

Socialist OUTLOOK

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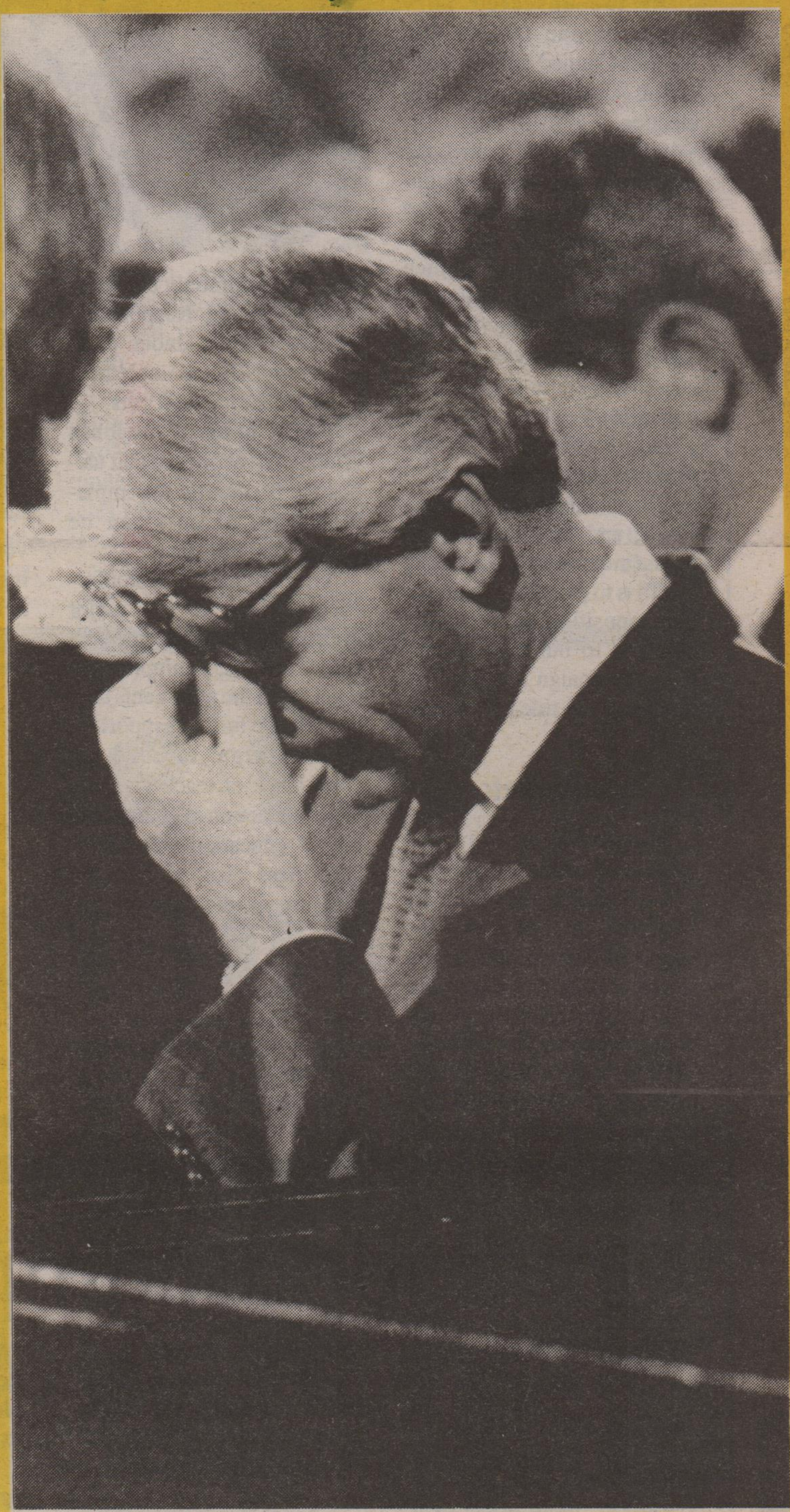
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Put Major out of his misery

FINISH OFF THE TORIES



THE LOCAL elections on May 4 confirmed what most of us already knew. The Tory government, hated and discredited even in the eyes of many of its own Party candidates and former supporters, has lost any popular mandate to govern.

The Scottish elections and now council polls in Wales have seen the Tories ousted from the leadership of any local authorities at all. In the whole of England they now control just eight of over 300.

As they writhe awkwardly under

media torment, groping for explanations of the latest of a succession of electoral debacle, Major's cabinet have so far managed to blame the electorate, their own rebel back-benchers, the world economy – anything but the policies which millions of voters have so emphatically rejected.

Sleaze

More and more Tory voters have realised that they too are suffering at the hands of a government which now seems incapable of listening to anyone, and embroiled in a permanent succession of embarrassing examples of sleaze

and incompetence.

Winston Churchill's rip-off of £12.5 million in Lottery funds on the eve of VE Day must have left a sour taste in the mouth of even the most hardened Tory voter.

All eyes are again on Tony Blair, after Labour's record share of the vote. But there are fears that instead of putting the boot into the Tories and stepping up the fight for an early general election, the Labour leadership will continue its internal war against the left and the unions, letting the Tories off the hook.

There are issues a-plenty which Labour could support to stoke up a mass anti-Tory movement. A million

health workers could shortly be balloting for strikes over their insulting one percent pay offer. Angry campaigns are growing against NHS cuts. Thousands of teachers' jobs are at risk, with the NUT balloting soon for a one-day protest strike.

The problem is that 'New Labour' has so far studiously avoided any involvement with these struggles.

The growing numbers now fighting the Tory offensive will not readily forgive the Labour leadership if it pulls back now.

Major's gang are battered, bothered and confused. Let's finish off the Tories!

Tories suffer school cuts backlash Fight hots up for NUT strike action

By Roy Leach
(NUT National
Executive,
personal capacity)

The 'meltdown' suffered by the Tories in the local elections was, to a large degree, a reflection of the mass opposition to education cuts.

As the unseated Tory leader of one Oxfordshire District Council put it: "Education was an issue in this election.

It is not a matter which the district council has any control over." Nevertheless, the Fight Against Cuts in Education (FACE) pledge, which called for a commitment to improved education funding and legally enforceable class sizes, helped to expose the complicity of many Tory councillors in the current round of swingeing cuts.

The challenge confronting FACE and the teaching unions (most particularly the NUT) is to provide a focus for the opposition to education cuts and to build the broad-based campaign necessary to turn back the tide of Tory attacks.

Network

For FACE the principal task is to develop the network of local campaigns which are emerging up and down the length of Britain, and to ensure that each and every one affiliates and relates to the national campaign.

This is particularly important as governing bodies which have submitted deficit



budgets (commonly known as Needs Related Responsible Budgets) come under pressure from LEAs to implement government inspired cuts.

FACE needs to establish effective networks so that tactics for frustrating the implementation of cuts can be rapidly disseminated.

The national FACE conference on June 10 is a major priority for enhancing the profile of FACE; equipping activists with the arguments they need to win further support for the campaign; to build the confidence of teachers about to go into action over the funding of education and excessive class size; and to put pressure on the teaching unions.

The NUT ballot for a one-day national strike to launch the Union's class-size campaign and against under-funding will open around 15 May.

General Secretary Doug

McAvoy has already fired the first salvos against his conference's decision with a mailing to all schools.

The left has responded with a follow-up to the Oxfordshire Pay & Conditions Conference on May 13.

Material arguing for a 'yes' vote will be circulated, including direct mailings to schools in areas where the local leadership may seek to sabotage the ballot.

High profile

A one-day strike won't, on its own, reverse the Tory offensive against education but it will provide the most high-profile launch for an ongoing campaign.

It is essential that education is not allowed to drop out of the political frame.

The recent elections have shown how vulnerable the Tories are over the issue of education and they must not be

allowed to get off the hook.

The second FACE national demonstration in London on September 30 is ideally placed to put education centre-stage prior to the Treasurer's Autumn statement.

The maximum possible turn-out on the demonstration will also be a warning signal to an incoming Labour government that we expect education to be one of its major priorities.

This means extra money rather than the vague promises we currently receive. FACE has already established itself as a long-term campaign.

Labour must acknowledge that unless it reverses the damage inflicted by 16 years of Tory mismanagement it will have to deal with the anger of 'Middle England'.

Those who ignore this simple message will face their own 'Thursday 4th'.

Landslide buries Manchester Tories

By Aidan Salter

TORIES IN Greater Manchester were facing VE (Virtual Extinction) day when their 20 year Thatcherite rule of Trafford Council came to a humiliating end.

They lost 32 seats over the county, whilst Labour gained 39 seats - strengthening their position in all ten local authorities and taking over Oldham.

The Liberal Democrats not only failed to cash in on the Tory disaster, but lost 6 seats as well. The only BNP candidate - Kevin Henderson in Rochdale Newbold - polled a pathetic 104 votes.

Overall the results reflected national trends: the Tories unpopularity and the Blair roller-coaster.

But the Trafford also reflected anger at the council's cuts in education and social services, and at the Lottery cash scandal engulfing local MP Winston Churchill.

Despite a high-profile campaign focussing on local issues and the base as a councillor Militant Labour's Margaret Manning lost her Rusholme seat, polling 371 votes to Labour's 1,270.

Labour should not read the results as an endorsement of its local government record. Manchester's Labour Council has cut funding for the voluntary

sector, bringing frontline community organisations to brink of closure.

It has spent millions on the Olympic and Commonwealth Games bids, whilst cutting local leisure facilities.

Support for Labour has risen dramatically over the last few years in middle class suburbs such as Chorlton, Didsbury and Heaton Mersey.

At the same time the Liberal Democrats have made large inroads into working class districts of east Manchester, exploiting the perception that the council has ignored local needs.

Manchester City Council has also come under fire over its transport policy from environmental campaigners and from the Labour chair of its Planning Committee.

High pollution levels and traffic congestion have prompted direct action from cyclists and environmental activists. The newly formed Fresh Air Now alliance and the Green Party together fielded 31 candidates in the city's 33 wards.

Riding high on the Blair roller-coaster, it is likely that Labour councils in the region will implement a right-wing agenda incapable of meeting the needs of working-class communities and ethnic minorities.

It is also likely that significant opposition will emerge linking together anti-cuts and environmental campaigns.

HOME NEWS

McFadden campaign grows

ALEC MACFADDEN, well known trades unionist and member of the TUC General Council, has been sacked from his post at the Merseyside Trade Union, Community and Unemployed Resource Centre. Glenn Voris spoke to him for Socialist

Outlook.

What led up to your suspension?

Mainly the breakdown of my working relationship with Kevin Coyne, the coordinator of the Centre. There were also political differences which go back to the debates in 1993 regarding Trades Councils and unions.

The MTUCURC totally

boycotted the North West Peoples march against unemployment and pit closures, for example.

Once informed the management gave me five minutes to clear the building - as soon as I had left all the locks were changed on my office. All my mail and files were confiscated and looked through.

I asked the unions to boycott the centre and to start lobbying it on the days of my hearings.

Tony Benn, Arthur Scargill and the NUM, and every county association of the TUCs have written letters of support.

Around ten regional unions have now boycotted the Centre.

Most of the left has backed me, although the SWP have now started using the Centre again.

What are the specific charges?

The original 40 have been whittled down to just three after exhaustive hearings: total breakdown of working relationship with Kevin Coyne; establishing a company to gather EC funding for training the unemployed (a breach of duty they call it); and my general competency and professionalism.

I have appealed against my sacking to an Industrial Tribunal. I am represented by John Hendry QC who thinks I have an excellent case and a very good chance of winning.

