

Socialist OUTLOOK

Murdered by the British state

Irish republican, Diarmuid O'Neill was shot and murdered in cold blood. In the aftermath of his killing the police and the state tried to suggest he had been killed in a gun battle but it quickly emerged that not only was O'Neill unarmed, no weapons were recovered from the flat in Hammersmith where he died.

Before a police marksman pumped six automatic rounds into him at close range, he was disabled by other officers throwing CS gas into his flat. Although there was never any chance of making the gun battle story stick, the authorities continue to spread lies and disinformation. The claim that O'Neill was taken out of the premises on a stretcher is graphically contradicted by the press photographs of blood on the front steps of the house. These suggest that dead or alive, he was dragged out.

Since his death numerous stories about his past activities have been planted in the media.

A past conviction for fraud and the alleged diversion of the proceeds to the coffers of the IRA supposedly demonstrate his unstinting commitment to that organisation.

Without any proof being offered it is said that he was intimately involved in the planting of the bomb at Canary Wharf earlier this year. Now the existence of a Basque girlfriend supposedly demonstrates a connection with ETA as well as the IRA.

Such stories not only whip up prejudice against the murdered O'Neill but also stir up anti-Irish bigotry. O'Neill's brother was arrested at the time of his death but has now been released.

Last weekend the men's parents said in a statement: "We are

relieved that our youngest son, Shane, has been released from custody ...Diarmuid was never arrested; he can never be tried, nor can he be acquitted or convicted other than by the press who have not waited to have a full and proper picture before judging him.

Instead, those who accused him took the law into their own hands and killed him."

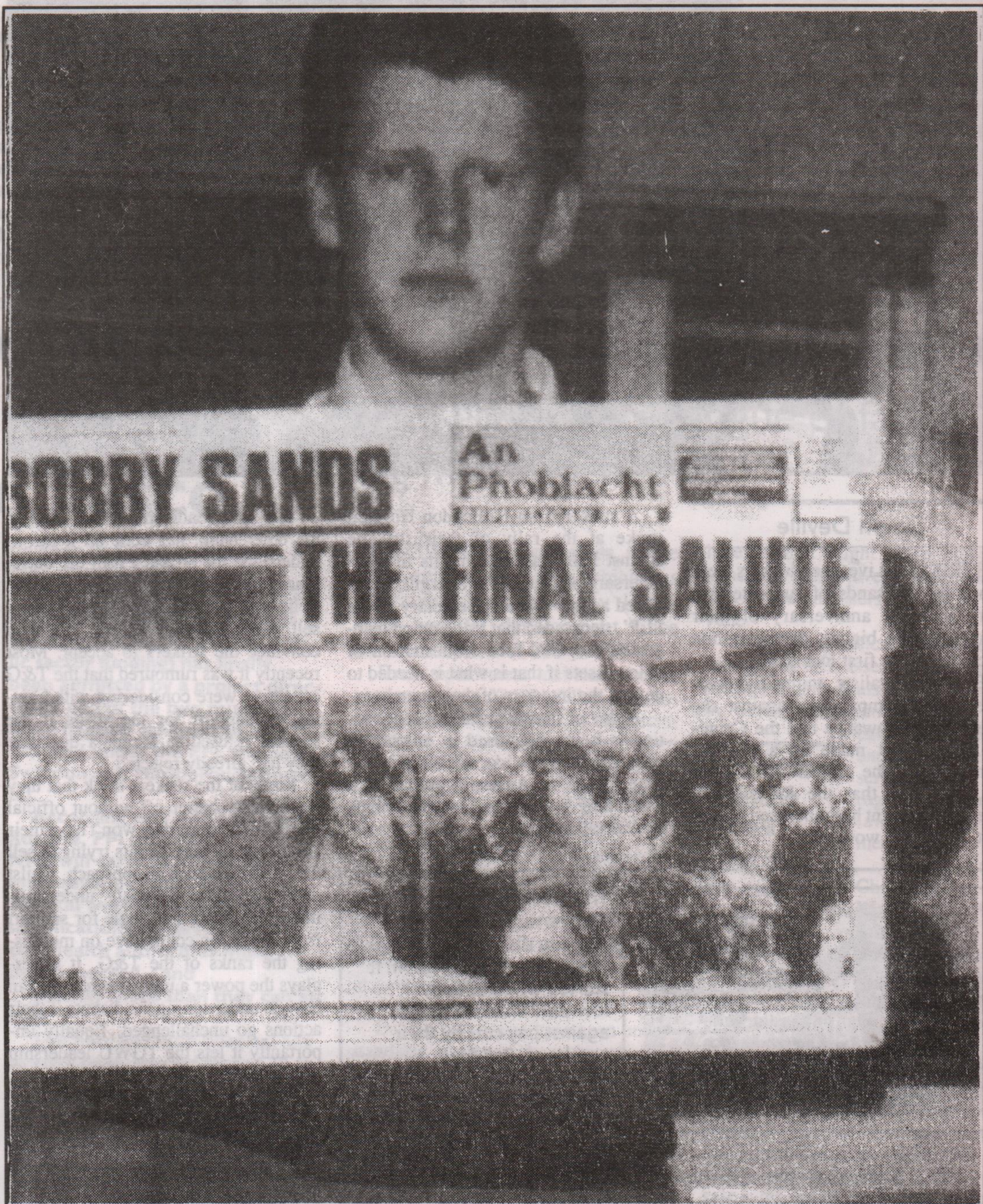
What happened to Diarmuid O'Neill is the latest tragic incident in a long history of state executions of Irish people. Throughout this the British government has constantly denied any policy of 'shoot to kill'.

Both the Stalker inquiry and the killing of three unarmed IRA members in Gibraltar in 1988 show that such a policy has existed, even if only at certain periods. Such a policy was supposedly justified on the basis of self defence of the individuals involved - in this case as in many others there is no way this could hold water.

The treatment of those who testified in the Gibraltar case may mean that no witnesses will come forward this time and we will never get the full picture.

Only hours after the events in Hammersmith the police were pressurising neighbours not to speak to the media. The Police Complaints Authority is to investigate the Hammersmith shooting and there will be no official comment until after this.

Some commentators are now suggesting that a mistake may have been made. Sinisterly this is accompanied by a suggestion that in terms of a successful fight against the IRA, such mistakes are inevitable and that the annihilation of one or several individuals is only a small price to pay.



Diarmuid O'Neill

Barbara battles for pensions

Terry Conway

PLATITUDES and misuse of statistics by Harriet Harman may not be enough to bring Blair victory on pensions. The leadership will try to get those who have submitted radical motions to remit and set up a commission to draft future policy, apparently with the support of pensioners leader Jack Jones.

Barbara Castle, once the prime architect of the vicious anti-union 'In Place of Strife' has become the opposition spokesperson on pensions. She says she is not backing down.

Castle, together with Peter Townsend of the University of Bristol, took up the absence of any commitment to action on pensions in the 'Road to the Manifesto'.

Their pamphlet 'We CAN afford the Welfare State' powerfully rebuts Labour's slide to means-testing not only on pensions but on benefits more generally.

One million pensioners do not claim the income support to which they are entitled. The pamphlet highlights the high administration costs cost of



One million pensioners do not claim the income support to which they are entitled

means-tested benefits and personal pensions, and exposes how the Tories have rigged the figures to generate a 'profit' on National Insurance contributions which has then been used to subsidise private pensions.

Castle and Townsend argue for a reformed State Earnings Related Pension Scheme (SERPS) with the restoration of all its original features as resources allow. The first measure that should be implemented, they argue, would be the 'twenty best earning years formula', particularly relevant in today's labour market.

Restoring the link between pensions and earnings destroyed by Thatcher as one of her first acts in government is crucial.

Castle and Townsend not only argue for restoring pension levels to what they would have been if

Thatcher had not axed the link, at a cost of £0.5 billion.

They also argue for an immediate increase in the basic level, as pledged by Labour in its 1992 manifesto—if it could be afforded then, they claim, it certainly can today.

Castle's stand is in line with that of pensioners' campaigns—10,000 marched through central London on September 14 to voice their demands. Many major unions and CLPs have similar positions.

Socialist Outlook wants to be able to go beyond these demands—but the first step in doing so is fighting vociferously for their implementation.

The fight for decent living standards in retirement may be a flashpoint in Blackpool—but the battle will continue long beyond the conference season.

Put the spotlight on ScotRail

Greg Tucker
RMT Train
Crew Grades
Secretary



Trying to build a national dispute in the face of the break up of British Rail, with all the restraints of the Tory anti-union laws, proved almost impossible. Nevertheless, it was possible to ensure that strike days were co-ordinated and momentum built up.

At the same time, the union had to come to terms with a shift in

AFTER the most complex campaign ever waged by the RMT, Guards have won a significant victory with only one train operating company remaining in dispute.

While the majority of train operating companies were prepared to settle on terms favourable to the union, ScotRail has dug in its heels.

The task now is to concentrate the resources of the union into winning our demands in Scotland.

Out of the 22 companies balloted, 14 have either made immediate pay awards or agreed to reduce the working week to 37 hours without strings. In three more, strikes have been suspended while offers are clarified.

