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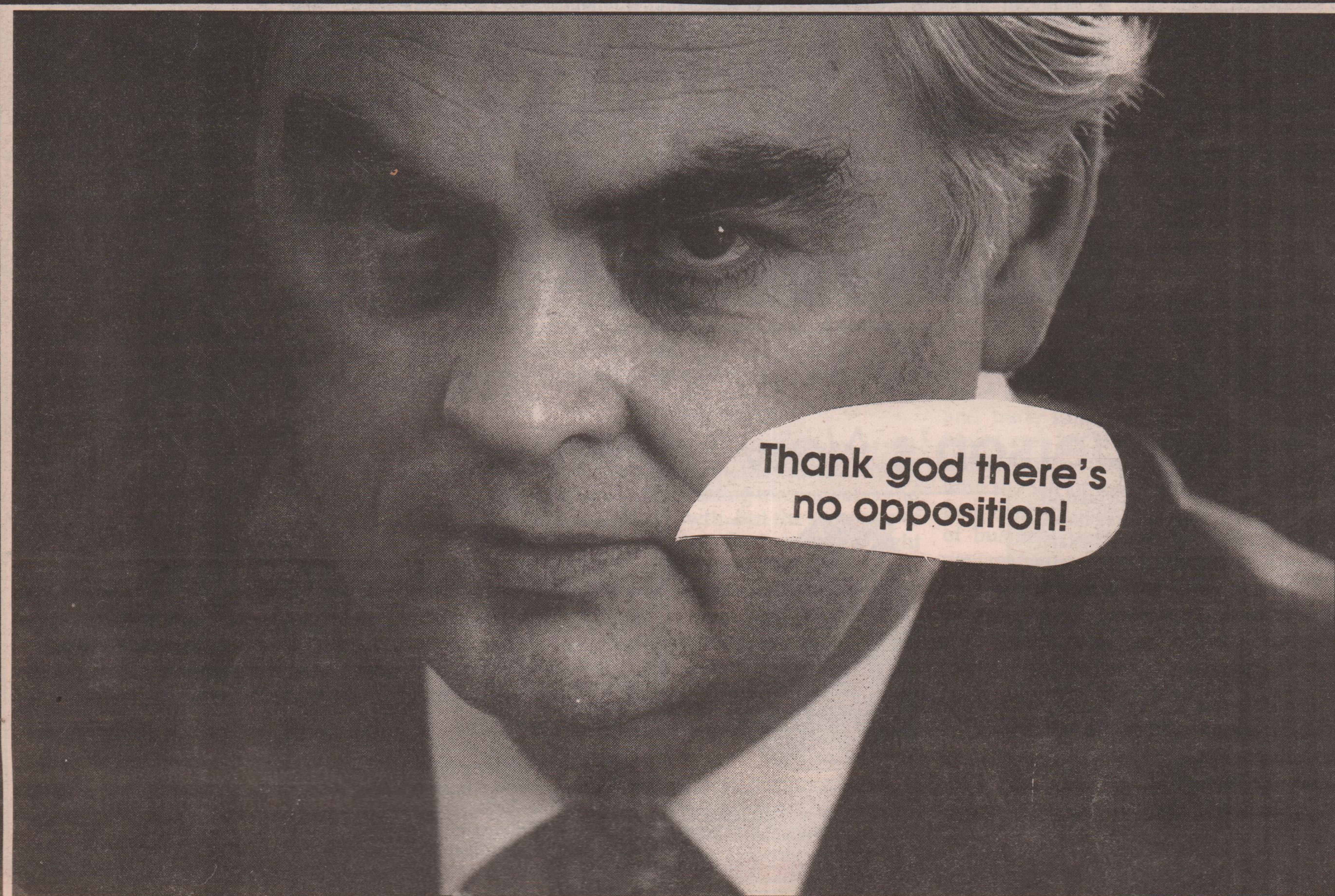
No 28