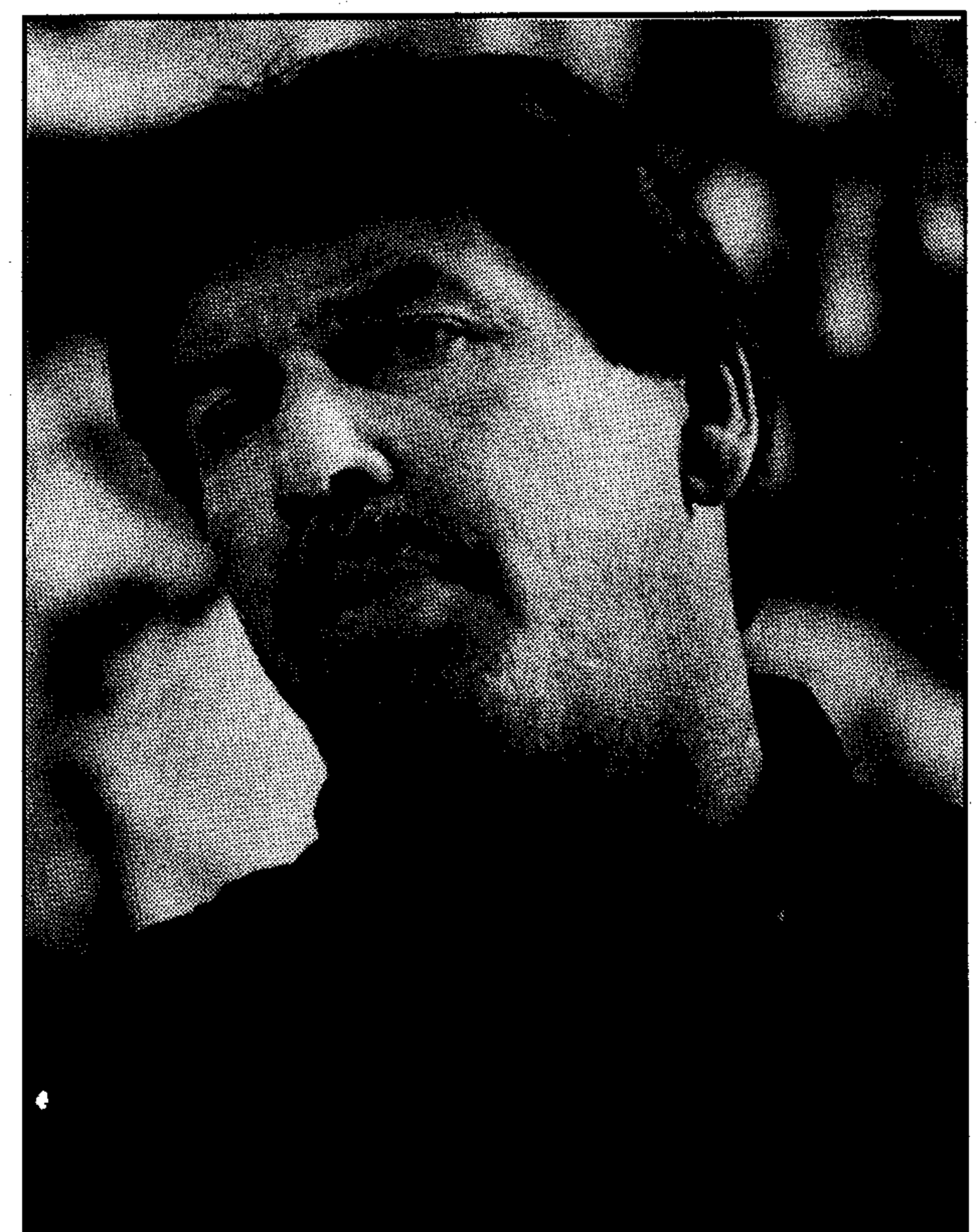
What are you asking of the labour movement?

- Continue the boycott
 - Write letters of support
 - Back the picketing of the Centre
- Letters of protest can be

Fighting on for socialism CONFERENCE of the left

Clause Four may be defeated, but the fight goes on for socialist policies in the Labour Party and the unions.

BIRMINGHAM
Saturday June 17
Watch this space for details!



Alec McFadden

PHOTO: Mark Woodyatt

sent to Kevin Coyne, MTUCURC, Hardman Street, Liverpool. Picketing starts every day at 8.30 am.

What we think

No mystery in election landslide

THE SCALE of the anti-Tory revolt sweeping through the electorate in England, Wales and Scotland has also had its impact in the Labour Party, and assisted Tony Blair's crusade against socialism.

The same desperate urge to get rid of Major's gang at any cost, which persuaded millions of angry middle class voters in Hertfordshire, Essex, cathedral towns and country hamlets to vote Labour, was also reflected in the constituency Labour Parties as they voted on Clause Four issue.

Politics, the fight for precise policies and specific demands, has taken a back seat in the desperate scramble to oust a discredited and bitterly unpopular government.

"I don't care who gets in as long as the Tories are thrown out," said one Plaid Cymru supporter as the Tory vote in Wales dropped to 10 percent, with Labour the main beneficiary. "This government is very unpopular. Mr Blair comes over extremely well on TV and people want to give him a chance," said a defeated Tory councillor in Canvey Island.

A-political

Blair's new clause, designed to offend nobody but socialists and commit him to no radical policies, and put forward only after most of the 'debate' was over, summed up the a-political mood.

He deliberately made the matter effectively a vote of confidence, challenging anyone voting against him to risk a split in the leadership in what everyone sees as the run-up to the next general elec-



'No, not victory—that's how many votes I got'

tion. Many who are far from enthusiastic about his new clause voted for it as a lesser evil to another election defeat.

Blair did the same thing with the local elections. Never has so little been offered to so many as Labour's feeble programme for local government. His claim that people are voting not against the Tories but 'for New Labour' flies in the face of the fact that the Party offered no actual policies or commitments for voters to endorse.

Of course the Tory leaders, too, are deluding themselves and retreating from any real analysis of politics.

They scratch their heads, wondering what or who to blame for this latest fiasco, debating whether or not a change of leader might make any difference — but refuse to examine the policies that have clearly angered and alienated their natural base of middle class voters.

Less than six weeks before the elections, 15,000 largely middle class parents journeyed to London to support the national FACE demonstration against cuts in education — reflecting a groundswell of anger running right across the shire counties. The Tory government stood firm against them — and has

paid the price.

A month before the election, Virginia Bottomley unveiled yet another package of hospital closures, triggering a revolt by back-bench Tory MPs, and scandal stories about the NHS have been regular fare in the Tory press: the government has stood firm, and paid the electoral price.

Poll after poll shows huge public opposition to rail privatisation — but the Tories are forging ahead, and are paying the price.

And while ministers whither on endlessly about economic growth and recovery, and boardroom chiefs stuff their wallets with record salary increases, the reality for



THE BRITISH CHARACTER
LOVE OF KEEPING CALM

most people on the ground is that jobs and living standards have never been less secure. There are scares over private pension schemes, over endowment mortgages and even insurance payouts may be taxed. Nothing seems safe.

Most of the 'new' jobs boasted by ministers are low-paid, part-time jobs, while many of those axed in round after round of redundancies and rationalisation have been what were solid, dependable jobs aspired to by the middle classes — including banking, insurance, middle manage-

ment.

To make matters worse for 'middle England' house prices are still depressed, tax increases are slashing real incomes, and insulting pay awards to nurses and health workers sum up a mean-spirited and inflexible government.

It's not the divisions in the Tory Party that cause them problems: it's the fact they are united in forcing home policies which have little popular support.

The anti-Tory mood now seems strongly enough estab-

lished to sweep Tony Blair into Downing Street. But where does he stand on the issues which have generated the 'feel bad' factor?

Voters who may take him on trust to get rid of Major may grant a brief honeymoon period, but they will be looking for real changes on the issues that matter: and Blair's new Clause sets out an agenda for no change at all.

Before the honeymoon is over, the fight must be waged by socialists inside the Labour Party for policies to meet the social and economic crisis.

Preparing for government



PHASE ONE was the elimination of Clause Four, a trial of strength with the left in the Labour Party and the unions, in which he enlisted the backing of the right wing mass media.

Phase Two in Tony Blair's preparation for government will be further moves to cut the unions' voice in policy making. It is already clear that union leaders who have opposed him will be allowed little or no influence on key issues.

Phase Three is likely to include proposals for the state funding of political parties that would end Labour's financial dependency and enable Blair to sever the remaining links between the party and the trade union movement that founded it.

Blair knows that his government, like previous Labour governments, will run into conflict with the trade union movement if it sticks to its right wing programme of minimal change.

Millions of workers who

are at present indifferent to the wording of Blair's new clause will vote Labour not to uphold the rigours of competition and the market, but in the expectation that new policies will be implemented to benefit them.

Minimum wage

They take seriously the call for a minimum wage, and they want that to be set at a serious level in excess of £4 per hour.

They want an end to the Tory war on the public sector, and cut-throat competitive tendering in local

government and the NHS. They want extra funds for health, education and pensions, and schemes to create real jobs, new houses and restore a viable public transport system. They may not realise that none of these are on offer from Blair's New Labour.

They will vote Labour because it remains the traditional party of the working class, and because workers take politics seriously.

This is not France, where the far left can safely cast a first round vote for a leftist candidate they know cannot win before choosing again in the second round. Workers want the Tories out, and Labour is the only plausible alternative government to the Tories.

Tony Blair has no intention of proposing policies that answer the needs of the working class. But it is equally clear that his actual policies can only be tested out, fought and defeated in practice.

As long as the dominant factor in workers' minds is getting rid of the Tories, debate on finer points of policy for the future appears

abstract and irrelevant. The time to take on Blair and win is once the main enemy has been swept away, and the timid role of Labour in office runs into conflict with the mood and aspirations of the working class.

That's why the fight now in the unions and in the CLPs remains crucial in setting out the ground for the fight to come.

Blair so far has accomplished only Phase One of his master-plan to reshape the Labour Party. The left must fight tooth and nail to stop the completion of this plan.

The battle in every union conference this summer must include the fight for specific policy commitments that would be demanded of a Labour government, and for opposition to any attempt to weaken the union link.

And the June 17 conference, aiming to unite the left in the party and the unions in a campaign for socialist policies, will be an important rallying point.

Blair is preparing for government. The left must prepare as well.

