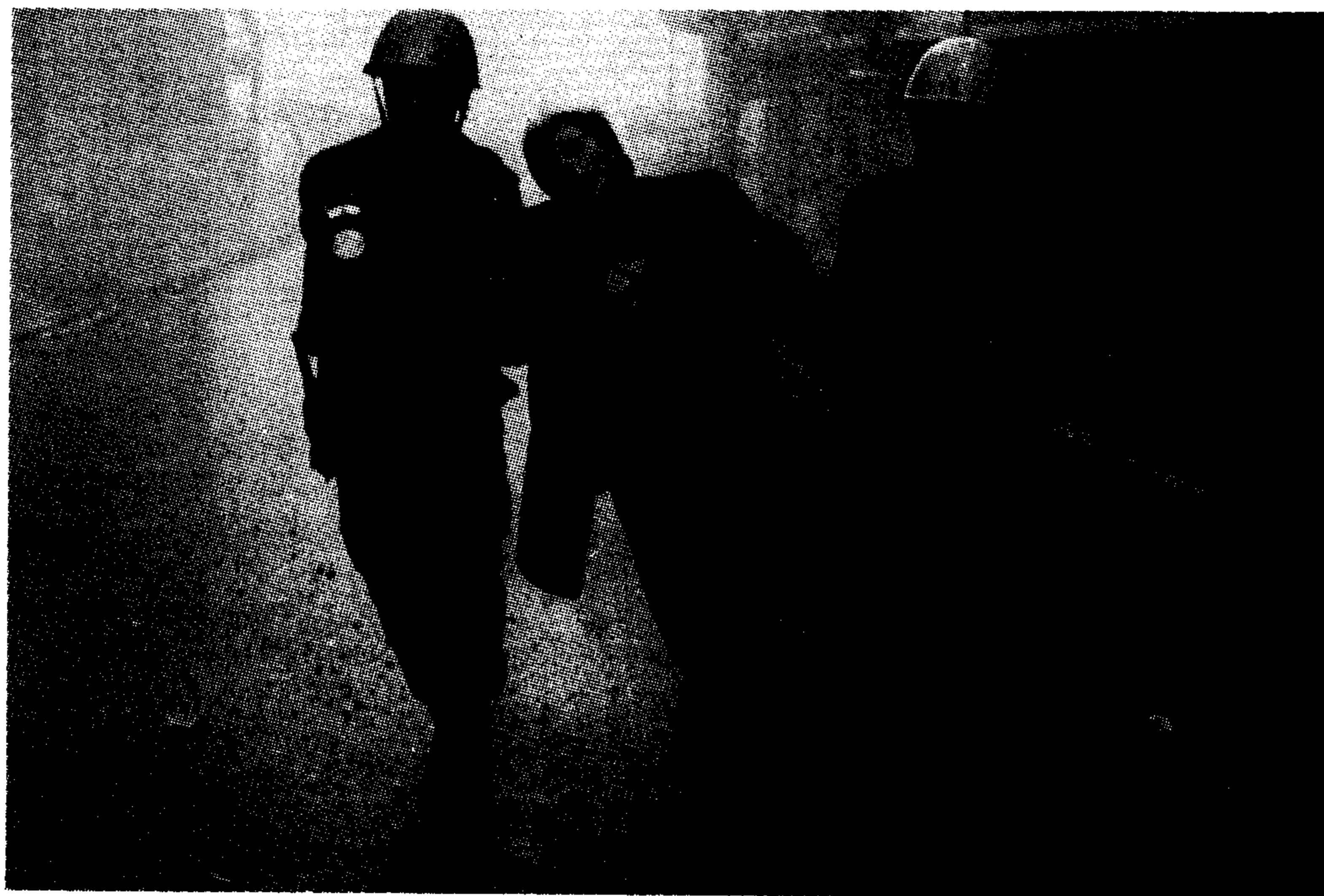
Things may become more difficult

Scandal of Militant's stance against Bosnian struggle

Recent issues of *Militant* have carried letters critical of that organisation's outrageous refusal to either support Bosnia's right to self-defence or to call for the lifting of the imperialist arms embargo on the besieged country. *Militant* has so far refused to publish this letter, from *Socialist Outlook's* ALAN THORNETT. Thornett has travelled in the region with International Workers' Aid and written extensively on the war.