26 September, 1992

# *socialist* **OUTLOOK**

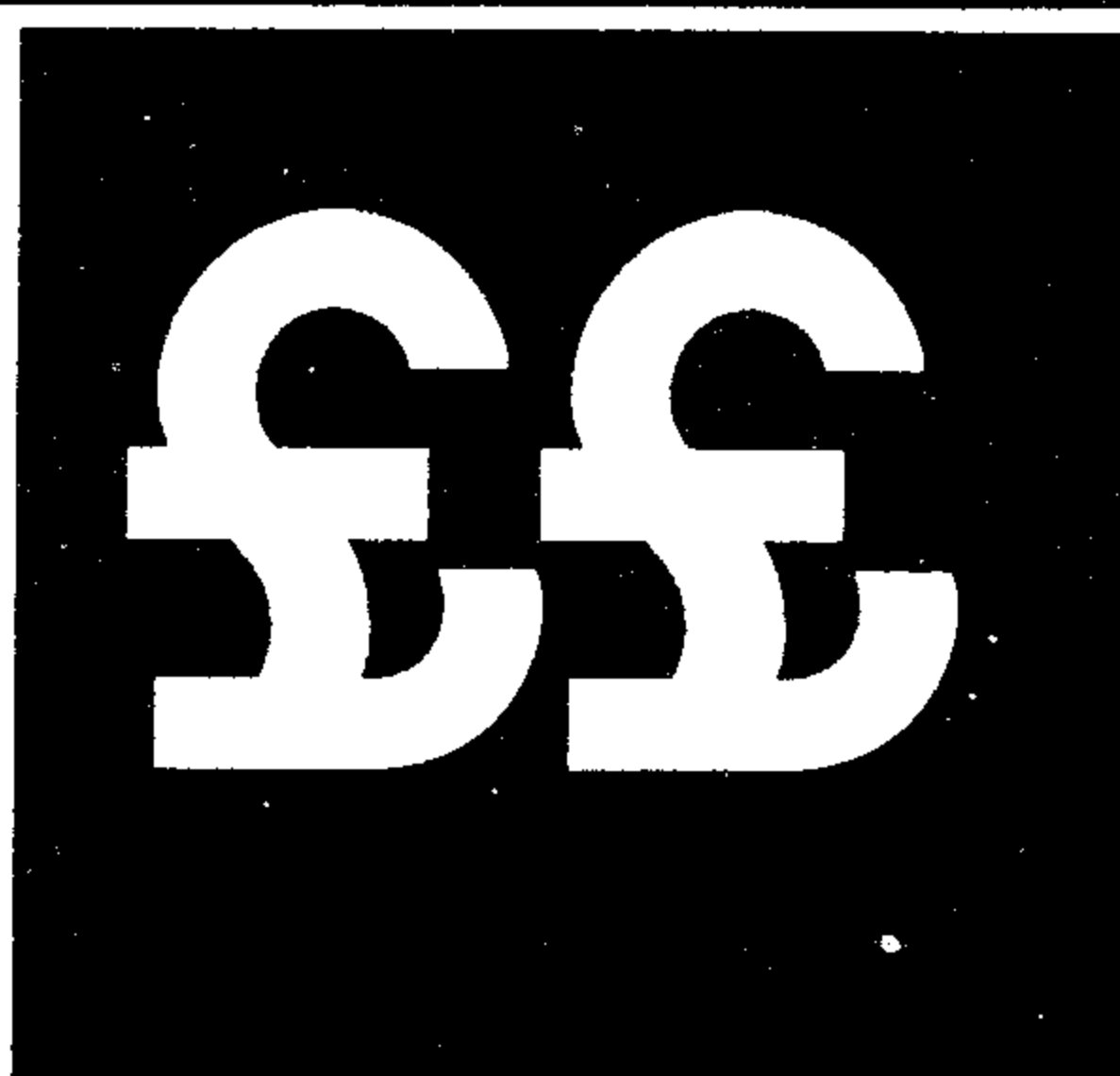
**Sterling, economy, Maastricht ...**

# **Tory CRISIS!**



**Thank god there's  
no opposition!**

# Blame Tories, not the Germans No substance in Lamont's lament



Nothing could be more ridiculous than the claim that the pound's nosedive 'did not reflect the real economy'.

At the same time as the financial markets were smashing the pound, the news came through that 40,000 people joined the dole queues last month. Only an imbecile could imagine that there is no link between economic recession and the fall in value of the pound.

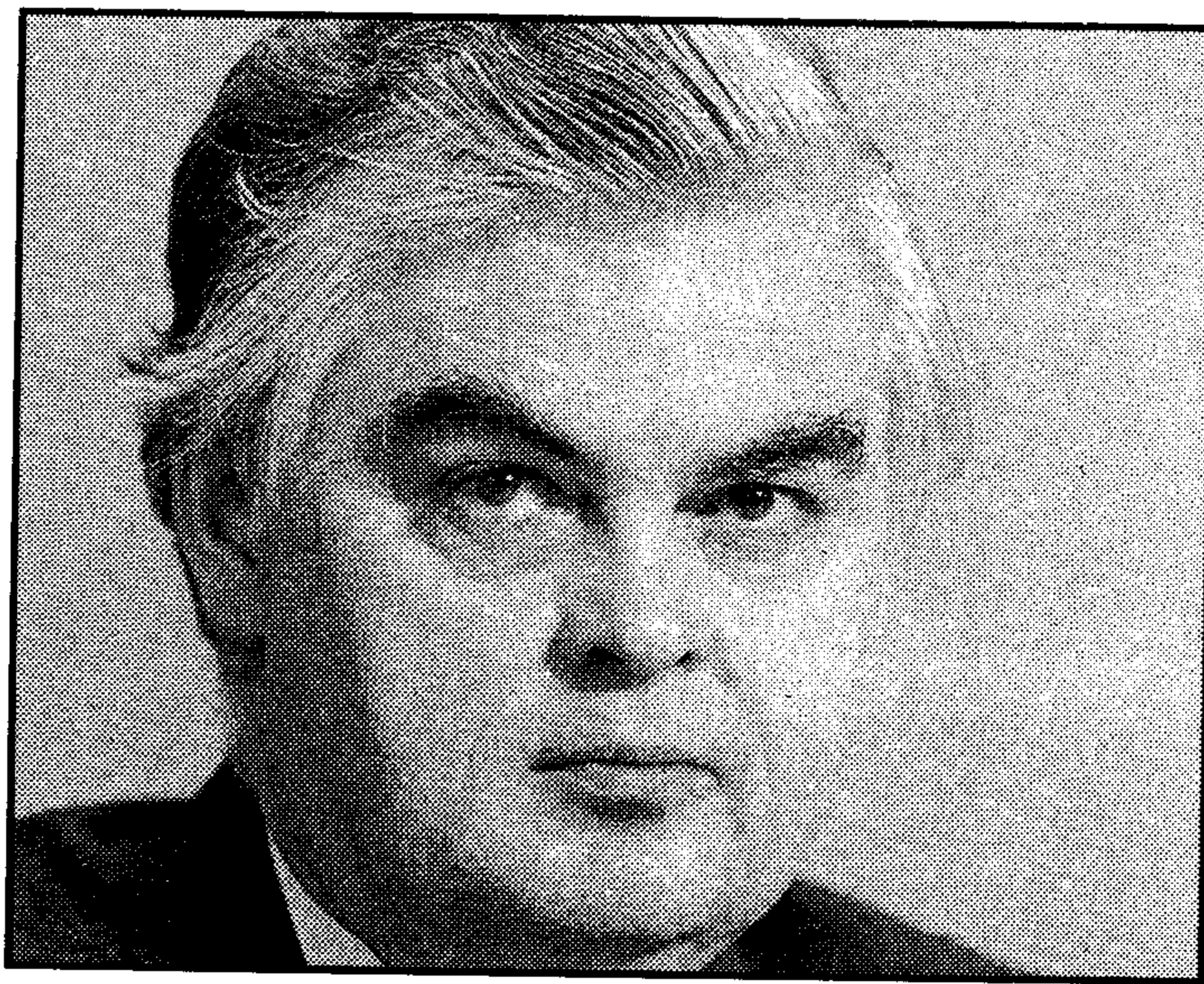
The dominant world currencies today are the dollar, the deutschmark and the yen. Self-evidently, this reflects the fact that these countries are substantially the most economically powerful. The decline in the pound reflects the accelerating decline of British capitalism.