Significantly, membership has grown rapidly and morale is high.

Paradoxically, the effect of privatisation has been to leave the new companies exposed. Whilst this is undoubtedly only a temporary occurrence Guards have been able to exploit this weakness. In the process the RMT has learnt some valuable lessons.

the seat of power – from the national level to company based representatives. Managements tried their hardest to create a split between the national union leadership and these company reps.

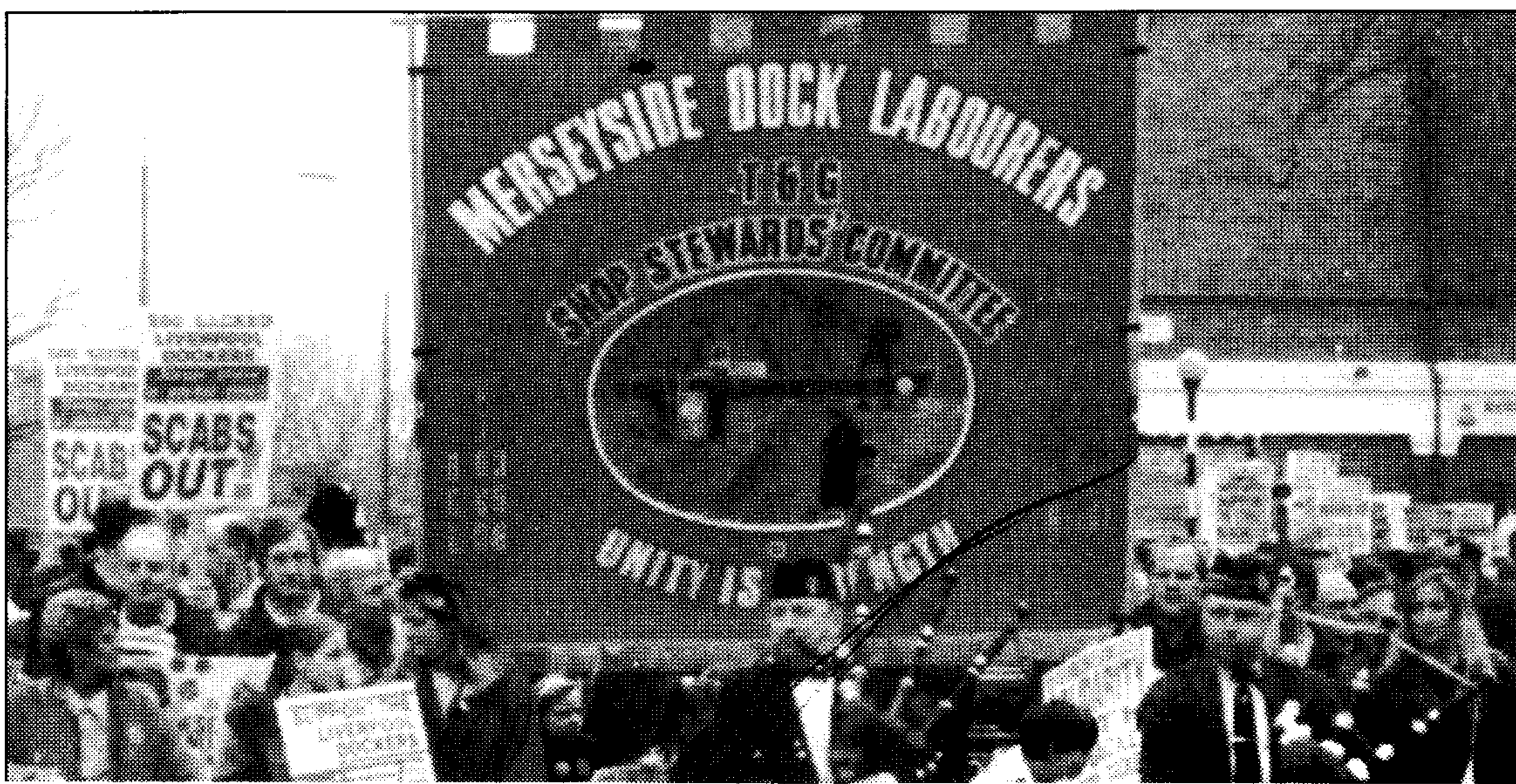
Only in two main areas in the South East were they successful.

While the time will come for an accounting in those areas, the key is now to concentrate on Scotland. ScotRail have offered a 37 hour week – but only if it is self financing. The union has rightly rejected this and called further strike days.

Scottish members have stood firm on previous strike days, and will continue to do so, but management is using other grades, in particular ASLEF drivers to undermine the action. The dispute needs now to escalate.

It will only be able to do so with support from the rest of the union. In particular a ScotRail Fighting Fund is to be set up. RMT members nationwide need to respond positively to the call for support.

Step up the support for the dockers



Simon Deville

STRIKING Liverpool dockers were joined by thousands of supporters to mark the first anniversary of their struggle in the biggest demonstration since they were first locked out.

Environmentalists, animal rights activists, and campaigners against the Jobseekers Allowance and the Criminal Justice Act made up a sizeable component of the protest. This is not the first time that the *Reclaim the Streets* movement has mobilised in support of striking workers.

A striker from Hillingdon Hospital spoke at the rally of their struggle against Pall Mall marking its first anniversary on October 1. Scargill, introduced as the 'General Secretary of the SLP', demanded that trade union leaders be prepared face sequestration of union assets if that is what is needed to defend the interests of their members.

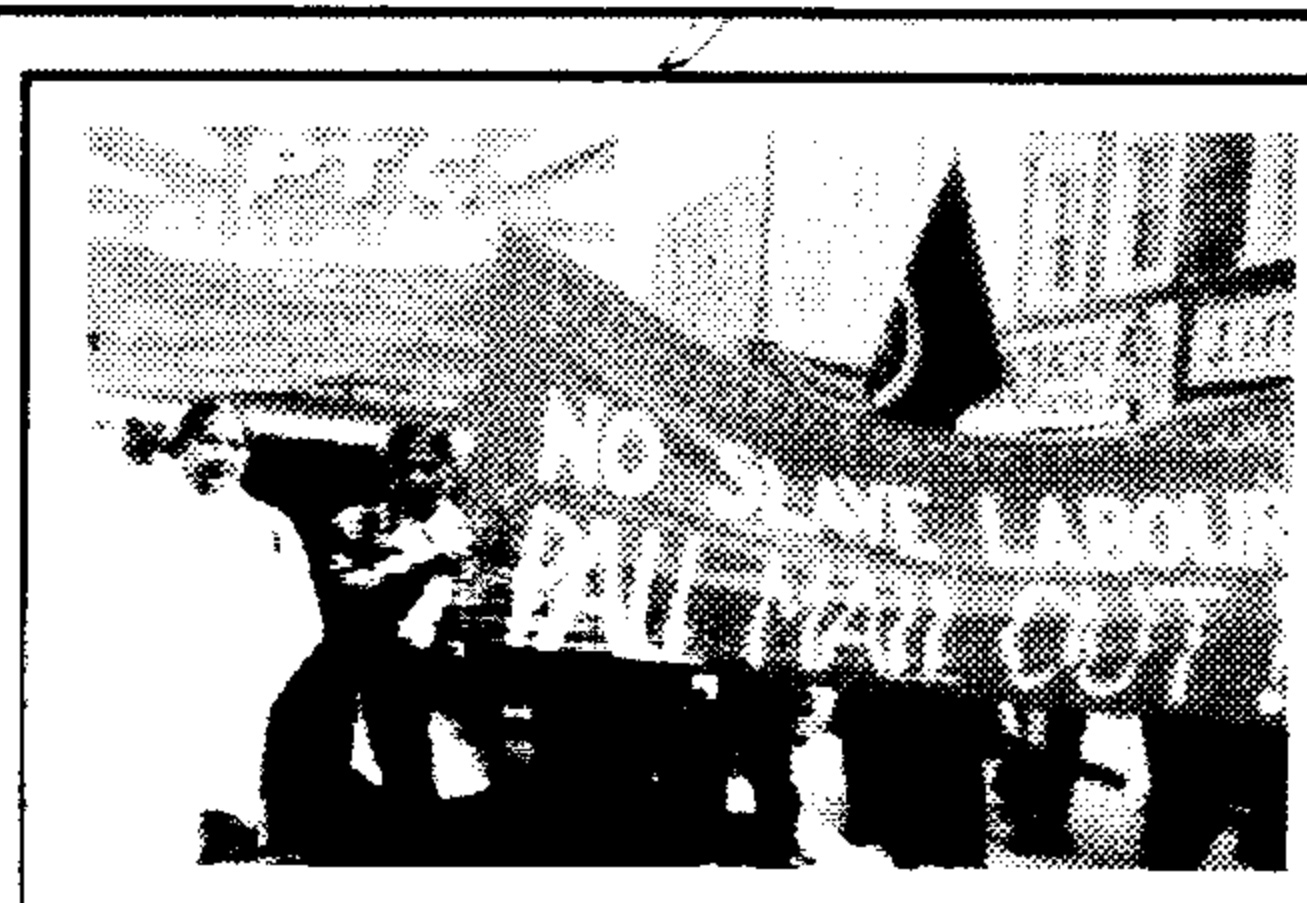
A day of international solidarity action is being organised in around 20 countries world-wide, with the Maritime Union of Australia preparing a week long boycott of Liverpool ships in Australian ports.