Our Promise

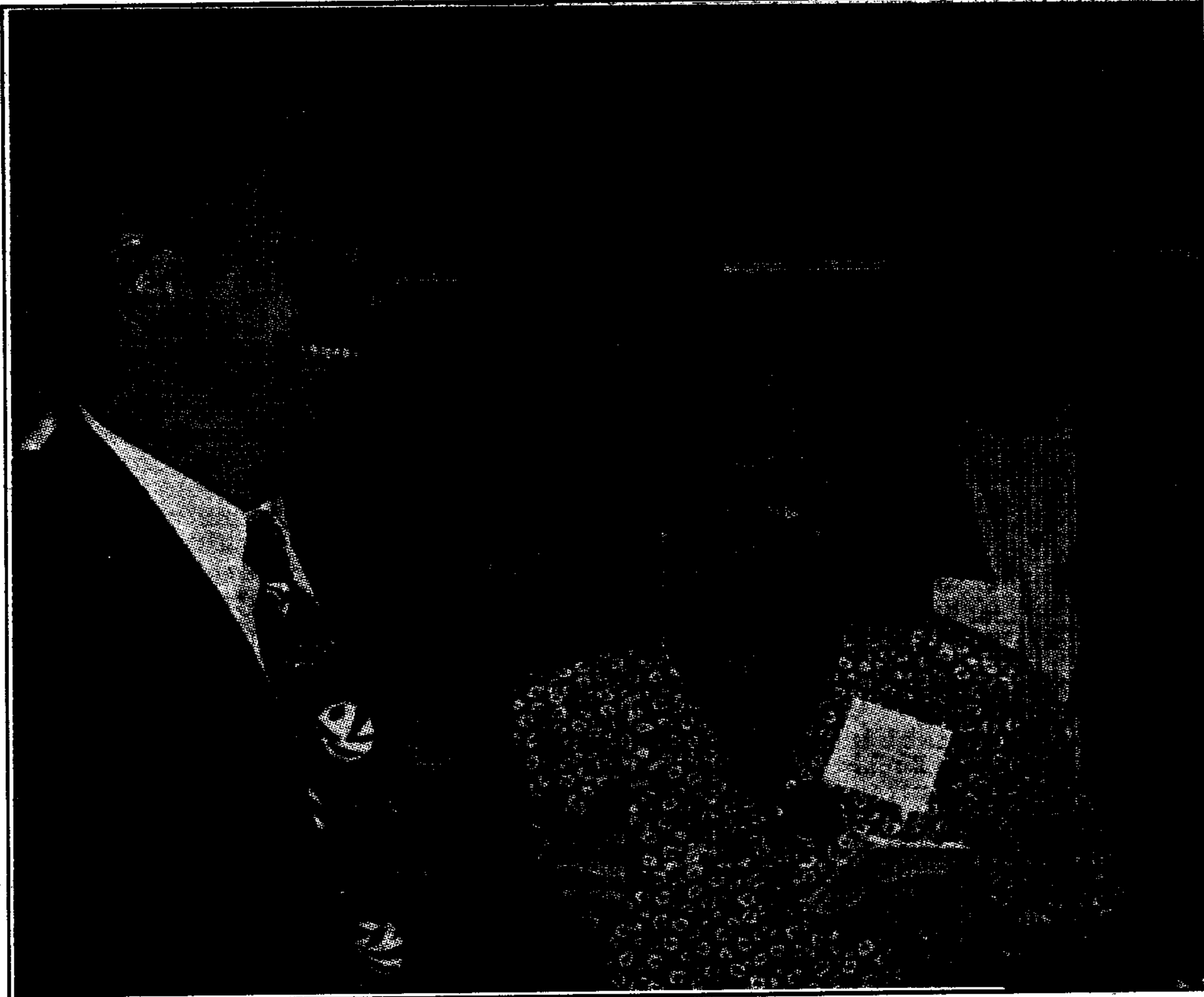
"In the name of Islam" screamed the front page of Today just after the Oklahoma bombing.

Every other big money newspaper sang the same tune. And they all got it wrong.

The reason? The modern capitalist press system promotes people with little sense of social reality or respect for facts. And cash, gadgetry and privileged access to sources are no substitute for hard analysis. Justification enough for the existence of small independent publications such as ours!

We can't promise to bring you exclusive on-the-spot footage from every corner of the world, but we do promise not to make things up or treat products of the FBI as proven facts.

EDITORIAL



Socialist Outlook supporter Andy Richards was one of the newly-elected Labour group of councillors to take control in Hove on May 4. A priority for the group now will be to turn around the Tory privatisation of the housing stock and find a way of re-housing the residents from the controversial Portland Gate complex.

Two-tier system as Blair rests on union right wing

ONE LAW for Blairites, another for the rest. That's New Labour.

For unions which blatantly ignored any democratic procedures but opted to vote for Blair's declaration of loyalty to the capitalist market system, there were no questions asked.

Among these were not only the hard-right AEEU, which did not conduct a ballot but a so-called 'opinion poll', and John Edmonds' hard-blowing and undemocratic GMB, which after months of blustering hints of opposition eventually plumped for Blair's clause, but also the shopworkers' union USDAW, which left the vote to its conference delegates after a speech from Tony Blair.

Apparently it is alright for delegates to decide when they back Tony, but not if they don't.

The two major unions which decided, quite properly according to their own rules, but without a ballot, to stand in defence of Clause Four were UNISON and the TGWU.

Both unions conducted consultations according to their own constitution. The TGWU decision was made, as always, by its elected lay delegation to Labour Conference; the UNISON vote was cast by elected delegates to its Affiliated Political Fund after extensive regional forums. Had either or both of them voted for Blair, nothing more would have been said.

Instead both unions



Empty words: Edmonds

have faced a two-pronged onslaught.

On the public level, there has been a huge campaign led by Blair's team attacking their leaders for being out of touch and their decision not to conduct membership ballots, blandly ignoring the problems of cost and the organisational effort that this would have involved.

Lists

Indeed UNISON is even now wrestling with the huge problem of assembling a full central membership list to conduct a ballot on NHS pay, with the grim echoes of last year's NATFHE judgement ringing in the ears of officials.

The second level of attack is being waged behind the scenes. Blair's gang has stepped up the 'dirty war' of arm-twisting and manipulation, openly promoting the right wing candidacy of Jack Dromey against a floundering Bill Morris for the TGWU lead-

ership, and seeking to undermine Rodney Bickerstaffe as the probable next general secretary of UNISON.

But of course these were not the only unions that held the line for Clause Four.

Even while the constituencies collapsed, casting only three percent of votes against Blair, block votes totalling a credible 35 percent at the conference included smaller unions like the RMT, GPMU, FBU, ASLEF and others, many of which have good reason to reject Blair's evasions on nationalisation, full employment, the minimum wage and trade union rights.

Had John Edmonds taken seriously his own speeches and votes a week earlier at the Scottish TUC for renationalisation and a plan to create a million new jobs, and the GMB voted for Clause Four, Blair would have been pushed close to defeat.

The fight on policy in the unions will now take on increased importance. The whole debate about how the decision on Clause Four was made was always designed to steer away from the central political choice that was on offer, between Blair's total capitulation to free market capitalism, or adherence to the notion of a different type of system, based on common ownership.

In the struggles yet to come these issues will come back to haunt the union leaders who fixed the vote for Blair.

Will it be war on the unions?

By Greg Tucker

THE INK is barely dry on Blair's new contract with capitalism – but already the Labour Party-trade union link is under attack.

There are moves to lessen the union input into party conference and the national executive.

Socialist Outlook has always questioned the way the block vote works. We have consistently argued for more democratic ways of expressing the voice of organised labour.

We want to increase the involvement of ordinary trade unionists against the impositions of the bureaucrats.

This is a totally different approach from Blair. He has used electoral changes to decrease the say of members not to involve them more.

Many on the left in the constituency parties bowed to the pressure for 'one member, one vote' (OMOV) to decide on Clause Four. The results of this are now becoming clear. The 'democracy' of an individual ballot has been used to cut out the role of trade unions affiliates in local parties.

Now that local government has been purged of the left, Blair finds it possible to curb

union support on Labour's NEC by including local government representation.

The new model "involvement" implemented by the newly-merged Communications Workers Union is instructive. General Secretary Alan Johnson was determined to do things the Blair way.

Despite the clear policy in the pre-merger unions in favour of Clause Four, he insisted on balloting the membership.

This took the form of an insert into the union's journal asking the loaded question: "do you agree with the NEC?". The pitifully low turnout of 17 per cent was nevertheless portrayed as a clear mandate.

Other unions are now being asked to follow the same example. Blair is even trying to intervene politically to shape decisions on industrial action in non-affiliated unions like the NUT.

It is no accident that the same Tony Blair refuses to repeal the Tory anti-union laws, which have seen the imposition of individual ballots as a crucial weapon to reduce the ability of unions to take prompt action and of their elected leaders to give firm leadership.

The trade unions have always depended on the elec-

tion of representatives who would negotiate and take decisions on behalf of wider groups of members, delegates who cast votes on behalf of branches at conferences, and executive members with scope to decide day-to-day policy.

To insist that each and every point of policy must be subject to an individual ballot of members could effectively paralyse unions in the workplace and at national level.

That is exactly why the Tories – whose party is subject to no internal democracy whatever – have worked so hard to impose these restrictions.

We urgently need now to wage a campaign reasserting the importance of participatory informed representative democracy.

This can go hand in hand with rooting out bureaucratic abuses and the fight for the democratic election and right to recall all full-time union officials.

■ **Conference: NEW LABOUR AND THE UNIONS, called by Socialist Movement Trade Union Committee, Saturday July 15.**

Details from SMTUC, 3, Blades House, London SE11 5TW

Why Blair's ballots do not mean more democracy

The so-called consultation over Clause Four was the first time the constituency parties have 'voluntarily' used the one member, one vote system (OMOV), although it is now compulsory for leadership and NEC elections.

Although the NEC pulled back from making it compulsory on this occasion, some 500 CLPs bowed to pressure to implement OMOV, and this proved a key element of Blair's success.

The exercise was reminiscent of a napoleonic plebiscite, simply seeking the endorsement of the leader's authority, and minimising the impact of any informed debate by reaching out to the most passive and least committed members.

The ballot paper produced by Walworth Road was a travesty, offering no option to vote positively for the old Clause Four, and was accompanied by a sycophantic letter from Tom Sawyer. Although there was no compulsion to use this, few CLPs decided to produce their

own ballot material.

Having seen how helpful it can be, and how strong a voice it gives the right wing media in shaping policies along his chosen lines, we can expect the principle of OMOV ballots to be promoted more widely by Blair and his team, not only on Labour Party issues, but also on union policy questions.

Tighter control

Inside the party this neatly coincides with the assault on the frequency of General Management Committee meetings and on the policy-making power of the annual conference, with the objective of bringing the party under ever-tighter control.

This of course is described as democracy. But replacing representative, delegated democracy with the spurious voting by uninformed, uninvolved individuals prey to the pressure of the mass media is a serious **attack** on democracy. In particular it excludes any trade union input from decision-making.

The democratic way of deciding policy centres on voting at General Committee level after full debate involving the views of delegates from all wards and affiliated unions.

Even when holding ballots there are more democratic options than Blair's plebiscite method. In Islington North CLP, the left managed to get an alternative ballot paper, containing both the options.

In other situations, ballot papers can be distributed at meetings which debate the issue, with postal votes for those who genuinely cannot attend.

Whatever the mechanism, the political fight must go on. If the left fail to explain the principles behind opposition to OMOV, we will not persuade many of the new layer of members joining the party without experience in the unions.

We cannot leave the territory to the leadership and their spin doctors. We have to fight within OMOV, while at the same time fighting for a more democratic alternative.

Clause Four defeated, but The party's not over!

By Nell Murray

SO BLAIR won, though not by the landslide he had hoped for.

In place of an outline of how the Labour Party could achieve its aims, it now has a mission statement full of waffle and no commitments beyond support for the 'rigours of competition' and the 'enterprise of the market'.

For all the talk about getting rid of archaic and meaningless forms of words, the whole debate was primarily an exercise designed to reassure the ruling class about the timidity of a Labour government, and to inflict a defeat on the Left.

Blair's new 'aims and values' makes explicit what has been the practice of the Labour Party and Labour governments throughout its history.

It is intended to signal to the ruling class that Labour has no 'hidden agenda' to cause it concern, and to the working class not to expect much from a Labour government, further underlining what is being said in (non-) policy statements.

The change is largely symbolic – since no Labour government ever intended to implement Clause IV – but no less important for that, since it removes an apparent commitment to socialism.

While at root changing nothing in the nature of the Labour Party, it does change the way in which many people perceive it.

Equally important to Blair was inflicting a defeat, and marginalising the Left over an issue which it regarded as basic to the very existence of the Labour Party.

Desperation

The overwhelming reason why Blair was most successful in the constituency parties is the level of desperation to get rid of the Tories.

Many are so desperate they will jump through whatever political hoops they are told stand in the way of a Labour victory.

Despite the 9-1 result in ballots, there is no great tide of enthusiasm for the new aims and values, with many setting aside serious reservations to vote 'for' what they are told is the key to electoral success.

Where real debate took place over the replacement of Clause IV, people could be convinced, but this was always an uphill struggle given the way Blair could mobilise the whole Party machinery, backed up by most of the me-

dia, to put his case.

The turning point was the collapse in the face of demagoguery about individual ballots. Rather than insist on informed democratic debate involving the maximum number of members and delegate decision-making, CLPs which had voted to keep Clause IV felt steamrollered into ballots and unable to summon up the arguments against.