The currency speculators could pick off the pound because the attempt to link it with the much more powerful German currency through the ERM was unsustainable. So much everyone agrees. But what lies behind the huge speculative movements of capital and Britain's economic decline?

Turmoil in the financial and currency markets is itself a reflection of prolonged international economic recession. During the 1980s there was a huge growth both in the generation of speculative capital, and fictitious capital as in the US 'junk bonds' boom. This is typical of a period of crisis.

Today it is not only banks and investment houses which play the speculative market, but also giant multinational corporations.

As the rate of profit declines, more and more companies discover that they can make more money through lending capital and currency deals, than through actually investing it in production.



Not a lot to laugh about

This trend was tremendously fuelled by runaway the US budget deficit, especially under Ronald Reagan. This pushed up interest rates internationally. The certainty of a return on a short-term loan to the US government was much more profitable than long-term investment in new plant and equipment.

Currency speculators make a killing from selling a currency as it goes down, and then re-buying when it hits the

floor. People who played the market right last week increased the value of their stake by up to 15 per cent, making billions.

But why was the British currency a suitable target? Put simply the pound in the ERM was overvalued against the real strength of the British economy.

Britain's economic decline is an old story. But the 1980s crystallised important changes in the structure of British

capitalism.

British capitalism is now a becoming a *rentier* capitalism, with a growing percentage of profits coming from overseas investment, the service sector and financial institutions.

Manufacturing industry drastically declined, and with it the structure of employment. More capital flowed to overseas investments; as debt grew, so did the financial sector. And foreign investment in Britain increased.

Every crisis of world capitalism brings a new 'international division of labour'. Today this means the growing relative strength of Japan and Germany, and the relative weakening of the US and Britain.

But the US is still the largest economy and the largest domestic market. Britain by contrast is no longer in the big league. In the last five years it has rated the second-worst country in terms of growth and investment in the top 21 OECD economies.

Capital, increasingly mobile across international borders, can 'restructure'. But economic decline and crisis is always an attack on the working class.

● THE CURRENCY crisis is itself a symptom of the crisis of capitalism. Until 1971, the world's main reserve currency, the dollar, was linked to a fixed exchange rate with gold. As US economic domination was eroded in the 1960s and the costs of the Vietnam war undermined its currency, this link was broken.

● Since then, repeated efforts have been made to 'peg' currencies against each other, but with no fixed reference point.

● Each of these agreements reflects the political and economic balance of forces at that point of time, but comes under pressure as each bourgeoisie wrestles with its own domestic crisis.

● This leaves the determination of the 'value' of a currency dependent on the whims and 'confidence' of speculators and bankers, shopping round for the quickest available buck.

● With the pound, the lira and the peseta already devalued, and the franc, the Irish punt and the Swedish krona now under siege, there is little prospect of any short-term stability for capitalism

## Maastricht : Has crisis killed the Treaty?

LAST WEEK'S financial turmoil has dealt a massive blow to the 'Maastricht road' to European capitalist unity.

Monetary union, due to be completed by 1999, is the cornerstone of the moves towards political unity. The chances for achieving it are now remote.

The chaos in the markets, and the row between Britain and Germany, are symptoms of the underlying contradictions in the whole unity process.

The capitalists need European integration to compete with the United States and Japan. But while they need unity, the interests of the different capitalist classes are not identical.

### Savage

The savage deflationary policy and high interest rates of the German Bundesbank, required to draw in money to pay for unification, is devastating for the weaker economies in the EC. The EMS compels other currencies to follow the Deutschmark, ensuring massive deflation.

The crisis has hit Italy, forcing down the lira and compelling cut-backs in the large state and welfare sector.

In Greece, (as we report on page 13), the government's deflation policy - in preparation for monetary union - has been met by a massive working class fight-back.

Under the terms of the EMS, every state is supposed to take co-ordinated action to defend a threatened currency. This the German government and the Bundesbank conspicuously failed to do in relation to the pound.

### Options

Underlying these inter-governmental conflicts is a stark fact; European unity is just one of the options open for Germany. If the process of monetary and political union doesn't happen, then Germany remains the most powerful state in Europe. It can build a zone of political and economic domination around itself, extending into eastern Europe.

If Maastricht goes down it will give European governments other than Germany the leeway to partially reflate their economies; it would mean that the worst deflationary attacks on the working class would be avoided - though only in the short term.