I was appalled at the dreadful article on Bosnia in the December 9 1994 *Militant* by John Bulaitis.

This article refuses to support the Bosnians against blatant Serbian aggression and the Greater Serbia project; defines Bosnia's multi-ethnic population as "Muslim"; refuses to recognise that the struggle for national rights is a class issue;



falsely regards the conflict as an ethnic civil war; refuses to call for the lifting of the arms embargo and regards talk of a multi-ethnic Bosnia as "pure utopia".

It also, scandalously, argues that Bosnia has never, in any case, been a "distinct nation".

Before the war Bosnia's three main ethnic (or really confessional) groups, were 31.3% Serbs, 17.3% Croats and 43.7% Muslims. The divide was religious rather than ethnic, since

ethnically the bulk of the population were Bosniac.

Religion laid lightly on the population. Bosnia-Herzegovina has been throughout its history and in all its different forms a multi-national, and multi-religious entity.

Charges of Muslim fundamentalism are misplaced. Bosnian Muslims have probably been less attracted to fundamentalism than any Muslim community in the world. Generally they do not observe Islamic law,

particularly in the cities.

Ethnic conflict and the rise of Serbian nationalism was deliberately promoted by the racist Milosevic project. It was not an "inevitable" result of the break-up of Yugoslavia.

Bosnia is an historic nation which has existed for 2,000 years in various forms. Even during the Yugoslav Federation, the bulk of the population saw themselves as Bosniac first.

The notion that Bosnia is not a nation because it is multi-eth-

nic is fundamentally flawed. Socialists should be *opposed* to the notion of ethnically pure states - not propose ethnic purity as a test of nationhood.

Socialists should be in favour of the right of nations to self-determination including their right to secede. We support oppressed nations against their oppressor and this is not altered by the politics of their leaders, pro-capitalist or otherwise.

The national question and the right to self-determination is a vital working-class issue which is fundamental for the struggle for socialism in ex-Yugoslavia. Socialism can only be successfully advanced on the basis of the defence of these basic democratic rights.

The unity of the working class has to be built on this - not abstract phrases. The call for workers' defence squads as a precondition for supporting the defence of Bosnia is a confused cop-out. The Bosnian working-class is defending the country at the present time. Many of them are organised by units raised by the trade unions. The miners' brigades defending Tuzla, for example, comprises Muslims, Serbs and Croats - all fighting to defend Bosnia.

• For a copy of the cited article from *Militant*, send two first-class stamps to us at PO Box 1109, London, N4 2UU.

SOCIALIST OUTLOOK



Where We Stand

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

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

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

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

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

What's HAPPENING

JANUARY

Sat 7 - Sun 8

SOCIALIST Outlook local organisers' conference on *The State and Revolution* and the politics of Leninism. Starts at 10.00am sharp on both days. North London. Registration and documentation: £4.00/£2.00.

SOCIALIST Campaign Group forum.

Friday 13

LONDON Clause 4 cam-

paign 6.30pm Queen's Head Acton St, off Gray's Inn Rd. Kings' Cross tube.

Sat 14

SOCIALIST Outlook editorial board meeting 2.00pm London.

Sat 14 - Sun 15

SMTUC committee meeting.

Mon 16

DEFEND Clause 4 public meeting Oxford Town Hall 8.00pm Main Hall with Margaret Prosser (TUC General Council).

Sat 21

BUILD a Wapping Union! March for trade union rights assemble 9.45am Tower Hill tube, march to rally on green opposite News International. Called by NUJ.

DEMONSTRATION against Oxford County Cuts.

Tues 24

MASS lobby and day of action against Oxford Cuts.

Weds 25

'STOP the SATs' lobby of NUT executive 4.00 - 5.30pm NUT HQ Mabledon Place WC1

'STOP the SATs' rally Friends Meeting House Clinton Rd WC1 5.30 - 7.30pm.

Sat 28

BLOODY Sunday march in Manchester from Platts' Field to Albert Square. Speakers include MPs Jeremy Corbyn and Bill Eth-

erington. Socialist Outlook sellers meet 12.00 noon at Platt Lane entrance. Details: 0171 609 1743.

CLAUSE 4 campaign National Steering Committee Manchester.