Blair skilfully manipulated events from the start to circumvent collective decision making with the proposal for a special conference in advance of any union conferences.

The rigged 'debate', 'consultation', isolated voting and biased ballot papers were used in dictatorial fashion to get the desired outcome.

Those who resisted either the policy change or the

It soon became clear that resistance meant speaking out, with any that did so facing a tide of unattributed slanders and attacks emanating from Blair's office.

After the tide turned in Blair's favour with the Scottish conference, many MPs began to look to safeguard their own parliamentary careers. Even several of the Campaign Group of MPs were at best lukewarm about fighting Blair.

An exception to this progressive collapse was *Tribune*, which having prevaricated at the start, came down in support of the Defend Clause IV campaign.

New recruits

Much has been made of how the 100,000 new recruits to the Labour Party influenced the outcome of the Clause Four battle.



Prescott: empty words will not stop Blair attacking unions

method of achieving it were increasingly vilified for daring to speak out and for not abandoning collective decision making – though of course these criticisms did not apply to those who decided without ballots to back Tony Blair.

The exercise having worked so well, Blair is now looking at making postal ballots compulsory in future, given that they were only advisory this time around (though it was hard to tell the difference).

Union leaders who argued for Blair's clause to preserve influence on a Labour government are in for a rude awakening.

Most of the soft left eventually gave in to Blair. Many of their MPs supported Blair from the start, but some, such as Peter Hain, swallowed the line that this was an open exercise, open to adding to the existing Clause IV sections on racism, sexism and so on, not wanting to recognise what Blair's purpose was.

While this is undoubtedly true, it does not mean the left should write them all off just because a small, prominent minority are well-heeled arch modernisers and ex-SDPers.

Many are trade unionists joining at the reduced rate; others are people who have suffered under the Tories and want to help Labour win, such as those protesting against education cuts.

When they can be engaged in debate (the last thing Blair wants) and, even more, in ac-



Blair's refusal to back struggles now shows Labour in government will not reverse Tory attacks

ing, if they were not cynical in the first place. Prescott's well-publicised 'words of warning' to Blair not to rush the attack on the union link ring hollow after all the service Prescott has done in helping to defeat the Left and strengthen Blair's hand.

Blair is prepared to crush any opposition, including sidelining any Shadow Cabinet members who even question his judgement.

It is a question only of how quickly, not whether, he moves to reduce the union share of the vote, revamp the powers and structure of the NEC, and demand the unions adopt his version of 'democracy'.

Blair wants the Party reduced to a passive membership allowing him to decide policy, and meekly accepting it.

Blair is working to an analysis of the failure of the last Labour government. His starting point is not that the government failed the working class, but how to prevent the Party taking the leadership to task for that failure.

Every policy statement, and Labour's refusal to back a single fight now on any issue against the Tory government makes it clear that he has no intention of seriously reversing the devastation the Tories have brought about.

Instead we have the Borrie commission with its assault on the welfare state, the refusal to even countenance the renationalisation of the utilities, evasion on the issue of the minimum wage, and scorn poured on the very idea of full employment.

Capitalism

Given the state of the economy, to do otherwise would require a major attack on capitalism, something no Labour government has ever been committed to carry out.

Blair wants to destroy the Party's ability to reflect the frustration of the working class, leaving him a free rein to crush opposition internally and externally.

During the last Labour government, particularly around opposition to pay laws, the Left gained ground in both the unions and the constituencies and united to defeat the leadership.

Blair wants to act now, in advance, dismantle the mechanisms by which this could happen again.

His aim is the European model of social democracy, where although not essentially different to Labour in their political nature, political party structures do not allow anything like the same direct input by the unions in their decision-making.

In the immediate future we can expect Blair to receive unquestioning loyalty, but the desperation for a Labour government is double-edged.

People want to see the Tories out because they want an end to unemployment, homelessness and the marketisation of the NHS, not because they want the same policies with a smile.

Every indication shows that the policies Blair sets his face against, such as the renationalisation of water, have majority support not just amongst Party members, but the population at large.

Thatcher

Last time a Labour government failed the working class we saw the growth of the far right and, eventually, Labour's replacement by a right-wing Tory government under Thatcher. History will repeat itself unless the left begins to pose a serious alternative.

The worst possible response from the Left would be to retreat wounded into isolation.

An important battle has been lost, but there are many more struggles ahead. We can take heart from the way sections of the movement resisted, and the new links built between activists in the constituencies and the unions.

If we build on this, the left can prepare the movement for the tasks ahead. We need to link up with, and take forward all those struggles taking place against the Tories now, while advancing a clear analysis of Blair's intentions and taking the offensive around key issues of policy.

The Left needs to develop an alternative clear voice to Blair up to, during and beyond the General Election. *Socialist Outlook* is committed to support this fight.

June 17 focus for fight back

By Alan Thornett

THE DAY after Blair's victory, the socialist fight-back began.

Nearly 100 attended the post conference meeting called on the Sunday by the Defend Clause 4 Defend Socialism campaign. It consolidated the network of activists who over the past 6 months have fought to defend the clause against the right.

Two and a half hours of discussion brought near unanimity that the fight goes on.

The meeting endorsed a statement outlining its response to the Blair victory and called a conference of the left in Birmingham on June 17, which will be based around issues – from wages to the defence of the NHS and education – which are central to the struggle both in the Labour Party and the unions, and which can relate directly to those who are in struggle or moving towards a fight.

Policies

This will discuss how best to take forward the struggle for socialist policies at this year's Labour party conference, and in preparation for a probable Labour government.

The strength of the meeting was the number of activists who turned up so soon after the events of Saturday prepared to continue the fight. Its weakness was the lack of MPs and unions represented at a national level. Patrick Sikorski, from the RMT's EC, was the only representative of a national union.

Socialist Outlook supporters back this initiative, which must be built on the broadest possible basis to draw in all those committed to socialism in the unions and Labour Party at all levels.

LABOUR PARTY

Candidates linked by old school tie

By Charles Mullet

Commentators assessing the televised head-to-head debate between French presidential contenders Jacques Chirac (on the right, Gaullist, graduate of the elite Ecole nationale d'administration, ENA) and Lionel Jospin (Socialist, also graduate of the elite Ecole nationale d'administration) were struck by how polite it was compared to previous such confrontations.

Symbol

Responding to the deep anxiety aroused in the French establishment by the impressive votes for far-right and far-left candidates in the first round, both these "ÉNArques" wanted to appear as the sober symbol of national

unity.

Explosive topics such as racism and immigration were hardly mentioned while much of the debating time was wasted discussing institutional reforms and minor tax changes.

Promises

Despite ritual campaign promises from both sides of dynamic change, the debate showed what the new presidency will be all about: continuity, but against an increasingly stormy background.

The backbone of this continuity is the Europe of the Maastricht Treaty.

Internally, the road to Economic and Monetary Union has been paved with high and persistent unemployment.

The next stretch will, additionally, be built on drastic cuts in social programmes and further public sector job cuts.

If Germany is to be persuaded to give up the D-Mark, then the French franc must at all costs be kept as strong as the German currency.

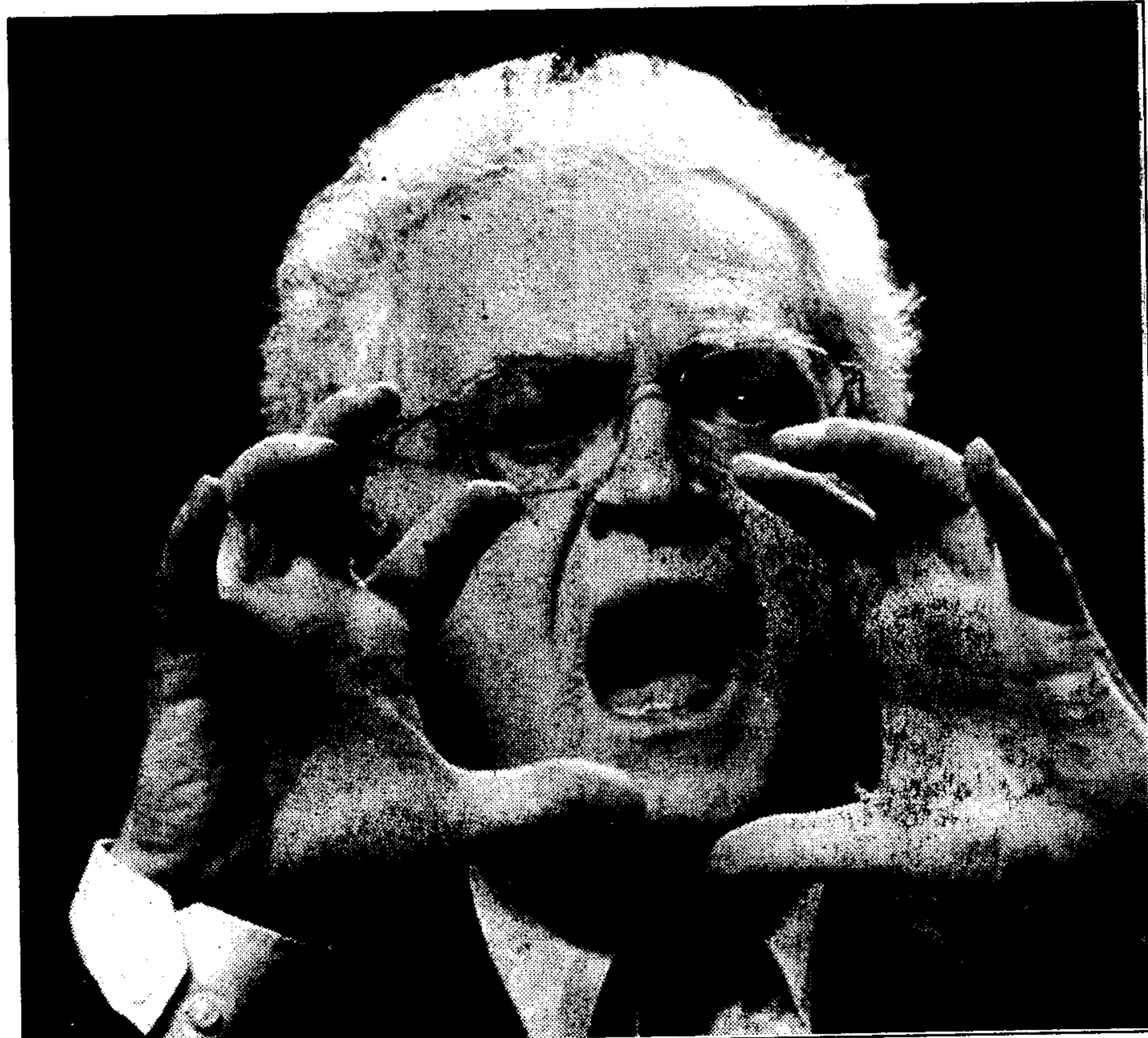
The high score for the far right is a result of the fact that the right-wing programme the strong franc policy entails was first implemented by a supposedly left-wing regime.

Another Socialist President would mean more economic pain and more fuel for fascism's fire.

The votes for the far left, on the other hand, show that millions are ready to open the "third round" on the streets against whoever wins.

Foreign policy

There is also a growing crisis of French foreign policy. Since its foundation the European Community or Union has accepted French political and diplomatic leadership and financially underwritten



Jospin: likely to fall foul of 'third round' of struggles on the streets led by the left

French neo-colonialism.

Now the internal balance of power in Europe is moving towards Germany, newly united and with an increasingly dependent north and east European periphery.

The French response has been to build up European defence and diplomatic structures which it can dominate and tie Germany firmly into these.

However, that domination itself, which rests on France's status as a nuclear power

backed up by a strong army, cannot be taken for granted.

Hence the high French military profile in Yugoslavia or Rwanda and French interest in defence cooperation with that other nuclear power, Britain.

Debacle

The debacle of European policy in the former Yugoslavia is a tremendous blow for France.