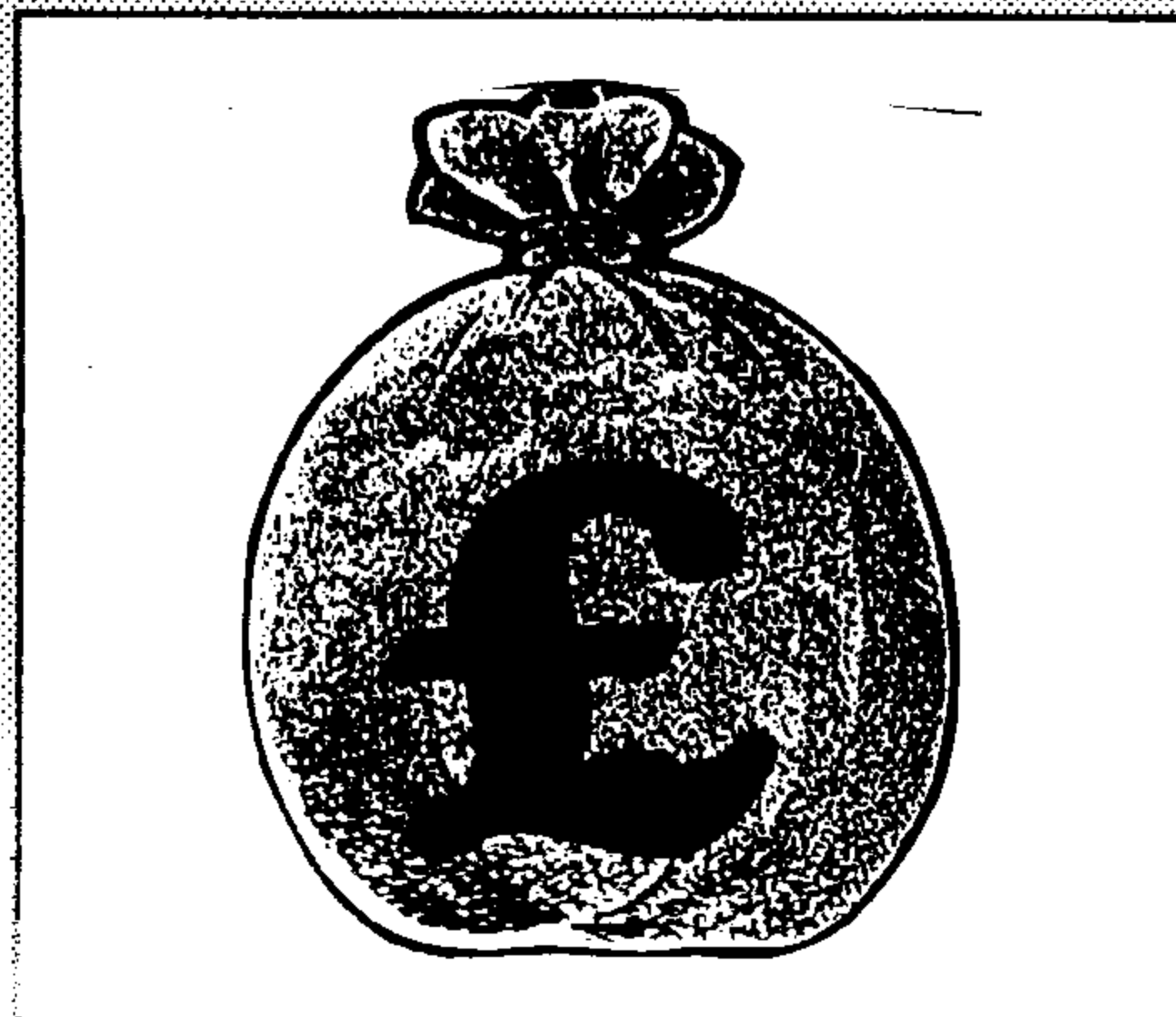
But it would not in itself pull capitalist Europe out of recession. The long-term winners would be Japan and the United States, as the EC remained a free trade zone and failed to turn itself into a more powerful productive bloc to challenge them.

## Help build Socialist Outlook - the thinking person's New Left Review

The Tories are in deep financial doo-doo. At one particular Trot rag based in London N4, the picture ain't exactly rosy either. Our bank balance is only marginally less in the red than our politics.

Don't you hate when it when every time you pick up a lefty periodical some dickhead chimes in with cliches like 'unlike the bosses' press, a workers' paper cannot rely on millionaire Tory backers and rich advertisers, and depends on its readers to stay afloat.'

Well, while *Socialist Outlook* generally avoids cliches like the plague, we cannot rely on millionaire Tory backers and rich advertisers, and depend on our readers to stay afloat.



Socialist Worker is out to extort a hundred grand from its readers. Militant wants forty. While we're already a better

read than the two of them put together, we asking for just £7K. Reasonable or what?

Thanks to Mr Lamont, your money is almost worthless anyhow. Don't waste it on that mortgage when you could send it to us here at the *Socialist Outlook* Staff Holidays in Bermuda Fund.

We desperately need dosh to buy better desk top publishing computers, improve production quality, pay those photographers we already owe a packet and extend our circulation.

If you can legitimately plead to being skinter than we are, why don't you take a bundle of *Outlooks* to flog at your union branch, Labour Party or campaign meetings, so people can have something interesting to do during the boring bits?

**Demonstrate**  
Brighton  
October 6, 1pm  
Tory conference  
Madeira Drive  
march to the Level  
**No**  
**Privatisation**  
of Royal Mail  
Called by the UCW



From low-profile to no profile: Labour's bankrupt new leadership has faded from view as the crisis intensifies

## Capitalism in disarray, Tories in crisis, but... **WHERE IS the Labour opposition?**

AS THE POUND collapsed last Thursday, Labour economic spokespersons Gordon Brown and Harriet Harman flitted around the TV studios. But they had *absolutely nothing* by way of an opposition policy, or indeed anything intelligible, to pronounce.

The reason is obvious: Labour policy has moved so far to the right that John Smith was advocating ERM membership before the Tories adopted it, and even Keynesian growth policies have been abandoned.

Harman and Brown argued for minor measures for 'training' and small-scale help for the housing market. But it is totally incredible to believe that these very cautious measures would have led to any fundamental change in the economy if Labour had been elected.

### Half-way

Any policy that is half way oppositional to what the Tories are doing, let alone socialist, has to propose measures to promote economic growth, create jobs, drastically cuts interest rates, and get the economy out of recession.

But even these measures for capitalist growth elude the present Labour leadership.

Even if the devaluation of the pound leads to interest rate cuts, the economic situation now directly leads to more huge attacks on the working class.