FEBRUARY

Sat 4

NATIONAL Assembly Against Racism, 10.00am - 5.00pm York Hall, Old Ford Road, London E2. Registration: £7/£4 from 'National Assembly', THARC, c/o CAG, 22 Hanbury Street, London, E1.

Sat 11

INTERNATIONAL Dayschool organised by Socialist Campaign Group Supporters' Network. 10.30am - 5.30pm Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, WC1. Holborn tube. Registration/Creche - £7 waged, £3 unwaged from SCGN, 1 Gorefield House,

Canterbury Road, London NW6.

Sat 18

WELFARE State Network working conference on benefits at University of London Union, Malet Street, WC1.

Sat 18 - Sat 25

YOUTH CND week of local DIY action details 0171 607 3616.

Sat 25

CLAUSE 4 London rally Sat 25/Sun 26

GREATER London Labour Party Conference.

APRIL

Sat 8

WELFARE State Network Conference.

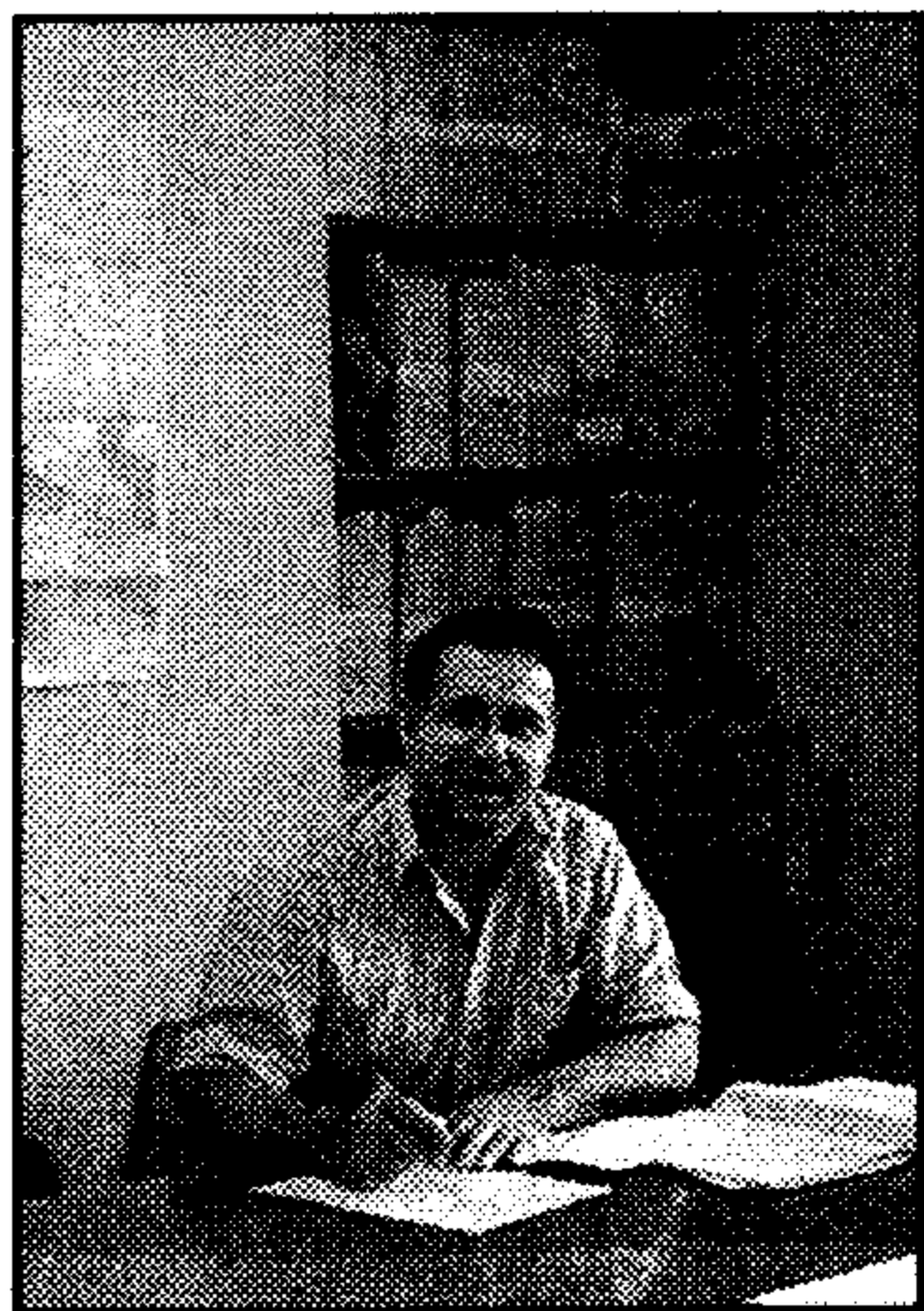
Sat 29

Special Labour Conference on Clause 4

Refurbishment success

The refurbishment of the *Socialist Outlook* administration offices will have been completed by the time this issue goes on sale.