Furthermore, other Euro-

pean states, above all Germany, have resisted new demands to cough up for French neo-colonialism in the recent negotiations over the renewal of the Lomé Convention.

Nor should we overlook the symbolism of bananas, with German consumers and importers chafing at Brussels' defence of the preferential treatment of small neo-colonial bananas over big free-market ones.

Five million vote for left candidates

ALAIN KRIVINE was one of the leaders of the student movement in May 1968. Today he a leading member of the Revolutionary Communist League (LCR). SONIA LEITH asked him about the implications of the election for the revolutionary left.

Jean-Marie Le Pen (National Front) won 15% of votes - his best score ever. Why?

He managed to project his "respectable" image. This let the Front ride on the fallout of unemployment and marginalisation, deeply felt by a range of layers in society. They also profited from the corruption scandals plaguing the main parties.

The National Front is clearly putting down roots in the "basement" of French society. Le Pen's best scores

were in regions with relatively large immigrant populations. Most worrying is the evidence that Le Pen was the most popular candidate among voters representing the "classic" sociological working class.

Communist Party Secretary Robert Hue claims the 1.9% increase in his party's score compared to 1988 is a "major event".

The halt in their long term decline is certainly something they are happy about, but one shouldn't exaggerate the importance of the extra votes - mainly protests against the Socialist Party.

And the problem is that CP conservatives will now say there is no need for further modernisation, while the "reformers" will be encouraged to push for more. One real success was the re-emergence of a milieu of intellectuals who were again willing to support the Communist Party.

"Workers' Struggle" candidate Arlette Laguiller got over 5% - and announced her plan to create a "large left party".

She started her campaign with her usual abstract critique of capitalism. Then,

when she realised she was having an effect, particularly among former CP voters, she began to propose transitional demands - an Emergency Plan. This was a historic first for Lutte Ouvrière (Workers Struggle).

Some of her proposals were good, some were ultra-left, and some of what she said about the state rather vague. But still, she no longer proposes a "mass revolutionary party" but a broad party to fight for the exploited.

What does this new proposition mean? Maybe nothing - the last issue of their paper didn't repeat Arlette's propositions.

Maybe it's a classical Lambertiste proposition - ignoring the really existing political forces, especially the non-revolutionary parts of the alternative left and the ecological movement, and simply proclaiming a broad initiative, which would be nothing more than a sectarian operation based on a Lutte Ouvrière core - a project doomed to failure.

But maybe LO is really thinking about building a workers' party - which would be very interesting indeed.

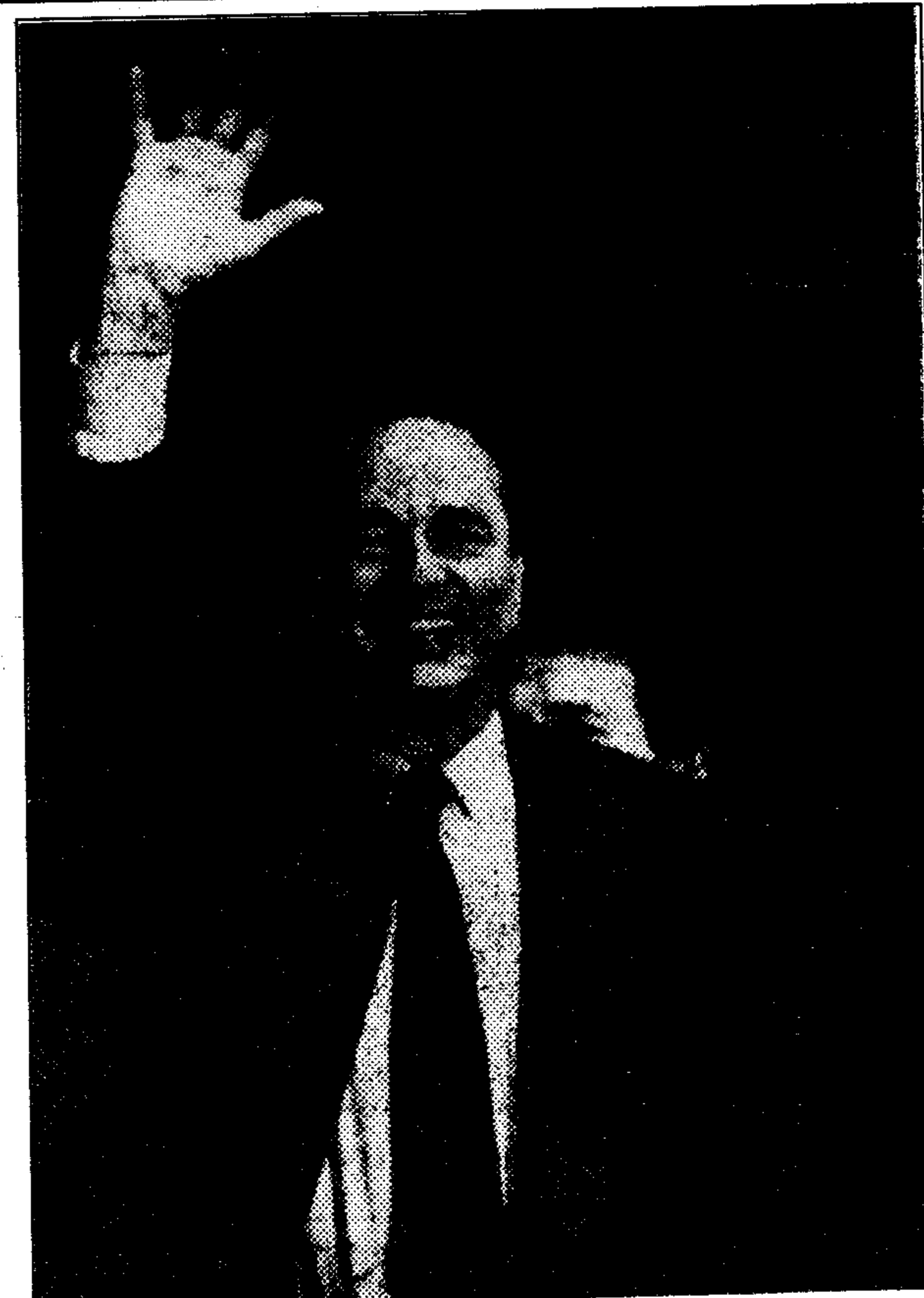
Red-Green candidate Michelle Voynet only polled 3.35 per cent - doesn't this show the failure of the alternative left-green recomposition you have been working for?

Any recomposition was doomed from the moment Voynet was only proposed by the Greens. She tried to catch up later, by stressing the elements in her programme which imply a rupture with the existing liberal consensus - the 35 hour week, solidarity, internationalism and so on - and by accepting the support of a range of alternative left groups.

But Green she remained for the public and the media. And in the end she scored less votes than the Green candidate A. Waechter in 1988.

A part of the (very small) French Green movement deserted her, and she picked up new support on the alternative left. But not much. She says she was seen as "too green for the Reds, and too red for the Greens".

What now?
The LCR calls for a vote against Chirac in the second round. But we have no illu-



Chirac: LCR calls for a vote against

sions in Jospin, especially after 14 years of Socialist Party management of the country.

The growth in social struggles during the election period shows that more and more workers are fed up with passivity.

Over five million voters supported left-wing candidates who criticised the Socialist Party's management of the bourgeoisie's austerity plans. This is a period of remobilisation. We need to find the political keys, to avoid the mobilisation falling flat.

That is why we initially called for a left unity candidate to the left of the Socialist Party. We were unsuccessful, but the current situation is still crying out for such a realignment.

If we miss this moment, a whole new generation of militants will be disillusioned, confused or sucked up by the Socialist Party and the Communists. This is the time to start opening spaces for common action and building spaces for common reflection.

■ Interviewed in Paris on April 25 by Sonia Leith.

Bosnians fight back as cease-fire ends

Croatia grabs back stolen territory

By Alan Thornett

The partial and much broken ceasefire in Bosnia has ended.

Not only have there been new offensives by the Bosnian army, but the Croatian army has invaded and recovered a segment of the Croatian territory occupied by Serbian forces since 1991.

The motivation of Croatian president Tudjman seems to be two-fold. First he hopes it will help him win in the forthcoming elections, and secondly the exercise will allow him to test out his chances of recovering Serbian occupied territory without the intervention on Milosevic and the Yugoslav army - still the strongest military force in ex-Yugoslavia - and the initiation of a wider Balkan war.

In 1991 Croatia was the first victim of Milosevic's Greater Serbia policy. A third of its territory was invaded by

the Yugoslav army, backed up by Serbian irregulars, at a cost of 10,000 lives and the systematic ethnic cleansing to remove the non-Serb population.

Since then the territory taken has remained under Serb occupation in the form of the self-declared Republic of Krajina. Led by Milan Martić it is in alliance with the Bosnian Serbs and Radovan Karadžić - including a joint military command.

Aggressor

Later on in the Bosnian war Croatia became a joint aggressor for a period of time with the Serbs against Bosnia and carried out its own ethnic cleansing.

This, along with other atrocities committed by the Croatian army were rightly condemned and opposed; but it does not alter the wrongs inflicted against Croatia by Serbia or make the military division of Croatia any more right or acceptable.

The area retaken by Croatian forces is the strategically important pocket of Western Slavonia and the town of Pakrac.

This is only a fraction of the territory occupied by Serbian forces but it represents, potentially, a decision by Croatia to reject UN policy - the protection of the status quo - and a military challenge to Martić and Karadžić.

However it develops, this military action by the Croatian army against the Croatian Serbs is good news for the Bosnian government, which has stepped up its own offensive against the Bosnian Serbs in the past few weeks.

Although the ceasefire has been a sham - Bihac has been shelled by the Serbs almost daily throughout its existence - the Bosnian government has used it to further train and re-equip the BH army.

Despite the arms embargo, which continues to deny it heavy weapons, the BH army has been transformed in the past year in terms of light



Fighting to push back Serb aggressors: Croatian troops

weapons and equipment. This has been helped by the shaky alliance between the Bosnian government and the Bosnian Croats of Hertzog Bosna, which has facilitated a trickle of light weapons from the coast.

Morale

On top of this there has been a transformation of morale and motivation in the Bosnian army - particularly in important areas like Travnik and Tuzla.

This motivation is connected to the Bosnian political objectives, the liberation of occupied lands, the return

of refugees to their homes, and the reversal of ethnic cleansing.

The Bosnian Serbs, on the other hand, are fighting in defence of their ethnically cleansed state.

This has led the BH army to their biggest military successes of the war - particularly their recent capture of the Valsic mountain range in the Travnik region.

Although, on any rational criteria, the politics of the conflict in ex-Yugoslavia is becoming clearer all the time, this remains lost on most of the left in Britain.

The biggest organisations of the far left, Militant Labour

and the SWP, still refuse to recognise Bosnia's national rights, stand aside in the conflict, and still equate the Bosnians with the Serbian regimes as a "warring faction".

Socialist Outlook has always rejected this view and has supported the struggle of the Bosnian people against the occupation and division of their country.

To this end we continue to support International Workers Aid to Bosnia which takes practical aid to the Tuzla Region to back their fight for the defence of a multi-ethnic society.

Strike wave as workers confront multinationals

Deng's demise could crack up China

By Simon Day

"THE POLITICAL fate of China is up for grabs" announced a recent US government report. The CIA think China has a 50-50 chance of breaking up after the death of Deng Xiaoping.

The vultures are already hovering over his sickbed - Prime Minister Li Peng and President Jiang Zemin both hope to benefit from Deng's demise.

International capital also sees this moment as decisive.

Since 1989 up to \$200 billion has been poured into the country. In 1994 foreign trade was more than \$200 billion. The trade surplus with the USA was \$23 billion in 1993.

Internally the turnaround has been just as dramatic.

GDP has grown by over nine per cent a year since 1980. There has been a similar rise in national income. Living standards and expectations for urban workers have risen markedly.