While the currency crisis dominated the headlines, government ministers were meeting to decide next year's public spending levels.

Tax revenue has slumped with the economy, and major cuts are inevitable. A public sector wage freeze could be one consequence of this situation. Other cutbacks in benefits and social spending are almost certain.

At the same time, unemployment is skyrocketing, with the real figure at more than 4 million and 50 people chasing each vacancy in the London area.

The tragedy of the situation, and the big danger, is that here we have a giant economic crisis, a massive attack on the working class, and the forces of real opposition to slump

policies are tiny, given the total abdication by Smith and company.

All this of course is the direct consequence of what has happened to the Labour Party over the last decade; the rightward move, as Labour goes into its annual conference, has reached grotesque proportions.

As we report on page 5, this year's TUC was marked by the growing ascendancy of business unionism, and the open abandonment of any form of challenge to the diktats of the

inflation' is pursued it means just more unemployment, more attacks on the welfare state, and mass poverty.

Imagine Labour had won the election. The new Labour government, like previous ones, would have been at the mercy of the currency speculators and could have been brought down by the pound's crisis. Once market forces are unfettered either a Labour government does what the capitalists want, or they launch an all-out attack against it.

The recent events show that any realistic socialist policy would have to be based on attacking the power of capital.

### Nationalisation

A socialist plan to combat the present economic crisis would have to start by nationalising the banks and finance houses. It would have to create a vast programme of public works and socially-controlled investment.

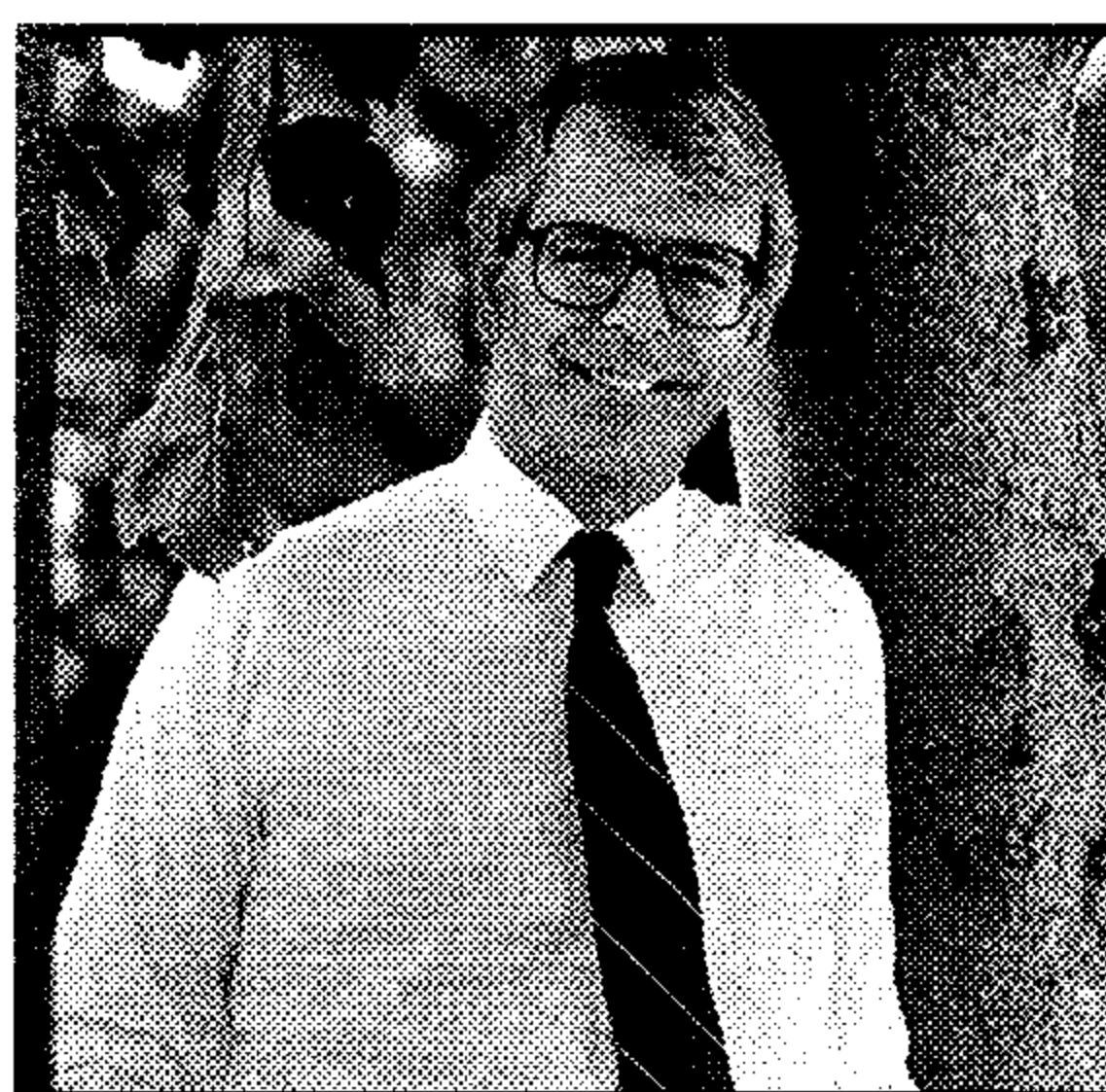
And none of these things would be accepted by capital, or imposed by them, without the most gigantic struggle.

Such policies could only be advocated in the context of actually organising a struggle against unemployment, against welfare cuts, against the anti-union laws, against the destruction of local government - against the whole Tory offensive.

This kind of thinking is of course a million miles away from that of the current Labour and trade union leadership. Which is why Major and Lamont can afford to ignore the huffing and puffing of John Smith; and it is why the left in the labour movement faces a long hard struggle back to defeat the iron grip of business unionism and post-Kinnockite new realism.