The 'left' leadership of the T&G on the other hand, has done all it can to undermine the strike. From the outset it has refused to officially recognise the strike and has attempted to negotiate a sell out deal with MDHC and then convince the strikers to accept. Most recently it was rumoured that the T&G executive were considering withdrawing all support for the strike if the strikers refused to accept a deal that they had already rejected.

Many of the strikers think that they are actually better off without official recognition, since they won't have their hands tied by bureaucrats trying to sell the strike out. Such an approach, whilst understandable, seriously undermines the effect a struggle for support from the union could have on mobilising the ranks of the T&G. It underplays the power a union leadership can have in undermining the dispute if their actions go unchallenged. Equally importantly it lets the TGWU leadership off the hook.

As the dispute enters its second year it is vital that the T&G leadership are forced to put their power and resources firmly behind those fighting casualisation and union bashing managements. Those in the TGWU who genuinely support the dockers must stand up and be counted.

This weekend sees the first anniversary of the long running dispute at Hillingdon Hospital in West London. It started when already low-paid workers struck against pay cuts by their employer, Pall Mall. Following this they were locked out.



This Saturday the anniversary will be marked by a demonstration leaving from Hillingdon Civic Centre at 1pm.

Labour attacks on Blair's patch

Ian Wilkinson

ISLINGTON COUNCIL in North London is set to force through a cuts package of £16 million, stating that it expects its government grant to be cut by about £11 million. It also intends not to set a high Council Tax just before the expected general election.

Blair's home Council which once saw itself as a flagship for the decentralisation of services now intends to recentralise many of them. It is voluntarily privatising many services, the biggest being Housing Benefits. It also intends to form partnerships with the private sector.

Islington is the latest on a growing list of Labour Councils attempting to impose draconian cuts in service conditions on staff.

Staff are threatened with a reduction in sick pay. Women face cuts in maternity leave from 27 weeks to 16 and attacks on special leave for childcare.

Islington has always prided itself on its equal opportunities policy. Councillors now suggest that all the women who have come to work for Islington are just too expensive!

All staff are about to be given three months notice of dismissal and re-engagement on new, worse terms and conditions.

All branch members are to be balloted on strike action against the attacks on conditions. A work-to-rule and ban on overtime are already in place.

The union is building for a lobby of the full Council meeting on October 31, starting at 6pm outside the town hall in Upper Street.

March to stop education cuts



October 19

Assemble Victoria
Embankment
12-1pm. Coach set
down at Waterloo
Bridge. Rally in Hyde
Park 3pm. Coach
pick-up at Park Lane

DEMONSTRATE

The Road to The Manifesto: rotten process and bankrupt politics

New Labour – No Life



All the hype about a mass democracy could be undermined if only a minority of Party members actually vote.

THE 'GREATEST EXERCISE in party democracy' is a sham. Labour Party members will soon be receiving individual ballot papers asking them to endorse the Party's new manifesto *New Labour New Life*.

These are being sent out on the last day of conference – on the assumption the manifesto will have been overwhelmingly endorsed there and that this will create a wave of enthusiasm among the wider membership.

At the moment enthusiasm seems to be in short supply. Very few members have actually seen the manifesto. Before voting they will only be given a 'summary'. Most people recognise the flaws in a process which does not even allow the Party conference to amend the manifesto.

The main advantage for the leadership is that with an election possible at any time most members will not want to leave the Party without a manifesto by voting against it. As with the previous ballot on the new Clause IV members will not have the opportunity of voting for an alternative. Party officials are however worried about the potential level of response.

All the hype about a mass democracy could be undermined if only a minority of Party members actually vote. Following the Clause IV ballot party officials did their best to ensure details of the turnout never got into the media.

The manifesto portrays as policy all that Blair has

'achieved' over the last few years. While the working class cry out for a Labour government to reverse the damage the Tories have done over 17 years, Blair's priorities are different.

At the heart of his approach is an orthodox monetarism, more concerned with restoring the profitability of British capitalism at the expense of the working class than addressing their real needs.

Anti-union laws will remain in place; the minimum wage will

currency if the conditions are right."

Such a stance implies, completely incorrectly, that it would be possible to amend the convergence criteria in a progressive manner.

Others, such as those around *Workers Liberty* while being clear that the content is unacceptable, argue that the left should not isolate itself by calling for a vote against. They have convinced the majority of the steering committee of the Socialist Campaign Group (Supporters Network) that it should merely call on people 'not to vote for' the manifesto.

They argued that a call for a 'no' vote would alienate those on the Left who would rather abstain. The end product of their twisted logic is that we can claim we can claim all those who do not vote as supporters.

The media will however portray abstention as indifference. The task of socialists has to be to convince party members that the only way to send a clear message that the politics of *New Labour* are unacceptable is to mobilise the largest possible vote against.

If there is a massive disparity between yes and no votes the leadership and the media will claim that it shows the left to be non-existent. The only way for the left to counter this is to organise a serious campaign against the manifesto.

It is also the only way to prepare the ground for a serious opposition to Blair's programme in government.

Enthusiasm seems to be in short supply. Very few members have actually seen the manifesto.

be set at a level acceptable to the bosses; the attacks on the welfare state will continue.

Some on the left of the party have been debating how to respond to the manifesto. While agreeing on the need to vote against it at conference, there are different views on how to vote in the ballot.

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Ken Livingstone has argued that much of it is so ambiguous that it is possible to vote for it – as if the leadership's interpretation of its ambiguities were the same as his. Thus despite his campaigning against the Maastricht convergence criteria for a single currency, he is able to say he agrees with the statement that "Britain should enter a single

Counting the mounting cost of the Private Finance fiasco

John Lister

THE TRUTH is out. Far from saving money for the NHS and reducing public spending, the government's controversial Private Finance Initiative (PFI) is substantially more expensive.

The scheme involves offering private firms the right to tender

for any public sector development scheme costing more than £1m, shouldering the initial capital cost in exchange for owning key facilities which could be 'leased back' to the public sector at a fat profit. Until now it has largely been attacked as a bureaucratic minefield that has delayed dozens, perhaps hundreds of

schemes in the NHS.

But the latest revelations confirm that PFI amounts to little more than the discredited "creative accounting" which government ministers ridiculed when it was implemented by local councils in the 1980s.

The NHS could become increasingly dependent upon hospitals which are owned and run by private firms for profit. Clinical services, too, could be taken over by greedy city consor-

tia keen to bleed profits from a cash-starved NHS.

The bitter truth that PFI costs more money (estimates suggest an extra 5-8 per cent above public sector funding) has finally been admitted by a project director of one of the two much-delayed flagship schemes to be financed under the PFI, the new Swindon and Marlborough hospital.

According to Trust boss David Roberts, PFI projects for the NHS will carry "a higher long-term revenue cost". If the new hospital were built to its original specifications its services would cost health authorities more than expected – and possibly more than they can afford.

The new Swindon hospital has already been slashed from 520 to 480 beds, and latest figures suggest there will be a massive funding shortfall during the period of the PFI contract. There are now even doubts over the suitability of the site selected for the new hospital. More delays are almost certain.

PFI's growing catalogue of failed big money schemes

THE SWINDON shambles is the latest episode in a saga which has effectively paralysed any large-scale hospital development since the introduction of PFI in 1994.

Even replacement ambulance radio systems costing £2-£3 million have become impossible to obtain, as the system grinds to a standstill. Computer projects have been halted. There is no easy escape.

To press-gang NHS Trusts into seeking private partners, Chancellor Kenneth Clarke has inflicted drastic cuts in government capital funding for the NHS.

But big companies have been understandably cautious about investing in cash-strapped Trusts.

The companies demanded new legislation which would effectively commit any future government to pick up the debts of a Trust which went bankrupt and thus guarantee their profits.

The new law was steamrollered through Parliament – but now city lawyers are worried that it still leaves loop-

holes which might leave companies vulnerable if they invested in floundering Trusts and ministers refused to intervene.

Trusts are specifically debarred from mortgaging their assets, so they can only offer profitable deals to PFI companies by paying hefty annual fees to 'lease

back' new buildings and buy privately-run services, or by handing over 'surplus' land for development.

Derek Smith, Chief Executive of King's Healthcare Trust in London told a recent conference: "PFI makes it almost impossible to do any-

thing unless you have a large slab of land somebody wants to develop."

Big firms are also deterred by the costs of developing PFI bids. With extensive involvement of lawyers, accountants and planners, each deal can cost companies at least £500,000.

One recent example, the proposed sale and lease-back of Coventry's Walsgrave Hospital, involves a contract running to 17,000 pages – just short of the size of Encyclopaedia Britannica.