The offices have been cleaned, repainted and had the old carpet replaced. Over the next week woodwork varnishing and rewiring will be completed in time for new administrative staff to take their positions.



It's all smiles at the new-look Socialist Outlook offices

New printing of 'Militant' pamphlet

A second printing of the *Socialist Challenge* pamphlet advertised in the last *Socialist Outlook* will be made next week. The new printing has been made necessary by orders from Militant readers in Britain and Belgium.

The pamphlet is available for £1.00 from 'Outlook International', PO Box 11089, London, N4 2UU. Bundles in multiples of five are half-price.

Socialist Summer School

The week has been set for the annual marxist school held for supporters of the Fourth International.

The school will be in Aberystwyth from Wednesday 23 to Monday 28 August. To book your place, send your £35 deposit to 'Socialist Outlook Summer School', PO Box 1109, London N4 2UU.

Phillipines book appeal

As readers will see in this *Socialist Outlook*, the Filipino left is turning away from its traditional reference point with Maoism.

Groups like BISIG [interviewed in *Socialist Outlook* 62] and the Multilateral Co-ordinating Body are organising new revolutionary organisations with a combined membership of over 10,000.

The Fourth International is eagerly answering requests from these organisations for english-language marxist literature. *Socialist Outlook* is sending a shipment of books to Manila on January 24.

More than 30 volumes by Leon Trotsky, Ernest Mandel, James P. Cannon, Alan Thornett, Indian Fourth Internationalist Kunal Chattopadhyay and others have been donated by the *Socialist Outlook* staff.

If readers have books they would like to give for the shipment please contact your *Socialist Outlook* seller or mail them to 'Outlook International', PO Box 1109, London N4 2UU.

FeedBACK

Socialist Outlook welcomes readers' letters. Letters over 400 words may be cut. Write to 'Feedback', PO Box 1109, London, N4 2UU.

Strategy from Bolshevism

Charles Mullet's 'Comment' article [A Bolshevik Century?, *Socialist Outlook* 73-74] poses very real questions for Leninists like Socialist Outlook. We continue to defend a basic strategic line for Britain developed out of the experiences of the 1917 Russian revolutions and adapted for the west by Lenin's Communist International and those who defended its tradition.

Mullet attempts to stress the limits of what we can learn from 1917 - arguing that Bolshevik tactics were only the historically specific form of the Russian revolution. Mullet concludes that a part of the Trotskyist tradition has mistakenly superimposed the Russian experience onto the modern world - "a copy of Trotsky's *History of the Russian Revolution* in their anorak pockets, eager to 'spot the Kerensky' and give advice on defeating the local Kornilov."

Sadly it is Mullet who is mistaken. Of course the Leninist-Trotskyist tradition must admit it has made mistakes - but not in defending the basic propositions

we carry forward from the Russian revolution.

Many of these ideas - that only the workers and peasants can successfully lead the revolution, that democratic gains can only be consolidated through social revolution, that this requires the independence of the revolutionary working class party and the smashing of the capitalist state machine, that this requires the direct economic democracy of workers' councils - are crucial tools in making politics today.

In Brazil, fighting for independent working class politics, in South Africa, working for a break with the ruling rich, in Belgium, confronting the politics of the popular front, and worldwide - it is the living continuity of Bolshevism which the Fourth International renews and represents in this period of late capitalism.

**Chris Brooks,
London N4.**

'A Bolshevik century?'

The question mark says it all. How can we even talk of 'A Bolshevik Century?' [*Socialist Outlook* 73-74]. At best, perhaps, a

Bolshevik decade - 1917-1927 and the defeat of the opposition, the victory of stalinism and the transformation of the Communist International from organiser of the world revolution into a branch of the stalinist foreign office.