Next week's Labour conference will show the left at a new low point. Any dramatic short-term breakthrough by the left is off the agenda. But by sticking to its guns, by supporting each and every trade union struggle which arises, by building the anti-racist fight, through a myriad of campaigns and through continuing to argue the socialist alternative, the left prepares the basis for capitalising on the inevitable crisis of the current leadership of the labour movement.

**"John Major's oft-repeated argument that 'inflation hurts the poorest in society' is ideological claptrap."**



Not out of the woods yet ...

government and employers.

This is echoed in the Labour Party by MPs coming out openly for coalitionism, and the adoption by the Smith leadership of positions on the economy and the welfare state which broadly parallel those of Tory think tanks.

### Interest rates

It is possible that under the pressure of sections of their business base, the Tories themselves could now go for cutting interest rates and limited economic growth. But the structure of British capitalism today, the immense weight of the financial sector, and of interests whose investments are located abroad, makes this by no means certain.

The aim of capitalism is *not* 'economic growth' but *profits*. Finance capital wants 'sound money' which prioritises the 'fight against inflation'. This was the original logic of locking the pound in the ERM and tying it to the Deutschmark.

John Major's oft-repeated argument that 'inflation hurts the poorest in society' is ideological claptrap. If the heroic struggle for 'zero

# 'Paddy Votesdown' goes courting Labour's right A Liberal dose of coalitionism

by Dave Osler

IS A Labour lash-up with the Lib-Dems the way to get the Tories out of office?

Egged on by *Marxism Today*, key thinkers on Labour's right have advocated a pact for years. Now Liberal Democrat leader Paddy Ashdown is seemingly opening the door.

After floating the idea in a keynote speech just days after April's general election, Ashdown saw 'working with people of all parties and none' become official policy at his party's conference in Harrogate last week.

The resolution carried against fierce opposition from MPs Alan Beith and Liz Lynne and campaign mastermind Des Wilson, and many of the rank and file. Its passage represents a potentially crucial victory for the New Coalitionists.

## Green light

With John Smith's *New Paths to Victory* leadership election manifesto explicitly inviting non-Labour contributions to discussions on social policy, the green light for 'dialogue' has been signalled in both camps. Many would go further.

Two articles from Calum Macdonald, Labour MP for the Western Isles (*Fabian Review*, May 1992 and *New Statesman & Society*, 11 September 1992) explicitly call for coalition.

His *NSS* piece was written in collaboration with maverick Liberal Democrat MP Simon Hughes, who in 1988 openly



**Paddy Ashdown - don't let him screw the labour movement too**

flirted with the Greens when they looked on the verge of an electoral breakthrough.

Yet significantly, it backpedals on positions advanced for the smaller but more influential Fabian audience.

Macdonald demands Labour backing for proportional representation by the year end as a platform for joint campaigning between the two parties.

This experience could lead to 'local electoral agreements, with Labour and Liberal ac-

tivists coming together behind single candidates standing on a common reform platform [emphasis added] in around 50 seats, resulting in a 'reformist, centre-left' - and presumably coalition - government.

What backbencher Macdonald counsels openly, many in the shadow cabinet are undoubtedly saying privately. Superficially, this quick fix may even tempt some serious socialists. They should think twice.

Far left publications



**Hands up if you hate the Liberals!**

generally dismiss contemporary Liberalism with trite clichés such as 'the bosses' B-team', which are true but scarcely analytically trenchant.

Based on a philosophical tradition stretching back over 200 years, the party has over 100,000 paid-up members and 18 per cent electoral support. Liberalism will obviously not evaporate overnight in any transition to socialism.

Furthermore, a pincer movement comprised of the effects of Kinnockism on Labour and the permeation of Labour right ideas into Liberalism via the Social Democratic Party split of 1982 has blurred the programmatic edges considerably. Some Liberal Democrat manifesto promises are well to Labour's left.

Macdonald makes much of this 'overlap', wrongly concluding: 'Emerging consensus between the two parties of the progressive left is part of a long term trend.'

## Symptom

It is rather a symptom of Labour's current ideological confusion, which the left must overcome by arguing for a socialist clarification.

This is something Macdonald plainly dreads. In *NSS*, he argues: 'The Labour Party has rescued itself from the depths of the early eighties and we will not relinquish the centre-left ground of British politics again.'

A deal with the Liberal Democrats constitutes an insurance policy against socialist ideas returning to the mainstream political agenda.

However innocuous or commonsense the siren calls for a 50 seat deal appear, socialists must firmly oppose them.

## Racists

There are other arguments against Liberalism's cadre is extraordinarily heterogeneous, ranging from self-perceived radicals to outright reactionaries of the calibre of MP David Alton and the notoriously racist group running Tower Hamlets council.

Its electoral backing - which in any case fell by five percentage points in the last election - includes a substantial tactical voter element, with as many anti-Labour as anti-Conservative supporters.

## Anti-Labour

The Liberal Democrats probably couldn't even deliver half its current base in a pact with Labour; radical policies could win over most of those elements anyway.

That Labour secured almost twice the Liberal Democrat vote is testimony to its enduring status as a class-based mass party, a standing the Liberal Democrats can never hope to emulate.

The difference largely lies in Labour's organic link with the unions, a salutary warning for those who would sever it.

Yet it is noticeable that it is precisely those politicians the furthest from Labour's working class base that are the most favourable to a pact with Paddy.

## Labour witch-hunt claims new victims

THREE Brighton Militant supporters and two Socialist Organiser sellers in Sheffield have been expelled from the Labour Party in the last two weeks.

### Campaign Against the Witchhunt

Meeting Saturday  
SEPTEMBER 26 7pm  
Central Library Lecture  
Theatre, Abingdon  
Street, Blackpool

with TONY BENN MP  
DENNIS SKINNER MP  
KEN CAPSTICK, NUM

As the witch-hunt against leftwingers in the party continues. Further cases are expected in both cities.