Reversing into PFI

A LABOUR government is now seen by some business chiefs as the potential saviour of the floundering Private Finance Initiative (PFI). Shadow Treasury minister Mike O'Brien argues that "This idea must not be allowed to fail. Labour has a clear programme to rescue PFI."

This full-scale retreat follows the back-peddalling of former shadow Health Secretary Harriet Harman, speaking at a UNISON conference on PFI in June. She offered only that a new Labour government would "overhaul" the PFI.

A year earlier her predecessor Margaret Beckett had dismissed the scheme as "totally unacceptable".

UNISON's health conference this year pledged the union to fight for PFI to be scrapped, and for any assets and services handed over to private firms to be repossessed.

Ireland after Drumcree

David Coen explains how Sinn Fein's strategy is shifting after the events at Drumcree earlier this year.

THE ORANGE MARCH at Drumcree was without doubt the most significant turning point in the history of Northern Ireland since at least 1974.

At first, the loyalists were prevented by the RUC from marching along the nationalist Garvaghy Road on their way back from Drumcree Church. The threat of revolt within the RUC and, more importantly, the blocking of roads across the six counties by the loyalists in the days following the ban, led to an about-turn by Chief Constable Annesley. The march was forced through accompanied by extreme violence by the RUC, as was another through the Ormeau Road in Belfast.

The public relations effort of the RUC to portray itself as an impartial police force came to nothing. In fact some RUC members left Drumcree to don Orange sashes and beat their sectarian drums through nationalist areas elsewhere in the north.

So upset was opinion in the south that the normally pro-unionist John Bruton was forced to denounce John Major on the BBC. What upset Bruton most was not so much that Dublin was not consulted about the RUC's change of plan, but what Drumcree revealed about British and unionist attitudes.

For it is plain that the unionists will not concede even the most minor reforms necessary to re-structure partition and the British are both unwilling and

incapable of making them do so. Mayhew's 'cheer up, it's not all that bad' comment to a *Newsnight* interviewer who pointed this out was typical of his colonialist attitudes and probably signals the end of his political career. But most of all, it reveals a total inability to grasp what is at stake.

Not even the most trusting nationalist in the north of Ireland now believes that there is any possibility of an acceptable settlement within the six counties.

Even though they initially benefited from the exposure of the real role of the RUC, the political fallout from Drumcree has very serious implications for republicans.

Having failed to drive the British out by force of arms, they formed an alliance with Dublin and Irish America to press the British to reform the six counties. It is clearer than ever after Drumcree that the British and the unionists will not make even limited concessions; still, the main demand of Sinn Fein's leadership is to be allowed into the talks which resumed in September.

However it is the activities of Sinn Fein in Derry in the lead up to and during the Apprentice Boys March in August which give the clearest picture of the direction in which the current leadership wishes to go. This is to supplant the Social Democratic and Labour



Party as the main nationalist party in the north.

Part of the route of the Apprentice Boys march along the walls of Derry overlooks the nationalist Bogside. In the past, apart from banging their drums and trailing the Union Jack in the faces of the nationalists below, the marchers occasionally threw pennies down into the Bogside.

Orange marches along the walls had been banned since 1969 when the loyalists and the RUC attacked the Bogside but got such a hammering that the British Labour Government had to send in troops to help the beaten and demoralised RUC. It was not until 1995, after the IRA ceasefire, that a march along the walls was again forced through by the RUC.

This year it was clear that the RUC would not be able to smash through the nationalist counter demonstration and so the walls were closed off by Mayhew. The position of the Sinn Fein dominated Bogside Residents Committee was that the Apprentice Boys could march along the walls by negotiation, but they had to ensure that loyalist marchers in other areas also sought permission from local residents before they marched.

Though in the end negotiations broke down, what Sinn Fein were attempting to establish throughout the north was the principle of consent.

Their thinking seems to be that if a united Ireland can only be achieved with unionist consent, then equally, an internal

settlement in the north requires nationalist consent to unionist rule.

Apart from establishing this principle of consent to an internal settlement and, by implication, abandoning the traditional republican demand for a united Ireland, the events in Derry were important in one other respect.

It is the base of SDLP leader John Hume and it is rumoured that he will retire soon, possibly before the next General Election. It is by no means certain that his anointed successor, Mark Durkan, would be able to hold the seat in the face of a challenge from say, Martin McGuinness or Mitchell MacLoughlin of Sinn Fein.

Given that in the recent assembly elections Sinn Fein were only 6 per cent and 4 seats behind the SDLP and the fact that a significant part of the SDLP's vote is a personal vote for John Hume, it looks very possible for Sinn Fein to become the main nationalist party in the north. They are already the largest party on Belfast City Council.

Those who argue that the republicans have no strategy should beware. Although the armed struggle has not succeeded in driving the British out, if it has any remaining purpose it is to hammer on the door to the negotiations. The pan-nationalist alliance strategy which has largely replaced it has likewise failed to deliver.

Now there seems to be a new strategy of overtaking the SDLP by turning Sinn Fein into a conventional bourgeois nationalist party.

This is the logical consequence of a decision to accept the unionist veto and an internal settlement. It is the real meaning of the demand that the loyalists seek the consent of local nationalists before marching through their areas.

There are historical precedents for the current trajectory of the Sinn Fein leadership. In 1927 an Anti-Treaty IRA leader founded a new party - Fianna Fail.

He took the oath of allegiance to the British Crown in order to enter the Dail and 5 years later became Taoiseach (Prime Minister). It was not long before Eamon De Valera was jailing his former comrades in the republican movement.

The main obstacle to the Sinn Fein leadership's chances of success with this scheme is not its working class supporters but unionist intransigence. After Drumcree the slogans 'Not an inch' and 'No Surrender' are even more firmly entrenched.

And in the political vacuum in Britain leading up to the general election, the door to the talks will not be opened for Sinn Fein.

After May 1997 under a Labour or coalition government, Blair may be dependent on the unionists for support, and therefore less open to the offer of a

ceasefire in return for him wringing concessions out of the unionists.

Out of office the Tories will feel free to give vent to their unionist instincts, especially if they are led by Redwood or Portillo. More likely, Blair will continue with "old Labour" policies in Ireland. In other words more repression.

Drumcree was also a lesson for all of those on the left in Britain who see the Orange marches through nationalist areas as harmless assertions of culture and tradition. The blocked roads, the intimidation and the burning out of Catholic homes, not to mention several sectarian killings by loyalists around the same time, demonstrate the real nature of these so-called festivities.

A 'peace process' welcomed by some as creating space for 'real class' politics has been shown to lead neither to peace or class politics. All that has happened is that the Sinn Fein leadership has given up the struggle against the British presence. It is now on the point of accepting a partitionist settlement which has been a bloody failure over 70 years.

The acceptance of partition is the acceptance of working class division. Historically it has been used by the unionists to split the working class both in the six counties and throughout Ireland.

By this token it is impossible to carry out the class struggle through parties which claim to be socialist but represent only the unionist working class.

The experience of the last couple of years exposes one other delusion common on the left - that there was a realistic possibility of a capitalist united Ireland.

Quite clearly, the bourgeoisie, north and south, are incapable of bringing this about, whatever the desire of some sectors of business to do so.

Behind the unionists stand the British ruling class, determined to crush Republicanism, determined to hang on to their last colony until there is no longer any possibility of a resurgent republicanism developing in a socialist direction and sweeping through the whole island.

Their problem is the historic crisis of the British state itself. As it fragments, the opportunities for socialists will multiply.

What the republicans fail to see with their eyes fixed on Dublin and Washington and the votes of the nationalist middle class in the north, is that their historic compromise will be with a decaying and unstable power clinging to the shards of empire.

The choices for socialists in the republican movement are becoming ever more clear.



Derry this Summer

Bi-partisan Labour attacks Jeremy Corbyn

JEREMY CORBYN is the most consistent opponent of miscarriages of justice, especially against Irish people, in the House of Commons. That is why Gerry Hunter of the Birmingham Six and Judith Ward have both rushed to argue the case for his defence.

But the key issue here, as Jeremy himself would be the first to argue, is not to sing his praises as an individual - but as a rebuttal to the same comments of the press would be.

An attack by the Tories on a Labour MP who invited Gerry Adams to the House of Commons is no surprise as they continue to exclude Sinn Fein from the talks in the



six counties. The threat by the Labour Party to withdraw the whip unless the invitation was withdrawn needs to be seen both in the context of the Labour's consistent bipartisan stance on Ireland and the increasingly authoritarian actions of the leadership.

Mo Mowlam, as shadow spokesperson on northern Ireland was eager to take the opportunity to slam Corbyn - while remaining silent about the murderous actions of the British police.

As has been pointed out elsewhere if John Hulme were a member of the La-

bour Party he would be subject to these attacks: Corbyn sought to say nothing different from the much-feted SDLP leader.

It seems to have escaped explicit comment that only Corbyn has faced the wrath of the front bench when Tony Benn was also involved in this invitation and when other left MP's met with Sinn Fein after the Canary Wharf bombing to discuss a resumption of the ceasefire.

Could this be because there are those with the ear of the Labour leadership who covet Corbyn's majority in Islington North?