In retrospect I would go even further back. The banning of factions at the [Bolsheviks' 10th] Congress, one of Lenin's few strategic mistakes, was the beginning of the end. It was the foundation on which Stalin could build his bureaucratic strangulation of the revolution.

How can we talk of a Bolshevik century - a century which saw the physical liquidation of the leaders of October; a century in which the political self-determination of the imperialist colonies has resulted in even greater exploitation in the form of neo-colonialism; where the 'ethnic diversity' of the nations in the Czar's 'prison house of people' has been hideously transformed into xenophobic madness and the revival of anti-semitism; a century which saw the destruction of the most powerful working class movement - in Germany - and ended with the geographical elimination of the USSR itself.

Bebel, at the turn of the century, described the 19th century as the century of hope and predicted that the 20th would be the century of achievement. The October revolution seemed to give flesh to that prediction. Now history will regard October as marxists regarded the Paris Commune - an example of what can be, a blueprint for the future.

What we have left is a nucleus of Bolshevism, a kernel of what we must safeguard for future generations.

Charlie van Gelderen, Cambridge.

Socialist Outlook

**Defend
Clause IV
Fight for
Socialism**

Troops out of Chechenia!

BATTLES are still raging in the Chechen capital Grozny as we go to press, as the Russian invasion runs into the predicted stiff resistance.

The hollow boasts three weeks ago of Russian Defence Minister Pavel Grachev that airborne units could take Grozny within two hours now look even more ridiculous.

The Russian onslaught on Chechenia has been marked by a ruthless savagery, with repeated intimidatory air strikes consistently aimed at civilian targets.

But with three centuries of proud resistance to Russian domination behind them, the Chechens were never going to be easily used as sacrificial victims to boost the flagging reputation of Russian President Yeltsin.

Dozens of Russian tanks and armoured vehicles are reported destroyed, and over 100 prisoners have been taken by the irregular Chechen 'Dad's Army' which has been assembled to defend the capital.

Yeltsin's decision to invade was always a desperate attempt to impose the stamp of his authority



Chechen irregulars hold up the might of Russian army attackers

as Russia descends into economic and political chaos.

He delayed a decision to launch the all-out military offensive until he had been given an enthusiastic nod of support from the Clinton administration and the European Union, where it was

agreed that the repression of the 3-year Chechen 'independence' was a purely 'internal' matter for Russia, to be resolved as quickly and quietly as possible.

For international capital, a crucial factor is the fight for control of Russia's only oil pipeline between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea. But there would also be alarm that if the Chechen revolt were allowed to succeed, many other nations within the Russian Federation could seek to follow suit, challenging the ability of any Russian government to repay its loans to western banks and its ability to open up the new markets coveted by western multinationals.

In the event, even the USA has become embarrassed and a little squeamish at the bloody tactics employed by the Russian invasion – and alarmed at the prospect that the situation could degenerate into a prolonged Afghanistan-style guerrilla resistance.

Within Russia, where the economic collapse has continued with a disastrous 15% reduction in industrial output last year, and where his own privatisation chief is now calling for some compa-

nies to be renationalised, Yeltsin sees the crackdown against 'Chechen gangsters' as a means of winning back domestic support, appealing to the growing forces of Great Russian chauvinism.

In fact it has left him more isolated than ever in the Russian parliament. His former prime minister Yegor Gaidar has joined the large number opposing the war, which also includes the Communists. Only the most right wing nationalists, headed by Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, have supported the invasion.

Isolation

His political isolation appears to be driving Yeltsin ever closer to a small coterie of advisors, including the heads of the Defence and Interior ministries and other elements of the military apparatus. These advisors are pushing him ever further to the authoritarian right, with increased reliance on military support.