The separate moves follow the recent round of expulsions in Lambeth and 127 suspensions in three Coventry parties.

Those kicked out in Brighton are Ray Apps (a Labour Party member since 1945), NUPE executive member Paul Cadman and Sheila Hall. Up to another 20 still face investigation, including several members of the Christian Socialist Movement.

A recent CSM meeting came out in opposition to all expulsions of socialists from the Labour Party. The decision sparked persistently heckling from MP Norman Hogg and two Walworth Road officials who were in attendance, according to witnesses.

Socialist Organiser supporters

Chris Croome and Wendy Robson were expelled in Sheffield last week. Charges against Cath Fielding, Alison Brown and Nof Ttofias appear to have been withdrawn.

Five other sellers of the proscribed left newspaper will be taken before Labour's National Constitutional Committee at an unspecified later date.

Expelled Lambeth councillor Steve French of Campaign Against the Witch-hunt, commented: 'These expulsions just show that people should not be complacent about the Smith leadership.'

'The witch-hunt continues. There's hundreds of cases in the pipeline. We need to build a united campaign that defends all those people under attack.'

**Campaign Against the Witch-hunt, 56 Ashby House, Loughborough Road, Brixton, London SW9 7SP**

## Militant trounces Scottish Labour Red faces for grey bureaucrats

SCOTTISH Militant Labour has taken a formerly safe Labour seat on Strathclyde regional council - the largest local authority in Western Europe - after winning 54 per cent of the vote in a recent by-election.

Christine McVicar's victory in Easterhouse/Garthamlock ward is a clear indication that Militant has built a serious base in Scotland's largest city.

### Prison

Last May the tendency won four seats on the city council, with leading anti-poll tax campaigner Tommy Sheridan elected from his prison cell.

It also proves there is an audience for left-wing politics in sections of the Scottish working class. Easterhouse/Garthamlock is based around the Easterhouse housing estate, one of

the most run-down in Britain.

One in three men in Easterhouse are unemployed, while 70 per cent of children receive school clothing grants.

Two years ago Labour took 71 per cent of the vote; this time its support was reduced to 28 per cent, despite sending seven MPs to canvas in the ward.

The episode should clearly warn the Scottish Labour Party that it cannot take its electoral base for granted.

Yet there is a danger that Militant supporters will mistakenly draw triumphalist conclusions from this victory.

The political vacuum created by Labour's deradicalisation can also be occupied by other forces, including the SNP, possibly even the far right.

There remains at present no objective basis for building a new mass workers party in either Britain as a whole or Scotland alone.

## TUC congress 1992

# Keeping the white flag flying

By Jim Watkins

This year's TUC was not just routine Congress. The invitation to CBI director general Howard Davies to address the conference, and the unconditional re-admittance of the scab EETPU, mark more than a deepening of new realism.

Coming after Labour's fourth election defeat in a row, these two decisive moments of the 124th TUC herald a fundamental political realignment of the British trade union and labour bureaucracy.

Labour leader John Smith attended only the General Council dinner and slipped away the same evening.

### Arrogant

In his address, Howard Davies arrogantly called on a movement battered by 4 million job losses and daily victimisation, to accept a pay freeze in the public sector so that wage levels could compete with those in Korea and Taiwan!

Only 50 delegates followed Arthur Scargill in walking out when the CBI boss rose to speak.

The course which is now being charted by the TUC is towards breaking with Labour and active participation in the competitive 'rationalisation' of British industry. A nasty British version of business unionism is achieving political ascendancy.

The tone of the week was set by the first composite resolution 'The Future Role of the TUC' in which AEEU leader Bill Jordan laid out the new agenda. The strength of the unions, said Jordan, 'lies in the world of work'; thus it shouldn't deal with social issues such as lesbian and gay rights. And the role of the TUC isn't to address industrial issues - that is for individual unions in their dealings with employers.

### User-friendly

Rather, the way for the TUC to become user-friendly and deliver a quality service is to become a centre of excellence on health and safety, pensions and low pay. It should develop relationships with the bosses, and the national and international legislators through the European Community.

Again this project to permanently de-gut the TUC and turn it into a servicing agency for the big four or five unions, the left could only muster calls for 'maintenance of strong, effective international and European trade union relationships, or in the case of the EPTU a call for the AEEU to be better behaved vis-a-vis the smaller unions.

The TUC will now set up an office in Brussels. But Jordan made it clear that the AEEU, which increasingly is setting the agenda for the TUC, has no faith in either the corporatist economic model of Germany