Now that peasants are no longer



Brute repression crushed 1989 revolt by students and workers

forced to remain in their villages tens of million of them have moved in search of better prospects. They arrive in cities which have not yet developed the usual mechanisms of social regulation needed by urban environments. The situation is tense.

The fear of peasant revolt was a prime motivation behind the privatisation of land and the partial intro-

duction of capitalist methods of production in the countryside.

The Communist Party judged that the accompanying fragmentation of the peasantry was the only way they could guarantee their position in the face of growing discontent.

Now the fruits of that policy are being borne in another form of mass discontent.

Strikes and other forms of industrial action are now commonplace, especially in the new special export zones the government has established along the coast. In Shenzhen, the largest one, there have been 1100 so-called "collective labour disputes" over the past two years.

Minimum wage

Most of the unrest occurs in foreign owned factories. This is very embarrassing for the "socialist" government of the Communist Party. Seventy per cent of workers in Shenzhen are paid below the official minimum wage and most are forced to do an average of 150 hours overtime a month.

The zone's newspaper reported that "workers are not allowed to talk when they have their meals; when walking to and from the factory, the dormitory and canteen, they are required to follow a special line en route; if they step beyond this line they will be punished by being forced to stand to attention for long periods, or suffer monetary penalisation."

This sort of treatment recently provoked a strike of 3000 workers. Health and safety standards are appalling and routinely ignored.

In spite of this, international capitalism is piling on the pressure for further curbs in worker's conditions and pay.

In a significant move Toshiba's president in the northern city of Dalian has recently petitioned the authorities bemoaning the rise of labour militancy. His company have threatened to move their operation to the Philippines.

A recent report in the Financial Times actually shows a slowdown in the rate of Japanese investment. Nevertheless, said a spokesperson for Toyota, "phases of uncertainty, even a leadership change, will not affect the move towards market opening."

Whether he is proved correct hinges a great deal on what happens in the succession battle. The range of possibilities depends very much on the choices made by the CCP after Deng.

1945: 50 YEARS ON



Memorial to British imperialist brutality: Bomber Harris

Five wars in one

THE SECOND World War must be understood as a combination of five different conflicts:

1. An inter-imperialist war, fought for world hegemony and won by the United States.
2. A just war of self defence by the Soviet Union against an imperialist attempt to colonise the country and destroy the achievements of the 1917 revolution.
3. A just war of the Chinese people against imperialism, which would develop into a socialist revolution.
4. A just war of Asian colonial peoples against the various military powers and for national liberation and sovereignty, which in some cases (eg Indochina) spilled over into socialist revolution.
5. A just war of national liberation fought by the populations of the occupied countries of Europe, which grew into socialist revolutions (Yugoslavia and Albania) or open civil war (Greece and north Italy).

In the European East the old order collapsed under the pressure of popular aspirations and Soviet military-bureaucratic action. In the West and South bourgeois order was restored — often against the wishes of the masses — by Western allied troops.

■ This analysis is set out in Ernest Mandel's short book *The Meaning of the Second World War* (Verso)

Their Victory Day and our May Day

By Lucky
Kandaneeratchi

THE MAY Day holiday has been obliterated from the 1995 calendar and replaced by 'Victory Day', to mark the 50th anniversary of the Allies' victory in the second world war.

The significance of the two is a manifestation of conflicting class interest.

With the prominence of the royalty, pompous celebrations are on the agenda with mounting propaganda aided by the reactionary press falsely depicting the war as a crusade against fascism and totalitarianism, for democracy and freedom.

A one-sided picture is painted, portraying only the crimes of the Nazis and the Axis powers, hiding the rest.

Whilst we have to express our profound grief for the six million innocent Jews who were the victims of historically unparalleled genocide, and our indignation against the savage atrocities of the Japanese, we must refresh our memories of those millions killed by the atom bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

The legacy of this holocaust was inherited by later generations, with physically and mentally deformed children. This indelible mark of the brutality of American imperialism will remain through the history of humankind.

Nor should the slaughter of 35,000 civilians by British bombs in Dresden be allowed to sink into oblivion. Millions of German civilians were killed in calculated Allied bombing of civilian targets.

Far from expressing any remorse, and despite the kindness and compassion shown by the members of the royal family on television screens, the Queen Mother recently unveiled the statue of Sir Arthur (Bomber) Harris — the butcher responsible for this carnage.

The war was an explosion in the race for colonies and economic exploitation by the imperialists.

Seeing communism as the sworn enemy of fascism, Hitler tore up his cynical pact with the USSR and in 1941 launched his attack to demolish the communist state, thus embroiling the Soviet Union in the war. It joined the Allies — only later to become the implacable enemy.

The entire globe was in the grip of colonial rule, with Britain's share almost one third. The imperialists could trade colonies with one another; just as Britain offered Somaliland after Mussolini's invasion of Abyssinia. He rejected it.

British profiteers made hay under the preferential rates of trading with the colonies, and drew immense manpower from India and Africa as

cannon fodder for the war machine.

Because of imperialist domination, every corner of the world was plunged into war, bringing misery and havoc to millions who had nothing to gain from the conflict. An estimated 53 million died, of whom 38 million were civilians. The claim that the war was fought to wipe out fascism and to usher in freedom is monstrously false.

In the Spanish civil war British and French imperialism had found common cause with the fascists, signing the non-intervention agreement in favour of the dictator Franco and against the legitimate and elected Republicans who were thought to be anti-capitalist.

When the Japanese fell in Indochina, French imperialism followed up on their retreat, and reoccupied the region.

In the wake of the war a tidal wave of revulsion that swept across the world bolstered the anti-imperialist struggles for freedom.

The Indian Swaraj (self rule) movement had its success in 1947, later followed by the African libera-

sation were leading organisations which spearheaded the campaign, in particular the CLU representing workers of European origin with a leadership influenced by revolutionary socialist ideas.

On 1 May, with Chicago as the centre, the struggle escalated to other cities. One characteristic feature was that even unskilled and unorganised workers spontaneously joined the strike in massive numbers. Workplaces were paralysed.

On 4 May at Haymarket Square following a demonstration, a meeting was held to protest against the brutal attack by police on a meeting of strikers at McCormick Reaper Works.

A bomb was thrown by a police agent into the crowd, killing a police sergeant. This triggered off to a violent battle with the police firing, and finally into a bloodbath, killing seven policemen and six workers.

One year later the leaders of the protest, Parson, Engel, Fischer and Spies were executed after a trial which became renowned as a judi-



The first London May Day demonstration, 1890

tion movement.

The 1945 election brought the British Labour Party to power with a resounding victory despite Churchill's personality.

Landmark

In contrast, May Day signifies a historical landmark in the workers' struggle against the fetters of slavery and exploitation.

Originally it was linked with the eight-hour working day, although today it has become the workers' international day of solidarity.

The birthplace of May Day was Chicago, a city inhabited by a multi-racial working class belonging to the militant and revolutionary tradition that celebrated the anniversary of the Paris Commune. They were engaged in violent battles in the throes of severe repression.

After futile attempts in 1867 and 1879, the hope of an eight-hour working day was rekindled by the Chicago Trades Assembly, in declaring 1 May 1886 a day for action.

The Central Labour Union and International Working Peoples As-

sociation were leading organisations which spearheaded the campaign, in particular the CLU representing workers of European origin with a leadership influenced by revolutionary socialist ideas.

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cial travesty. This was followed by a period of repression.

The eight hour day was achieved by this kind of struggle and sacrifice. It must not be thrown into the dustbin of history.

Inspired by the example of the American workers, the founding congress of the Second International resolved to observe May 1 1890 on an international scale.

In many European countries workers braved state harassment to come out on strike. In this process, May Day became a day of international workers solidarity, celebrated with demonstrations and rallies around political demands.

Fascism is a product of capitalism, stemming from a system in crisis and decay. Its spectre still haunts us.

The present regionalisation of the globe into competing trade blocks of the EU, NAFTA and Asia Pacific region is the precursor to conflicts to come.

It remains the task of the working class to free the world from these dangers; that's why May Day, and not the imperialists' Victory Day is important to socialists.

A Trotskyist veteran remembers Italy in 1945

Revolution was in the air

By **Charlie Van Gelderen**

THANKS to the logistical requirements of the British army, I found myself in Naples in 1943, soon after the fall of Mussolini and the collapse of the fascist regime.

It was like living in a political renaissance. The atmosphere was exhilarating. Marxist literature was openly displayed on open air book-stalls, dated 1926, some with the pages still uncut. The booksellers, after these books were banned, simply concealed them, waiting for the day when fascism would come to an end and they could sell them again.

Everyone was being very political. Revolution seemed to be in the air. Almost every wall was covered with slo-

gans: Power to the Workers; Viva Stalin; Viva Tito.

The Italian working class, isolated from the international socialist movement for nearly two decades, identified Stalin and the advancing Red Army with the October Revolution. They were ready for their own October.

When Togliatti arrived in Italy he was greeted by enthusiastic crowds. He was greeted with cries of Workers to Power.

Kremlin

But Togliatti had come back from his Moscow exile with strict orders from his masters in the Kremlin. "No, comrades", he said (I paraphrase) "this is not the time for workers' power. Our main job is to support our allies to defeat the Germans. We don't need workers' power, we need Field Marshals in

power", a reference to Marshal Badoglio who had succeeded Mussolini as Prime Minister.

Through a member of the Socialist Party, with whom I was friendly, I was asked to speak to a meeting of Socialist Youth. From there a report must have gone to the local Trotskyists that I might be 'one of them'. This is how I came to meet Nicola de Bartolomea (Fosca), a veteran Trotskyist.

He was already in contact with an American member of the Workers Party (Shachtmanites) which was using its seafarer members to bring funds and assistance. I managed to get information through to the SWP in New York and help began to arrive from that source too.

Other American and British servicemen soon found their way to us. Cigarettes were the main currency in

Naples at that time.

I sold my Naafi ration on the black market, giving all the funds to the Italian comrades.

The Americans brought whole case-loads of Camels, which commanded the highest price. With this money we launched the first Italian Trotskyist paper, *Il Militante*.

We learnt from one of the American comrades that he had seen a manifesto calling for the Fourth International in Bari and Foggia, on the other side of the Italian peninsula. It was signed 'Mangana'.

It was imperative that we contact him but that part of Italy was in the American zone. We needed passes to get there.

One of my jobs was to issue passes to soldiers on leave. I wrote in in my own name, signed with a scribble and put Lt (for lieutenant) after the signature.



Money from a case-load of Camels launched an Italian paper

An American comrade provided Nicola with a letter stating that he was employed with the US Military Police and had permission to visit his sick mother in Foggia.

We travelled by hitch-hiking on military vehicles; journeyed miles on top of a huge wine barrel drawn by horses and eventually reached Foggia and Mangana.

This led to the formation of the *Partito Operaio Comunista*, the first Italian section of the Fourth International. I am the proud possessor of its number one membership card

Nicola, unfortunately, died in 1946. Under Mangana's leadership the party took an

ever more sectarian line and never established roots in the working class.

I also met Bordiga. We became very good friends and established warm comradely relations.

We had many interesting discussions but he was still the same ultra-left sectarian who had quarrelled with Lenin. He was a very colourful personality and his supporters worshipped him. This was a very interesting experience for me.

In fact, my three years in Italy was, politically, among the most fruitful periods of my life, an experience I will never forget.

Was it a war against fascism?

By **Simon Day**

THE WAR was a fight for democracy against German fascism. The Allies represented the forces of civilisation fighting Nazi barbarism.

This is the core message of every broadcast and tabloid reprint. The whole of the British establishment has thrown its weight behind drumming it home.

But behind the slogans lie a reality that is completely ignored in the VE celebrations.

Imperialist powers do not go to war for such things as "democracy" and the rights of small nations. These are justifying ideologies to cover their real war aims. Wars can only be understood as a continuation of politics.