Yet the invasion was opposed from the outset by rank and file soldiers and the most intelligent military commanders on the ground, and appears to have led

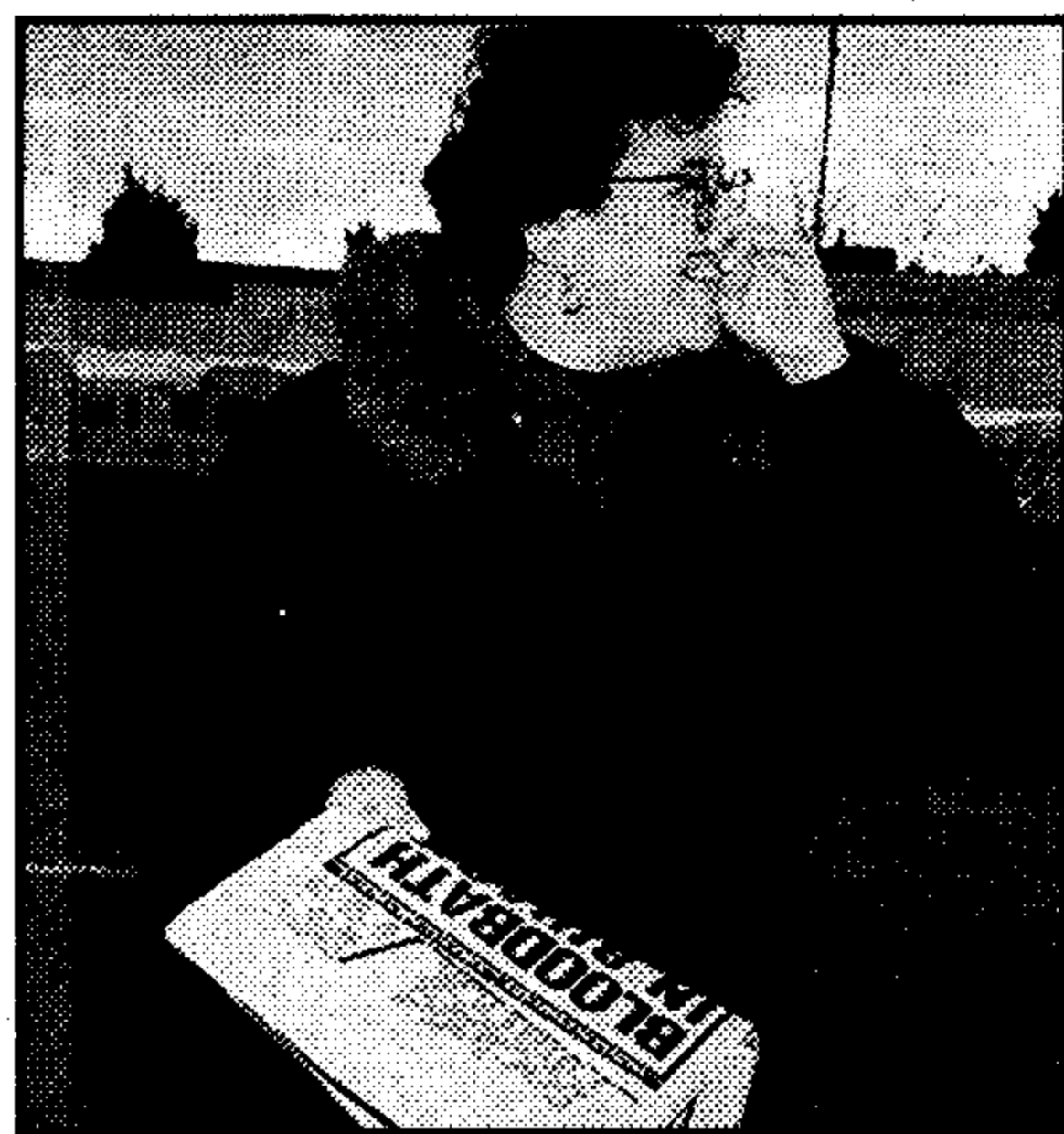
to a wholesale crisis within the army.

The morale among the invading troops is at rock bottom as they confront the courageous Chechen resistance. An outright victory seems most unlikely.

The anti-war movement, muted by political demoralisation and by widespread racist hostility to the mainly muslim and darker-skinned peoples of the Caucasus, is beginning to make itself a factor in Moscow. It will grow in intensity as the Russian death toll mounts.

The Russian troops must be immediately withdrawn from Chechenia, and the right of self-determination must be upheld for nations which, like the Chechens in their 85% vote for independence in 1991, show they desire it.

In the long run Yeltsin cannot bomb or shoot enough people to keep the Federation together by force: only a reversal of his disastrous marketisation policies, the development of democratic socialist planning and the beginnings of economic expansion can secure a voluntary federation of nations.



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