Susan Moore

Zionism flexes its muscles

* Palestine aflame

THE LATEST Israeli massacre of Palestinians could not have been predicted in its precise detail. But it has been obvious for some time that the faltering 'peace process' had reached a dead end. Roland Rance looks at an explosion that was inevitable.

The spark which triggered it was the Israeli decision to open a tunnel through the Old City of Jerusalem, supposedly to give tourists better access to the Western Wall of the ancient Jewish temple. Statements from both Netanyahu and Foreign Minister David Levy have since made clear they will not concede on this – or any other matter which suggests the future of Jerusalem could be up for negotiation.

Palestinian resentment at Israel's refusal to honour even the minimal concessions promised in the Oslo and Cairo accords forced Arafat to call protests but these spun out of his control. Once again, as at the start of the Palestinian intifada in December 1987, apologists for Zionism have described the Palestinian resistance as planned and co-ordinated. This is a distortion.

As with the intifada, this rising of the Palestinian masses is as much a challenge to their recognised leadership as it is to the Israeli army of occupation.

This time, the leadership is not in exile, seeking diplomatic channels to negotiate with Israel. The leaders have returned to Palestine, and face mounting anger as the scale of their capitulation to Israel, and the humiliating contempt in which the Israelis hold them, become ever more clear. As Michel Warshawsky of the Alternative Information Centre in Jerusalem pointed out at the summer school of the French Revolutionary Communist League, "The Palestinian Authority today has less autonomous room for manoeuvre than the PLO and the Unified Leadership of the Intifada had in 1989."

In a further change from the intifada, this resistance is armed. The Palestinian security forces up to now have faithfully executed Israel's aims and repressed the Palestinians as Israeli mercenaries. Now some may be at-



The challenge to Palestinian and Israeli socialists alike is to learn the lessons of past defeats. The mobilisations over these last days have drawn in new layers and opened new doors – the opportunity must not be lost

tempting to regain credibility by defending unarmed Palestinian civilians against Israeli brutality while others seem to have concluded that they were deceived into believing the 'peace process' was in their interests.

When armed Palestinians have previously fought back against the Israeli army – from the battle of Karameh in 1968 through to the siege of Beirut in 1982 – they have inflicted heavy casualties, and gained limited political victories. For the first time, such resistance is taking place inside Palestine.

It would be a mistake to just blame the new Israeli PM Binyamin Netanyahu for the collapse of the 'peace process'. Long before his narrow election victory, it was apparent that Israel had no intention of honouring its commitments. Former PM Yitzhak Rabin, having signed a detailed timetable for Israeli military withdrawal from the occupied territories, then claimed that "There are no sacred dates". He and his Labour successor, Shimon Peres,

reneged on firm promises including the release of political prisoners, the return of refugees forced to flee in 1967, freedom of movement between the West Bank and Gaza, and the withdrawal of Israeli troops from Hebron.

As Warshawsky also noted, "There is no crime against peace that the Peres-Rabin team did not commit". In that sense, Netanyahu's victory in the Israeli election, while a defeat for the Labour Party's strategy for containment of Palestinian resistance, was a consequence, not a cause, of the collapse of the sham 'peace process'.

But this resistance is weakened as a result of the capitulation by its former leaders.

In 1987, when the intifada erupted, an entire generation of young activists – many of them schooled and tested in Israeli prisons – rose to prominence at the head of a mass popular upsurge of frustration and anger.

They created a genuine revolutionary leadership, which took effective control of large parts of the occupied territories, controlling not only security but also economic affairs, education, health, welfare and most other aspects of civil society.

This example threatened not merely continued Israeli control over Palestine, but the future of all of the undemocratic Arab regimes. It was necessary for Israel to come to terms with the exiled leadership, which had been outflanked by the popular uprising and which shared a common interest in its defeat.

This led to the unprecedented Israel-PLO accords, and the agreement to repartition Palestine and to collaborate in the repression of Palestinian dissent.

Netanyahu and the Likud Party have never accepted this agreement. Even though it guarantees Israeli political and economic domination of the Middle East, it has a price.

Although Rabin and Peres pretended otherwise, the agreement could only hold if the parts of the occupied territories from which Israel withdrew were granted formal independence, and if most of the Israeli settlements were dismantled.

This rising of the Palestinian masses is as much a challenge to their recognised leadership as it is to the Israeli army of occupation.

While the Labour Party delayed meeting its commitments in the hope of profiting politically and further weakening a discredited PLO leadership, before having to pay a much reduced price, the Likud insisted on the price as a reason to reject the entire package. The bulk of the Israeli peace movement, which effectively retired from activity rather than press its government to honour its commitments in the agreements, contributed to their failure.

The Palestinian left, meanwhile, seems almost to have given up the struggle, and conceded leadership of any resistance to the fundamentalists.

But a struggle based on religious obscurantism can never defeat Israeli occupation and end the partition of Palestine and the dispossession of the Palestinian people. It cannot even mobilise the whole of Palestinian society, let alone offer a way forward for war-weary Israelis.

The challenge to Palestinian and Israeli socialists alike is to learn the lessons of past defeats. The mobilisations over these last days have drawn in new layers and opened new doors – the opportunity must not be lost.

Mordechai Vanunu

ON 30 SEPTEMBER 1986, Israeli nuclear technician Mordechai Vanunu was kidnapped by Mossad agents in Rome, and clandestinely shipped to Israel. He was later convicted of treason and espionage.

His 'crime' was to tell a Sunday Times reporter what all the world knew – that Israel was secretly building nuclear bombs.

Since his kidnapping, Vanunu has been in permanent solitary confinement, in conditions denounced by Amnesty International as "cruel, inhuman and degrading."

This week marks the tenth anniversary of his kidnapping. In protests around the world, activists have demanded his immediate release.

Socialist Outlook joins them in this demand, and recognises Vanunu's extraordinary courage in resisting all the attempts to break his spirit and impair his sanity.



Facing mounting anger as the scale of capitulation to Israel

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Sound the alarm over single currency chaos

Break the conspiracy of silence!

John Lister

THE UNEXPLODED bomb of British politics is ticking angrily away in the belly of the Tory Party, but few Labour activists and even fewer voters are aware of the scale of the threat they face.

While top Tories tear each other's eyes out in the wrangle over a single European currency, the popular press ignores the issue, presenting it as obscure and abstract, while the TUC actively argues and lobbies for a catastrophically wrong policy.

The reality is that the single currency, and the rigid mechanisms and rules that would enforce it, would seriously hamper the struggle for socialism or even the fight for serious reforms within capitalism for the indefinite future.

No matter which government won the next General Election in Britain (or any other European country), economic policies would be dictated by the six unelected Executive Board members of a new European Central Bank, to be located in Frankfurt.

This grotesque Euro-quango could not be removed from office by any EU government or even by the Council of Ministers: it would hold office for eight years. It has been described by the *Financial Times* as "the most powerful and politically unaccountable central bank in the world."

This Central Bank's primary objective would be to deliver low inflation and fixed interest rates.

Brutal sanctions will be employed against member states which break the

rules, including punitive fines payable to the Central Bank.

The Bank of England would have to be privatised under Maastricht rules, to be operationally independent of the Treasury and empowered to participate in the new European system of Central Banks.

The incoming British government will be obliged to take an immediate decision on whether or not to enter the EMU, and if so, to instantly implement the savage cuts in public spending needed to reduce Britain's budget deficit.

The latest calculation is that the gap to be bridged is £19.5 billion—equivalent to the entire hospitals' budget, or the total schools budget.

Despite the enormous threat posed by the single currency, Blair's team,

Blair's team will not declare their policy openly at this stage.

This means that, as with the Maastricht Treaty itself in 1992, British workers will have no opportunity to cast a significant vote *against* the single currency: with the Liberal Democrats ardently supporting EMU, only the cranky right wing nationalists of Sir James Goldsmith's Referendum Party are standing on an anti-EMU ticket.

There are limited signs of opposition within the labour movement.

Ken Livingstone was the first in the field with his 'Alternatives to Maastricht' campaign, this time without the support of the GMB's John Edmonds.

Perhaps more attractive is the 'People's Europe' campaign launched in the summer by MPs including Alan Simpson, Denzil Davies and Llew Smith: this now claims support from over 70 MPs and MEPs—but has barely pricked the surface of the trade unions and wider popular support.

People's Europe goes beyond calling for a referendum: it demands that "Labour should clearly state in its General Election Manifesto that a Labour Government would not join a single currency on the terms contained in the Maastricht Treaty."

And it raises the obvious warning that:

"Any attempt to cut public expenditure in order to meet the convergence criteria, with all the consequences for unemployment and the welfare state, could split the Cabinet and break a Labour government."

However, trade union leaders, including many on the left, have failed to firmly oppose European Monetary Un-

Economic policies would be dictated by the six unelected Executive Board members of a new European Central Bank

like the TUC, appears strongly inclined to join up. With Major's gang hopelessly divided on the issue, Blair is seen by Germany's Chancellor Kohl and other European leaders as the person most likely to pull British capitalism into EMU. In this stance he is also seeking to ingratiate himself with an influential section of the CBI.