The economic crash between 1929 and 1932 convinced Japan and the USA that growth could no longer be centred on the home market. But to move the focus of their economies required more than a simply economic reorganisation.

The advent of giant corporations and multinational business in a vast capitalist market so heightened competition between powers as to require an accompanying new political and social re-arrangement to consolidate

the economic project.

This contest took place on a world scale. To achieve world leadership needed both economic superiority and a military strength to enforce it.

The ideologues of Washington called this endeavour "making the world safe for democracy". Japanese imperialism for its part, realised dependency on the USA for raw materials was a potentially disastrous weakness.

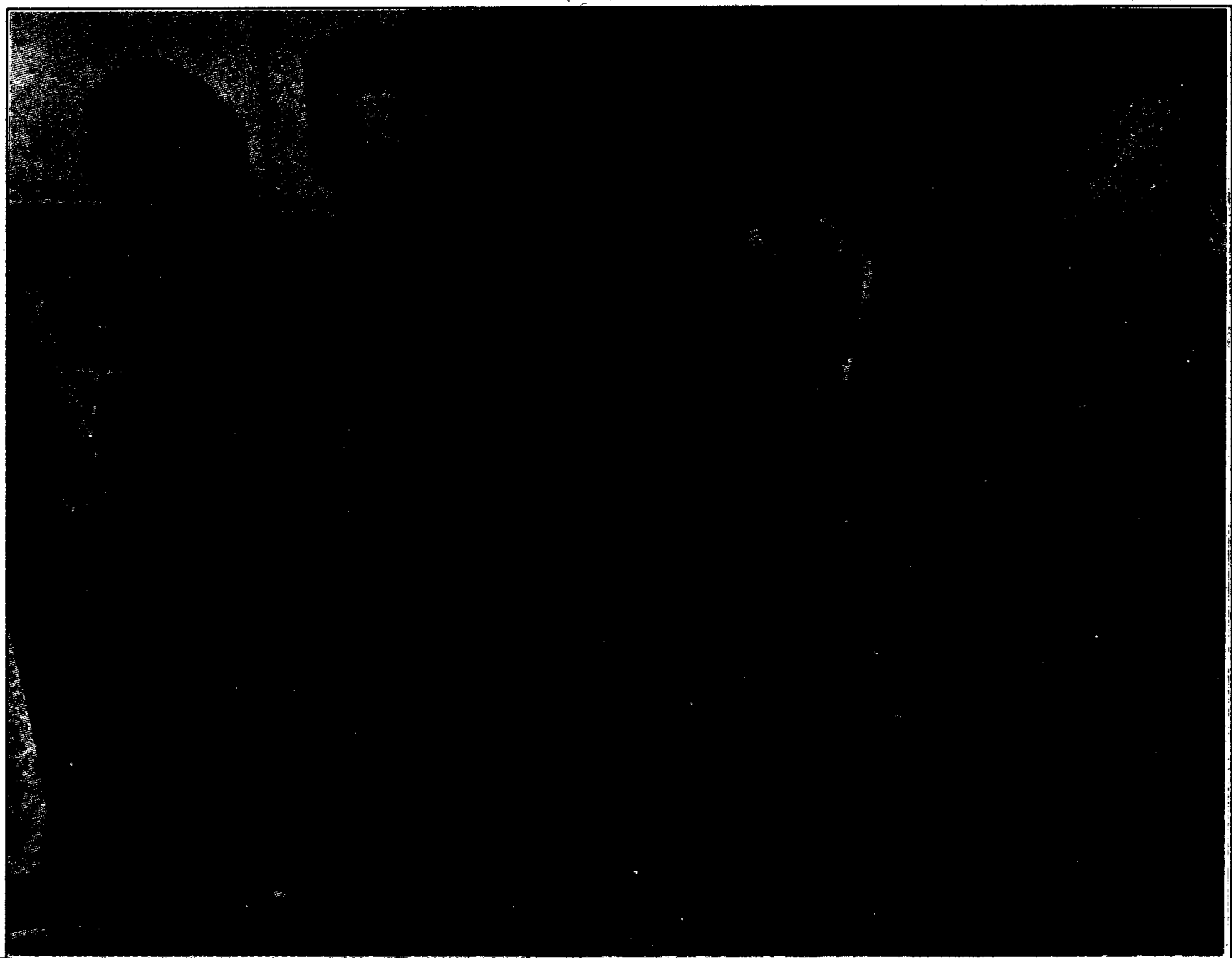
From 1942 onwards the USA fought for dominance in the Alliance. It made Britain submit because of its need for aid. What Churchill called "parting with political authority and control" set the scene for the whole post war settlement - a "special relationship" which was founded on US hegemony.

Britain knew well that German dominated Europe would be the death knell for the British Empire - as soon as Hitler had consolidated his position in on the continent his war machine would come after British acquisitions abroad.

This is the real motivation behind British involvement in the war.

All the western powers embarked upon war to ensure their own imperial interests. Wars are about adapting political arrangements to new financial-industrial conditions.

It is important to appreciate this.



Like Hitler, the American and British ruling class were fighting for markets and profits

As Ernest Mandel points out in *The Meaning of the Second World War*, to see the war as simply anti-fascist is a mistake.

The American and British ruling classes fought the war not in order to defeat fascism, but to triumph over the German and Japanese bourgeoisies.

There is the world of difference between the legitimate and just self-defence of a small nation fighting German or Japanese imperialism and the war aims of Britain and the USA.

Wars should be characterised instead by their justice.

To do otherwise results in the labour movement tamely following behind ruling-class policies - as did the Communist Party's "anti-fascist alliances". It means ignoring the ter-

rible atrocities committed in the colonies of one's own imperialism.

Rebuilding

When the war was over, the Communist and social democratic parties which had collaborated in the imperialist war effort ended up collaborating in rebuilding capitalist states.

There is further reason to question all the current demagoguery over the "defeat of fascism".

Not only does the simplicity collapse a series of processes into only one of its aspects, but it misunderstands the ideologies that have shaped the post-war settlement.

Anti-Nazism was the main ideology used by the British ruling class

to get its working class to fight, die, and endure cuts in living standards. It was an important tool in gaining the submission of the workers' organisations.

It was important also in fashioning the workers' movement post war. The relationship was consolidated in a new way in the Attlee administration - a very workable alliance was drawn up between workers, government, intellectuals and the labour movement bureaucracy founded on such things as full employment, guaranteed living standards and social liberalisation.

It is the drawn out death of this settlement that continues to shape British politics. And no amount of VE day nostalgia will hide its demise.

1945: 50 YEARS ON



The hard-fought battle for liberation now being sold short by Mugabe

As Mugabe caves in to IMF austerity Zimbabwe's hopes betrayed

By Bala Kumar

President Robert Mugabe forecast his party's landslide victory long before it happened.

With voter turn out only 58 per cent, apathy was high. All but two seats went to his Zimbabwe African Unity—Patriotic Front, which has governed since the end of white minority rule in 1980.

Most of the opposition boycotted the poll. The most troublesome candidates for the government were their previous supporters who ran as independents. Some reflect a real frustration among the urban poor.

Real wages have plum-

meted and social services like health and education have been slashed. One in five public sector workers have been sacked.

Foreign debt has increased by 44 per cent to \$3.8 billion and debt consumes 30 cents in every dollar of export earnings.

Land remains a highly contentious issue. The failure of the government to transform agricultural relations has angered the rural poor who were so important in the liberation struggle.

Capital

Most of the official land "redistribution" was only a recognition of already existing *de facto* arrangements. Moreover its owners still lack the

necessary capital for seeds, fertilisers and oxen to make best use of it.

The large commercial sector, which now includes some black politicians and their relatives, has far easier access to credit and money. They do not rely on the recently dismantled state marketing boards.

Corruption is rife in ruling party circles around the award of land grants and state tenders.

Mugabe's swift responses to past scandals shows that he remains very sensitive to public feeling on these matters.

The main debate in government is over Mugabe's successor. For those radicals left in the ZANU—PF what confronts them is the dismal task of changing its present course.

Fake 'unity' can't stop Hindu zealots

K. GOVINDAN reviews Mani Ratnam's *Bombay* starring Manisha Koirala and Arvind Swamy

INDIAN cinema rarely strays from formula plots of tragic love, song and dance routines and action-packed sequences.

So when a film comes along combining the prerequisites of box office success with an original script, the making of the film is often as big as its subject.

Mani Ratnam turns from Kashmiri militancy in the blockbuster *Roja* (Rose) to the Hindu-Muslim riots which overwhelmed India's commercial capital in December 1992 and January and March 1993.

A Hindu man and Muslim woman defy their families and society to marry one another.

It is difficult enough coping with their own problems when they are engulfed in the violence following the destruction of a mosque by Hindu zealots and riots against Muslims.

The important political points implicit or otherwise in this film are that riots were not spontaneous but carefully orchestrated by fas-

cist Shiv Sena. Also that the police sided with Hindu mobs and controversially shows them firing into unarmed crowds which they have always denied happening.

It is estimated that over 60 per cent of the Bombay police force sympathise with the Shiv Sena whose supporters led mob attacks on Muslims and the destruction of their property.

In this year's election they swept to victory in Maharashtra state as senior members in an alliance with the right wing Bharatiya Janata Party and also extended control over the Bombay Municipal Corporation.

Orgy of hate

The powerful and emotive scenes in the orgy of hate and bloodlust let loose will stay with the millions who have seen this film forever. However Ratnam disappoints by trying to be even-handed in blaming both Muslims and Hindus for the riots.

Yet, as numerous reports have documented, it was Hindu mobs who provoked and attacked Muslims who were the majority of the 1,500 killed, mainly by police bullets.

He omits mention of the Congress (I) who created the Shiv Sena to break the Muscle of organised labour in the 1960's and have pandered to

communal sentiments from both Muslims and Hindus for decades.

The ending is totally unreal. Extremist leaders repent for their fanaticism, and people form a human chain for peace. So all we are left with is the discredited politics of 'Hindu-Muslim bhai bhai' or 'Hindus and Muslims are brothers' and the message that we should think of ourselves as Indians first before personal identities.

Of regret too is the director's appeasement of Shiv Sena leader Bal Thackeray, when he agreed to cut scenes portraying him critically to gain his permission to screen it in Bombay itself!

Such is his power. Now Muslim leaders are demanding the same concession and the film has been banned in a number of towns by Hindu and Muslim groups, as well as in Malaysia and Singapore.

Activist film-makers like Soma Josan and Anand Patwardhan have documented and analysed the riots better but lack the mass appeal which Javed Akhtar's script and AR Rahman's soundtrack lend to the strong acting in *Bombay*.

Mani Ratnam has made an important statement in his art as much as choice of material, his imperfections should encourage others to be bolder, for popular culture too is a contested space.

FEATURES

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What's HAPPENING

MAY

Weds 10

JEWISH artists and the Russian revolution Nottingham Jewish Socialists' Group meeting with Stanley Mitchell (0115) 9603355.

Fri 12

STUC demonstration outside Tory Party conference 'march and rally for Scottish democracy - Target the Tories - general election now' assemblie by Blythwood Square 4.00pm

Sat 13

SOCIALISM, Social Democracy and revolution *Socialist Outlook* dayschool 10.30am - 5.00pm North London. Speakers include Francois Vercammen, United Secretariat of the Fourth International. Tickets 6/3 from Socialist Outlook, PO Box 1109, London N4 2UU.

ORGANISING to defend the public sector. Called by Strathclyde and Newcastle UNISON and Tyne & Wear FBUI. Lecture Theatre Two Leeds Metropolitan University Calverley Street LS1 Details 0191 232 8520 ext.

6980.

SOCIALIST Outlook dinner and quiz night Orkney House Nursery Bemberton Estate corner of Caledonian Road and Copenhagen St. (ring 101 for entry) bar and fabulous food £7 waged £3.50.

Sat 14

ATTITUDES to the Holocaust Jewish Socialists' Group meeting with Dr. Tony Kushner Small Hall, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square WC1.

Tues 16

SCOTTISH Defiance Alliance (against CJA) meets 7.00pm at 71 London Road (Anti-Poll Tax Federation office).

Thurs 18

SRI Lanka: peace with democracy South Asia Solidarity Group meeting 7pm Conway hall, Red Lion Square WC1 details: 0171 713 7907.

Sat 20

NOTTS FACE conference details: Sal 0115 9626298.

Sat 27

AFRICAN Liberation Day march 1.00pm Kennington Park London SE11. Rally at

Trafalgar Square Details: 0171 924 9033.

JUNE

Sat 10

CLUB Mandela disco Queen's College 1 Park Drive 8pm proceeds to South African democratic movements.

Sat 17

SOCIALIST policies for a Labour Government campaign conference called by Defend Clause 4 Birmingham.

Sat 24

SEMINAR hosted by New Left Review: Socialism in an Age of Global Capitalism with Luciana Castellina MEP (Communist Refoundation Party, Italy), Tony Benn MP, Eric Hobsbawm, GA Cohen, Tariq Ali. 9.30am - 5pm. Tickets £5/free from NLR, 6 Meard Street W1V 3HR. *Socialist Outlook* sellers attending contact Duncan on 0181 292 7079.

NATIONAL day of action against Immigration Act Deletions

JULY

Sat 3

NOTTS Welfare State Net-

workdemonstrationdetails Sal01159626298.

Weds 6

LEEDS *Socialist Outlook* public meeting: Trades Unions and the Labour Party with Glen Voris.

Thurs 7-Sat 9

SOCIALISM beyond the market: CSE 25th anniversary conference details: John, Phillip or Mary (0191) 232 6002

Sat 9

CRIMINAL Justice after the Bill a day conference sponsored by the Haldane Society of Socialist Lawyers. 9.30am - 4pm Camden Town Hall opposite St Pancras BR. 3/10 from 20-21 Took's Court EC4.

Sat 15

'New' Labour and the Unions Socialist Movement Trade Union Committee 10.30am-5.00pm South Camden Community School NW1 Kings Cross BR Tickets £5.00 waged, £3.00 unwaged.

Fri 22 - Fri 29

INTERNATIONAL Youth Camp in Toulouse, southern France. Send 35 deposit to 'Liberation Publishing Association', PO Box 1109, London, N4.

AUGUST

Weds 23 - Mon 28

SOCIALIST Outlook Summer School Aberystwyth on revolutionary leadership. Send your 35 deposit now to 'Socialist Outlook Summer School, PO Box 1109, London N4 2UU.

After Clause 4 vote: is the Party over?

Socialism, Social Democracy & Revolution

10.30am-5pm, North London, Sat 13 May

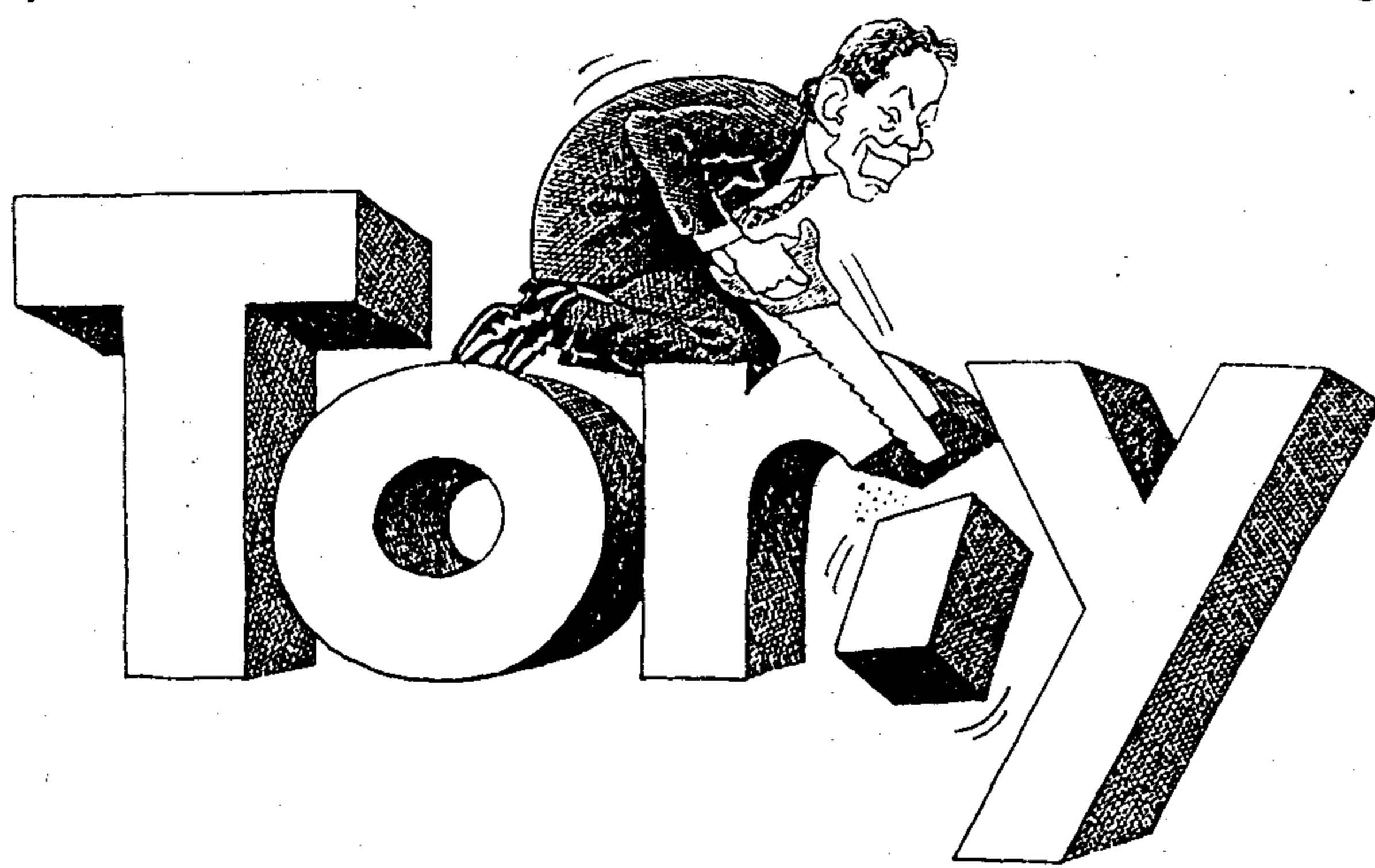
In this special dayschool, open to Socialist Outlook supporters and those sympathetic to our ideas, we hope to look at the tasks for the left in the labour movement.

Reform or Social Revolution?

Gill Lee (Socialist Outlook Editorial Board) and Kathryn Marshall (Liberation!) examine key debate in socialist strategy.

Nationalisation or expropriation?

François Vercammen (United Secretariat of the Fourth International) discusses fighting for social ownership.



Revolutionaries & Labour

MARIAN BRAIN looks at the experiences of marxists in the Labour party, and looks at the past experiences of work outside the party.

Send £6 waged, £3 unwaged to *Socialist Outlook*, PO Box 1109, London N4 2UU.

What we fight for

UP AGAINST mass unemployment, rampant employers with savage anti-union laws, and a war on hard-won public 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 build a new type of working class leadership, based on class struggle and revolutionary socialism.

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

The Tory strategy has been to shackle the unions, and to fragment and weaken the resistance, allowing them to pick off isolated sections one at a time.

In response, most TUC and Labour leaders have embraced the defeatist politics of 'new realism', effectively total surrender, while ditching any pretence of being a socialist alternative. Every retreat encouraged the offensive against jobs, wages, conditions and union rights.

New realism is the latest form of reformism, seeking only improved conditions within capitalism.

We reject reformism, not because we are against reforms, but because we know that 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 the working class.

We are a marxist current, based not on the brutal totalitarian parodies of state marxism, nor on the tame, toothless version of 'marxism' beloved by arm-chair 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 to topple the corrupt and reac-

tionary rule of capital and establish its own class rule.

We struggle against fragmentation by building solidarity, to unite the various struggles of workers, the unemployed, of women, of pensioners, of the black communities, of lesbians and gay men, of students, of youth - and of those fighting imperialism in Ireland and worldwide.

Socialist Outlook is above all an internationalist current, in solidarity with the Trotskyist Fourth International, which organises in over 40 countries.

Unlike some other groups on the British left, we do not believe a mass revolutionary party can be built simply by proclaiming ourselves to be one. This degenerates into sectarian posturing and abstention from struggles in the labour movement, playing into right wing hands.

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 revolution. The oppressed must organise themselves and fight now for their 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 racism and fascism - in which various left currents can work together for common objectives while remaining free to debate 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!

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SOCIALIST OUTLOOK

Socialist OUTLOOK

INSIDE:
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youth paper

Cut off arms to Jakarta regime

Stop the Hawks!

BETWEEN now and the twentieth anniversary of the Indonesian invasion of East Timor on December 7th 1995, activists will be stepping up the campaign to stop the export of Hawk jets and other British arms to the Indonesian junta.

June 10th will see a second national day of action to stop the Hawk deal. Campaigners will be using the day to get the message out locally about the British government support for the Indonesian genocide. The aim is to build for the second International Day of Action on November 12th and

the lobby of Parliament on December 7th.

At the same time the Hawks Coalition leading the campaign are pushing a joint model resolution for Labour Party conference calling on all sales of military equipment to Indonesia to be stopped. So far, in an appalling piece of bi-partisanship, the Labour front bench has merely parroted the Tories demand for proof of the use of Hawks in East Timor.

The direct action wing of the campaign is also rapidly gaining momentum. Activists are signing up to carry out direct action to stop the Hawk deal.

This is a significant development following the unanimous election

of Fernando de Araujo as Honorary Vice-President of the National Union of Students. Student activists, who work on Third World debt have begun to cross over to support the direct action campaign against the Hawk deal, as have some anti-road protestors.

The campaign that put the BAe AGM under siege has more in store for the next seven months. Get affiliated to the campaign and get involved in the June 10th Day of Action.

■ Stop The Hawks - No Arms To Indonesia can be contacted at NPC, 88 Islington High Street, London N1



BAe rattled by protest

By Alden Salter

OVER 100 people demonstrated outside British Aerospace's AGM on May 4 at Mayfair's Marriot Hotel. The protestors charged BAe with aiding and abetting genocide in East Timor.

BAe is selling Hawk jets to Indonesia's military regime, whose illegal occupation of East Timor has cost an estimated 200,000 lives since 1975. Eyewitness testimony confirms that Hawks have been used against the East Timorese.

Inside the AGM, about 30 protestors holding shares asked questions about the Hawk deal, the

role of high-ranking BAe staff in supplying electric-shock batons to Saudi Arabia, and its alleged sale of landmines. The protestors presented an alternative annual report, highlighting job losses resulting from the shrinking arms market and making the case for conversion to civil production.

Shareholders entering the AGM were confronted with a 'die-in' by about 15 protestors. Fake blood was splashed across their path and tape recorders reproduced the sound of fighter jets, whilst the Grim Reaper and a life-like General Pinochet stalked the scene.

A banner was draped from the hotel roof reading 'BAe: murder by proxy'. In a moment of literal high farce, one suited

BAe official crawled onto a ledge and unsuccessfully tried to cut the rope suspending the banner.

Inside the AGM a protestor was racially abused by a share-holder. After complaining, the abused shareholder was forcefully removed from the AGM, followed by several other protestors.

A message was read out from Chris Cole, who is serving a sentence in Pentonville prison for breaching an injunction following a previous sentence for destroying a Hawk nose-cone at BAe Stevenage.

■ Please send messages of support to Chris Cole at Pentonville Prison, Caledonian Road, London, N7 8TT.