Blair's line relies upon the ignorance or indifference of many Labour MPs, few of whom have expressed any coherent view on the single currency. Of course, as on the minimum wage,



Currency convergence requires driving down wages—especially those of young workers

ion. Some openly admit that they have nodded through the TUC policy without having read the documents.

Others, like John Edmonds and AEEU leaders, have joined employers in pressing the case for the single currency, regardless of the savage toll such a policy would take on public sector jobs and welfare services.

Even those who have edged towards an opposition stance, like TGWU leader Bill Morris, have done so tentatively, arguing on the one hand that "Britain cannot turn its back on Europe in these circumstances without finding itself all but alone", while pointing out on the other that under the Maastricht

rules "a single currency could spell a jobs catastrophe for British industry", and calling timidly for a referendum.

UNISON debated the single currency at its conference this year—and voted overwhelmingly to reject it. Yet none of UNISON's national officials will publicly argue the union's policy.

The fight on this issue must be taken into every section of the trade union and labour movement.

It is vital that the left takes the initiative, sounding the alarm against a single currency which could devastate our public services.

Bosnian elections bring no solutions

Veronica Fagan

BOSNIAN refugees in Germany are attempting suicide rather than face expulsion. On September 24, in the wake of the Bosnian elections, Germany announced that it would start returning refugees from October 1.

Two unsuccessful suicide attempts followed. Last month, one middle aged Bosnian killed himself. Such is the confidence of refugees who fled from ethnic cleansing that the Dayton agreement and the elections have solved anything.

Most Bosnian refugees in Germany, although "ethnically cleansed" from areas now under Serb control, would be sent to areas under the Bosnian-Croat Federation's control. This would pro-

voke a hostile response from the Croat authorities, and could lead to a resumption of the war between Bosnia and Croatia.

The outcome of the elections held few surprises, with nationalist parties succeeding in all three parts of Bosnia. Most attention has been given to the fact that in Bosnia, President Izetbegovic of the Party of Democratic Action defeated his rivals Zubak of the Croat Democratic Party and Krajisnik of the Serb Democratic Party. Within Republika Srpska, some divisions do seem to be opening up.

While the United List, with a clearly multi-ethnic platform, received only 1 per cent of the vote, Ivanic of the moderate nationalist Alliance for Peace and Progress took 31 per cent—not a small

achievement given the conditions under which the voting took place.

Media attention has focused on validation of the elections. It seems likely that the OSCE will agree the results; not to do so would undermine the basis of the Dayton agreement. But it was clear from the start that the elections could not be free or fair.

For example, the Dayton Agreement insisted that electoral lists from 1992 were used! Since then hundreds of thousands have been killed.

In addition, none of the conditions set by OSCE for the elections were met. There was no freedom of movement, preventing large numbers from voting in their former places of residence. Refugees were not permitted to return to much of Bosnia.

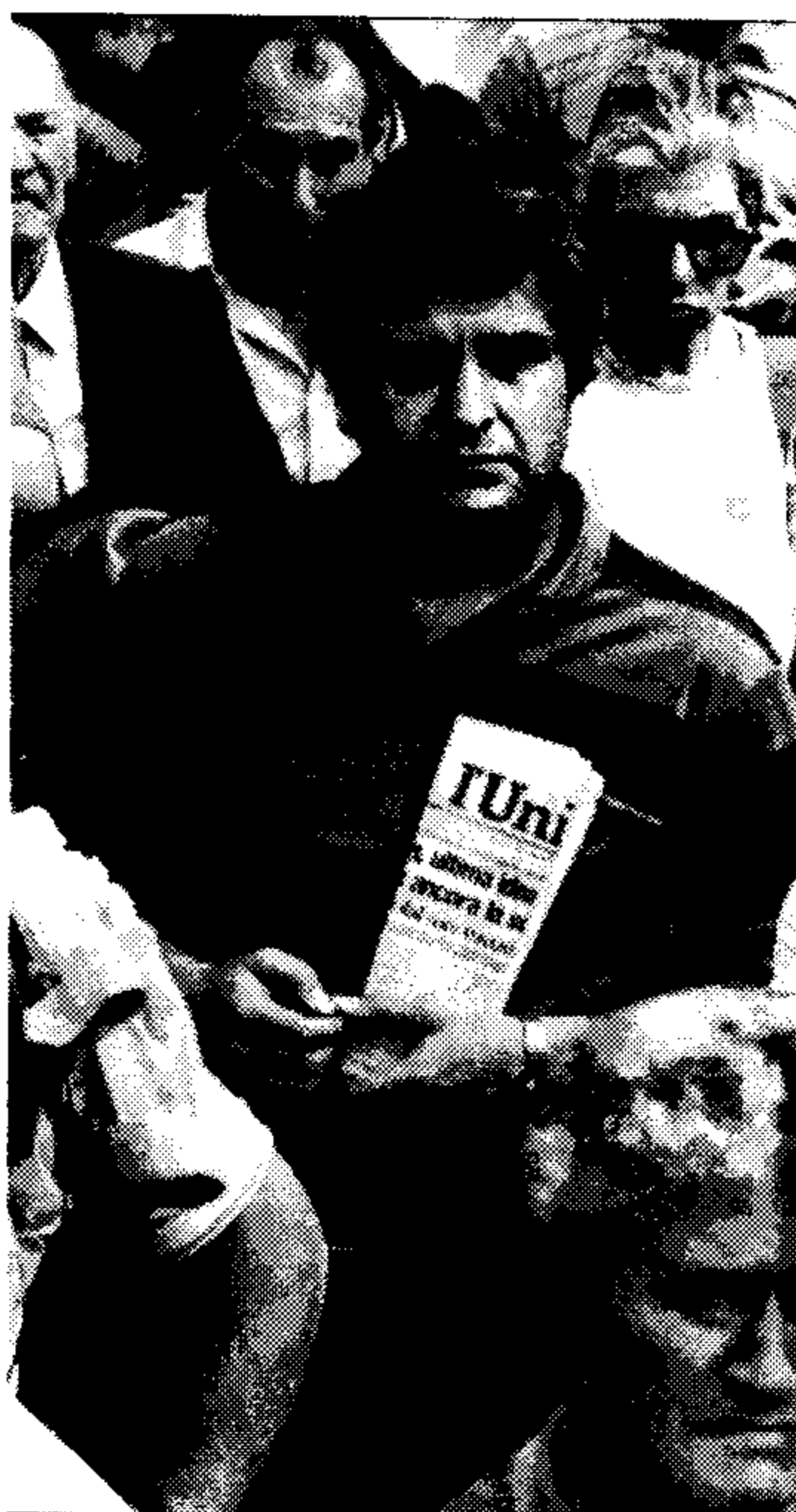
Nor was freedom of the press established. The nationalist parties dominated written and broadcast media all over Bosnia.

Vast abuses of human rights continued and were sanctioned, seen most grotesquely in the funding by OSCE of the candidacy of mass murderer and rapist Arkan in Republika Srpska. Protests of intimidation have been ignored.

The United List also complained to the OSCE that in some other areas—including a number in which they expected to do well—significant numbers of voting papers were missing.

They originally called on September 17 for the results in the affected cantons to be nullified, but less than a week later they seem to have retracted.

The effect of the Bosnian elections has been to sanction the partition of Bosnia and the results of ethnic cleansing.



UMBERTO Bossi, leader of the Northern League party, proclaimed the birth of the independent and sovereign federal republic of Padania last month. Padania is the name of Italy's northern plain.

The republic's provisional government aims for secession from Italy in a year's time.

The declaration, made in Venice, followed three days of often mystical demonstrations and rituals by the rightist Northern League while Bossi sailed down the river Po, the region's main waterway.

To some, Bossi appeared to be just a pompous, ignorant dema-

Will Italy break-up?

gogue, and the uniformed *leghisti* merely a gang of urchins escaping for a moment from the vigilance of their teachers. This view, held by some on the Italian left, underestimates the Northern League's influence.

Four million people, 20 per cent of the northern electorate, voted for the League in April. In Lombardy it won the vote of one worker in three: more than the class-struggle Communist Refoundation Party and the reformist Democratic Party of the Left.

Since the downfall of Christian Democracy, Italy's middle classes and petty bourgeoisie do not feel their views to be represented by the mainstream employers' organisations, financial institutions and politicians. The Northern League benefits greatly from the support of the former bastions of Christian Democracy.

The only way to oppose both Bossi, and his far right national patriotic National Alliance opponents, is by promoting class solidarity between workers using the old slogan: "North and South unite in struggle". This is made more difficult by the unions' acceptance of the reintroduction of wage differentials abolished through workers' struggles in 1969.

This article abridged from *Rouge*, 19 September 1996.

Diego Giachetti in Turin

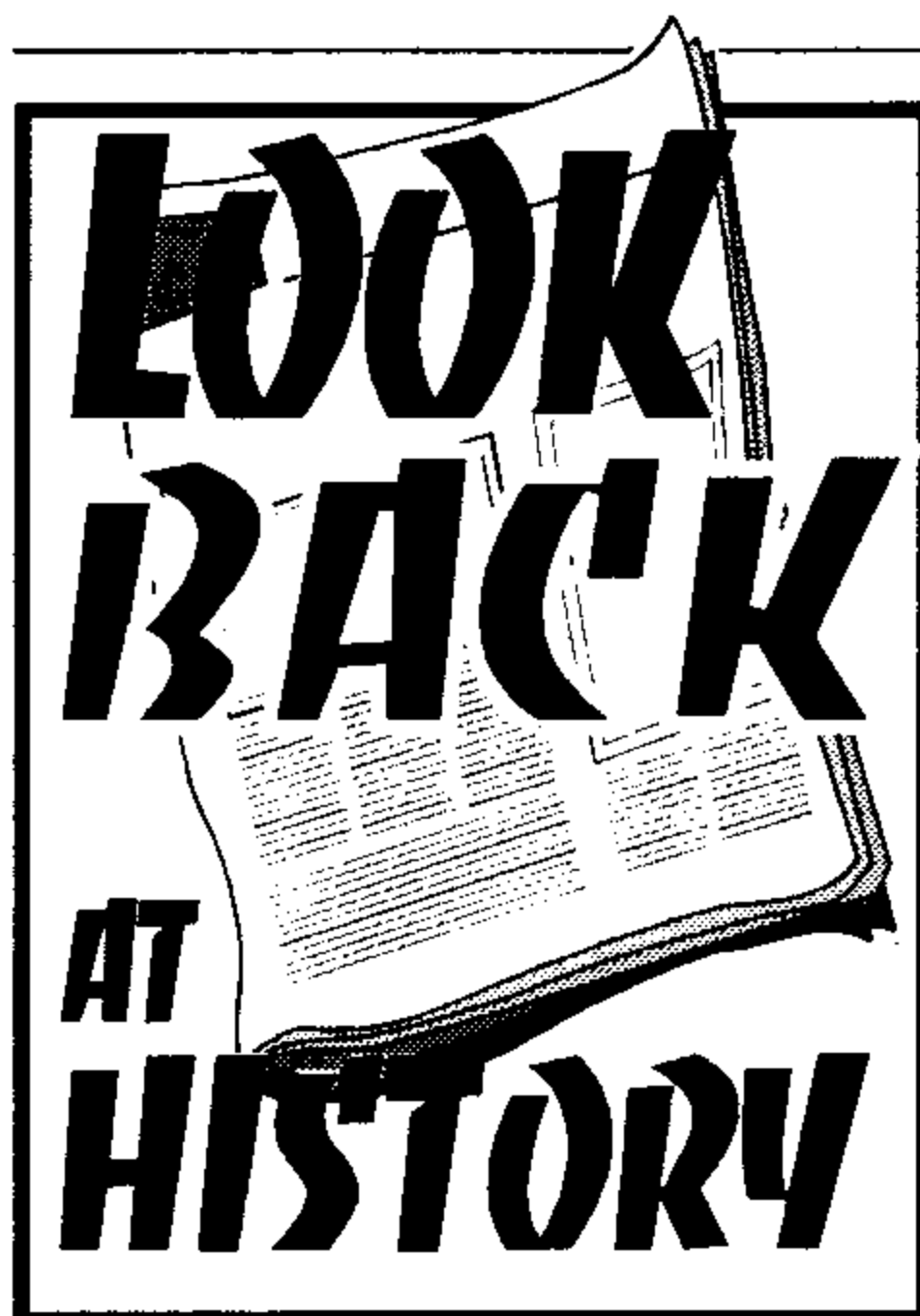
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1956 – the Tory debacle over Suez

Geoff Ryan

A SITTING of Parliament suspended. Fists raised. The Tory government denounced as 'fascists' and 'murderers'. Demonstrations against British militarism organised by the Labour Party.

The Fire Brigades Union calling for a General Strike. Resignations of government Ministers.

The enforced retirement of a Tory Prime Minister. The British Commonwealth on the brink of being torn apart. Not fantasy but Britain 40 years ago at the time of Suez.

On October 29 1956 Israeli forces attacked Egypt. The following day the British and French governments called on both sides to withdraw ten miles from the Suez canal. Egypt would have to give up control of the Canal, as well as a large piece of territory. British and French troops would then occupy the Canal zone, supposedly to keep the warring armies apart.

On October 31 British planes attacked Egyptian airfields and an invasion fleet left Malta. Destruction of the Egyptian airforce allowed Israeli troops to advance through the Sinai peninsula.

On November 5 British paratroopers were dropped at Port Said and the following day the fleet arrived. Port Said was captured later that day and British and French forces prepared to advance on Suez. The Egyptians sank ships to block the Canal.

On November 6 the British government ordered a ceasefire, forcing the French to follow suit. A relatively easy military victory (resistance by Egyptian soldiers and civilians was much stronger than was admitted) soon became a political debacle for the Conservative government of Anthony Eden.

The Israeli attack and British and French intervention, named Operation Musketeer, were not spontaneous, but well prepared in advance. Plans had been drawn up in August and scheduled for September, then delayed to bring the Israelis on board.

Britain, France and Israel went to war to overthrow the radical Arab nationalist regime of Gamal Abdul Nasser. Nasser, along with Tito and Nehru, was one of the leaders of the recently formed Non-Aligned Movement, which called for support for national liberation struggles in the colonial world. Both Eden and French 'Socialist' Prime Minister Mollet believed that the landing of troops would lead to an uprising against Nasser - the exact opposite of what actually happened.

Nasser's attacks on imperialism, his support for the Algerian independence fighters and his willingness to allow Palestinian guerillas to conduct operations against Israel led to him being denounced (like Saddam Hussein 30 years later) as a new Hitler or Mussolini.

Nasser made two crucial decisions which heightened international concern. He bought arms from Czechoslovakia. In May 1956 he recognised the

People's Republic of China.

This led to strained relations with the United States and in July 1956 the US government refused a loan to build a dam at Aswan. The British government immediately followed suit.

On 26 July, in response, and in order to raise the money for the Aswan Dam, Nasser nationalised the Suez Canal, owned by a French company. This was the final straw for Britain and France. The response was to carry out the plans for Operation Musketeer.

Some justification for military intervention was needed. Eden therefore organised a conference in London to discuss 'internationalising' the Canal, at the same time claiming in a TV broadcast that Nasser was 'a man who cannot be trusted to keep an agreement. We all know this is how fascist governments behave'. Not surprisingly the Egyptians rejected the conference's demands.

The Canal Company then ordered all its marine pilots to leave the Canal, in the typically arrogant and racist belief that Arabs would not be able to keep open a major seaway of world importance - providing a convenient excuse for intervention.

However, the British government had massively miscalculated world reaction, particularly that of the United States. They expected US support, not realising this did not fit in with US foreign policy concerns at the time.

The invasion of Suez coincided with the suppression of the Hungarian revolution by

Russian tanks. The US found it difficult to condemn the Russian invasion when its own supposed allies were brutally invading Egypt. The Anglo-French adventure got in the way of the much greater American strategic interest - 'containing Communism'.

Labour's opposition to Suez was not because of any principled objection to imperialism.

Opposition from the US left Britain and France firmly isolated within the United Nations. Only Australia and New Zealand gave support. The usually reliable governments of Canada and South Africa abstained while India led the anti-British campaign. The whole future of the Commonwealth was at stake.

The Labour Party had played a central role in forming NATO and was far more 'Atlanticist' in its world view than the Tories. Without US opposition to Suez Labour would never have opposed British militarism.

Worldwide hostility to Suez was having serious economic consequences.

Massive withdrawals of Sterling deposits took place from August onwards - including India's deposits of £150 million. There was a serious oil shortage which could only be met by the US. The US refused to supply oil or allow the necessary loans from the International Monetary Fund. This forced the British government to agree to pull its troops out of Egypt and encouraged Labour opposition to Eden's adventure.

As a result of Suez, Nasser emerged stronger than ever and began to extend his influence throughout the Arab world. Within two years the staunchly pro-British Iraqi monarchy had been overthrown and the Jordanian regime was tottering.

Egypt and Syria had united in the United Arab Republic. Far from the invasion leading to denationalisation of the Canal it was a disaster for British and French capitalists - Nasser nationalised all British and French property.

Egypt and other Arab states turned increasingly towards the Soviet Union. Western influence went into decline in the Arab world. Britain and France were revealed as second rate powers, no longer able to play their old role on the world stage. The process of decolonisation became inevitable after Suez.

Opposition to national liberation struggles could only be continued with at least tacit American support.



The Duke of Wellington's Regiment en route to the middle east in 1956

Socialist Outlook's politics

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 the 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 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 brutish totalitarian parodies of state marxism nor on the tame, toothless version of 'marxism' beloved by armchair academics, but on 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 reactionary 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, Ireland and Wales should be left to await revolution. The oppressed must organise themselves and fight now for their demands, which are 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 us in the struggle for socialism, readers' groups meet in cities across the country.

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Get organised, get active!

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Bob Pennington

Many *Socialist Outlook* readers will be distressed to hear of the recent death of Bob Pennington. Bob made many important contributions to revolutionary politics in Britain. He was a prominent leader of Dockworkers through his involvement in the 'Blue' union in the 1950's. He was industrial organiser of the International Marxist Group for many years. The next issue of *Socialist Outlook* will carry a full obituary.

FEEDBACK

Socialist Outlook welcomes letters. Post them to Feedback, PO Box 1109, London N4 2UU. Those over 300 words in length will be edited. You can E-mail us at: outlook@gn.apc.org We are on the web at: [HTTP://www.gn.apc.org/labournet/so](http://www.gn.apc.org/labournet/so)

Socialist OUTLOOK

Dorrell's pre-election disaster

John Lister

STORMY times are ahead for Health Secretary Stephen Dorrell as health authorities and Trusts across the country break cover to reveal record-breaking deficits and devastating cuts in the run-up to the next election.

The Tory tactic of squeezing NHS funding to pay for tax cuts last November is producing bitter fruit as health chiefs tear up the Patients' Charter, reducing the NHS in many areas to a skeleton emergencies-only service.

In South West London, two health authorities propose to slash up to 80 per cent of non-urgent waiting list contracts to achieve cuts of over £20m next year.

In Lambeth, Southwark and Lewisham, with cuts totalling

between £18m and £27m next year the chief executive of Kings Healthcare Trust has openly admitted that the consequence will be a 'two tier service', discriminating between patients on the basis of where they live and whether their GP is a fundholder.

In East London & City, £14m in the red this year, health chiefs are debating a £22m cuts package including a massive £13m from mental health services which would mean sacking consultants and front-line staff in an area where bed occupancy in psychiatric services is already 120 per cent.

Across London planned cuts exceed £100 million.

Other towns and cities are also under the hammer.

Manchester faces a £14m shortfall, Oxford £7 million. In Colchester one Trust, Essex Rivers, faces a £3.5m deficit this year.

The cash crunch is one reason for the delay in settling this

year's NHS pay round, and the pitifully low offers being put forward: only a minority of Trusts are even offering three per cent to nursing and support staff, while some are already pressing for redundancies.

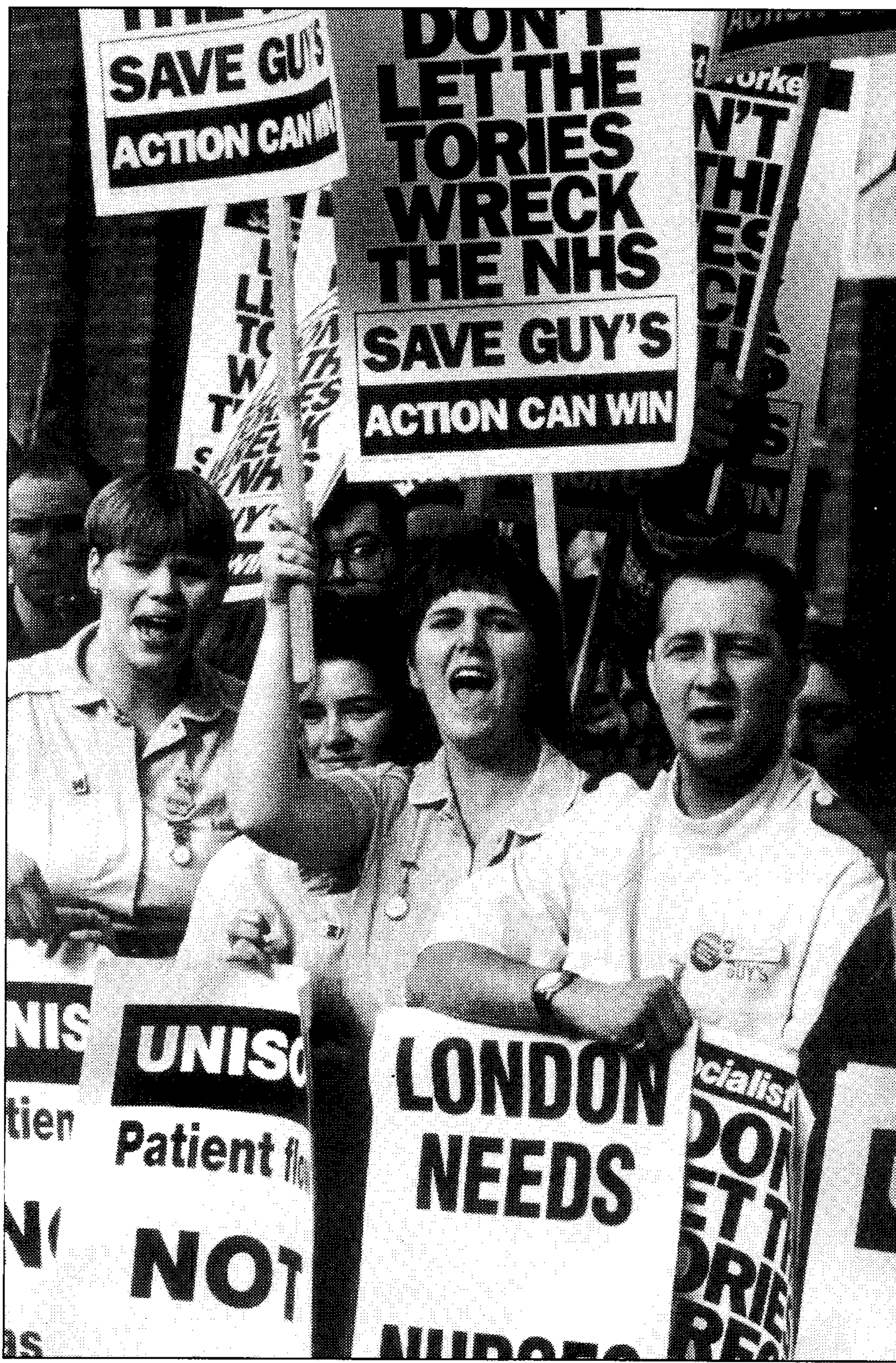
Now, hospitals are bracing themselves for a long, hard winter of headline scandals and misery for patients, many elderly, who will be waiting even longer for the beds they need.

No wonder the Tories are worried.

The cuts that are now threatened are the biggest since the NHS was established in 1948.

They could effectively destroy comprehensive health care in many areas.

A concerted campaign by health workers and the labour movement is vital to keep these issues at the top of the pre-election agenda, and make Stephen Dorrell's nightmares come true.



March for full employment and in defence of the welfare state

Greg Tucker

THERE ARE Twenty million registered unemployed in the European Union today, and fifty million people living below the poverty line.

Rather than trying to address the real social problems underlying these statistics, governments across Europe are uniting to adopt policies which will deepen the crisis, pushing up unemployment and increasing poverty.

They are engaged in a process of discussion, probably reaching a climax at the Intergovernmental Conference in Amsterdam next June, on the next stage to be taken on the road to monetary convergence.

Estimates suggest that ten million more unemployed will be created by their plans. For the governments of Europe, unemployment is a weapon to help control working people, not a problem. Welfare spending is an obstacle to profit, not a response to the needs of society.

Their proposals are about protecting the interests of capital at the expense of our living conditions.

Across Europe opposition to this ruling class offensive is on the increase, through the wave of strikes in France last winter, and the mass demonstrations in Italy and Germany. European activists have come together to plan a series of marches to converge on the Amsterdam Conference.

Launched in Florence this summer, the Appeal for European Marches against Unemployment took a big step forward last weekend when a hundred

representatives of unions and unemployed organisations from over a dozen countries met in Paris.

They combined political discussion with practical proposals on routes of marches, timetables of activity etc. Delegates from a range of organisations in Britain attended, including representatives of major regional trade union committees and the National Unemployed Centres Combine. Organising committees are being set up in most EU countries, with an international organising centre in Paris.

There will be a major conference in Brussels at the start of February. The marches begin in mid April, and converge in a mass demonstration in Amsterdam on June 14.

Books, pamphlets and an international newspaper will be produced. Already web sites are up and running.

In Britain, plans are emerging for up to three separate feeder marches across Britain, from Scotland, Wales and the North West. Irish unemployed groups are to consider whether, having marched across Ireland they can then join one of the British legs.

While these plans are undoubtedly ambitious, this reflects the importance of the issues at stake.

Currently Labour and the TUC leadership remain committed to supporting the ruling class European project.

Coming, hopefully, almost immediately after the election of a Labour Government, a response to the threat posed by further integration of European capital will be crucial.

We have to force the issues of full employment and defence of welfare spending firmly onto Labour's governmental agenda.

British delegates to the Paris conference called a meeting in Manchester on October 26th, open to all those interested in becoming involved, where all decisions relating to a British initiative can be taken.

As Euro MP Ken Coates said in support of the project, "Next year's planned European Marches against Unemployment will make Europe's jobs crisis crystal clear for all to see."

We need maximum public support to bring off this exciting project.

The initiative in alerting public opinion to the spreading scourge of unemployment offers everyone an opportunity to participate in some way and register their visible opposition to a Europe of mass unemployment and exclusion."

Make sure you are represented at the meeting in Manchester - Build the EuroMarch for Jobs.