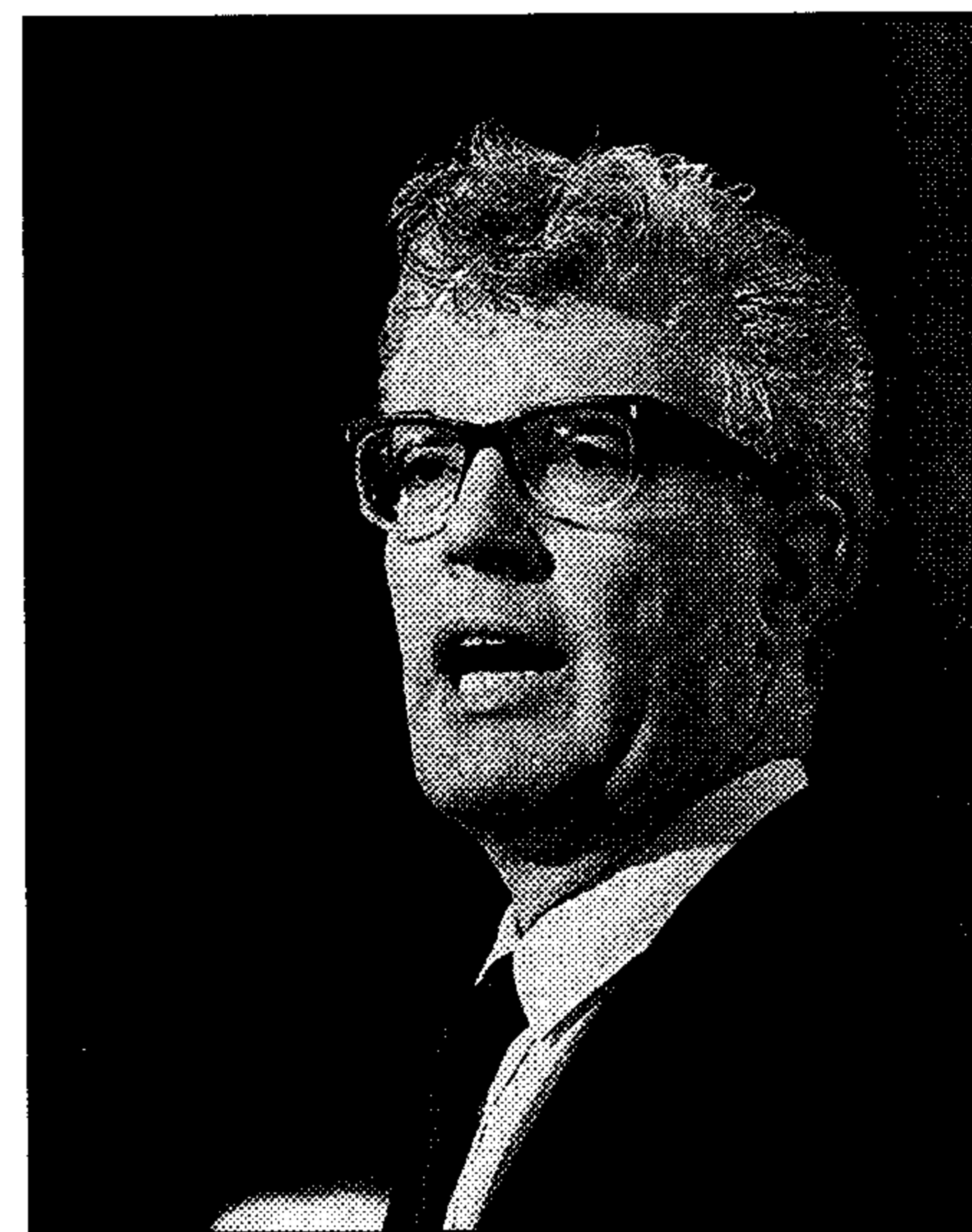
Arthur Scargill - not only walks on water but also walks out of the TUC

and Sweden, or in the Maastricht social chapter, or indeed in European trade union links.

The business union right-wing no more wants to confront the European multinationals than it wants to take on the bosses here.

Not surprisingly the only person prepared to speak out and expose the nakedness of the centre and left at the conference was Arthur Scargill, in the crucial debate on employment law.

The composite on this issue was moved by Alan Jkinson of NALGO, who made much of the provisional court ruling on the Newham dispute, in which NALGO had been banned from campaigning for a 'yes' vote in a strike ballot (the ruling has



Oh Boy! Buddy Holly lookalike Rodney Bickerstaffe presided as the CBI called for a public sector pay freeze

since been overturned).

The motion's seconder, Bill Morris, accurately outlined the iniquities of the present situation and called for a legal framework of trade union rights.

But NALGO and the TGWU had agreed to the deletion of the crucial section of the motion calling for the repeal of all Tory anti-union legislation. Scargill came to the rostrum and immediately declared that he agreed with everything Jkinson and Morris had said, but wanted to know what the movement was going to do about it.

### Minority

The NUM's own motion calling for a 'refusal to co-operate with anti-trade union legislation' was massively defeated, but there was a significant minority in all delegations supporting non-compliance. For example in the NCU delegation support for the NUM position was only lost by 9 votes to 8.

The only real struggle at Congress was the prolonged fight by the NUJ to impose some practical conditions on the re-admittance of the EETPU which has now merged with the AEU to form the AEEU. Their resolution called for members poached by the EETPU from TUC-affiliates at Wapping and elsewhere to be handed back. But EETPU leader Gallagher refused point blank to hand

back a single member.

### Threats

Meanwhile the AEU continued their tactic of threatening to walk out if their EETPU colleagues were not re-admitted.

By Thursday the NUJ had agreed to remit the motion but only after the GMPU print union, led by Tony Dubbins, had stabbed them in the back.

Dubbins was only able to this with the active support of the *Morning Star* supporters in his delegation. Led by Communist Party of Britain (CPB) general secretary Mike Hicks, they

refused to fight for the NUJ position, allowing Dubbins to effect the sell-out.

Done in the interests of 'unity of the movement' and 'one trade union centre in Britain', this actually meant unity on Jordan's or Gallagher's terms.

The *Morning Star* bizarrely reported this stitch-up with the headline 'Bridlington Rules OK'; bizarrely because the deal sanctioned poaching against the spirit of Bridlington, and because in any case Bridlington will be banned by the new wave of anti-union laws.

### Desperate

The *Morning Star*, in desperate financial straits, is very keen to get cash from trade union leaders; Bickerstaffe, Knapp and Cameron all attended their 'relaunch'.

In the midst of this headlong rush to the right the 'Unshackle the Unions' campaign held a fringe meeting addressed by, among others, Joe Marino of the Baker's union, Billy Pye of the NUM EC, the sacked Manchester guards, and an representative of OILC.

The message of the meeting, chaired by NUJ president Jim Boumellha, was that the only option for rank-and-file trade unions is to fight back. Meanwhile the General Council has invited employment secretary Gillian Shephard to address next year's Congress.

## Doing the Blackpool Bossanova Take your social partners?

Behind Confederation of British Industries chief Howard Davies' speech at the TUC lies growing opposition to the government's disastrous economic policies, now increasingly expressed by many top bosses.

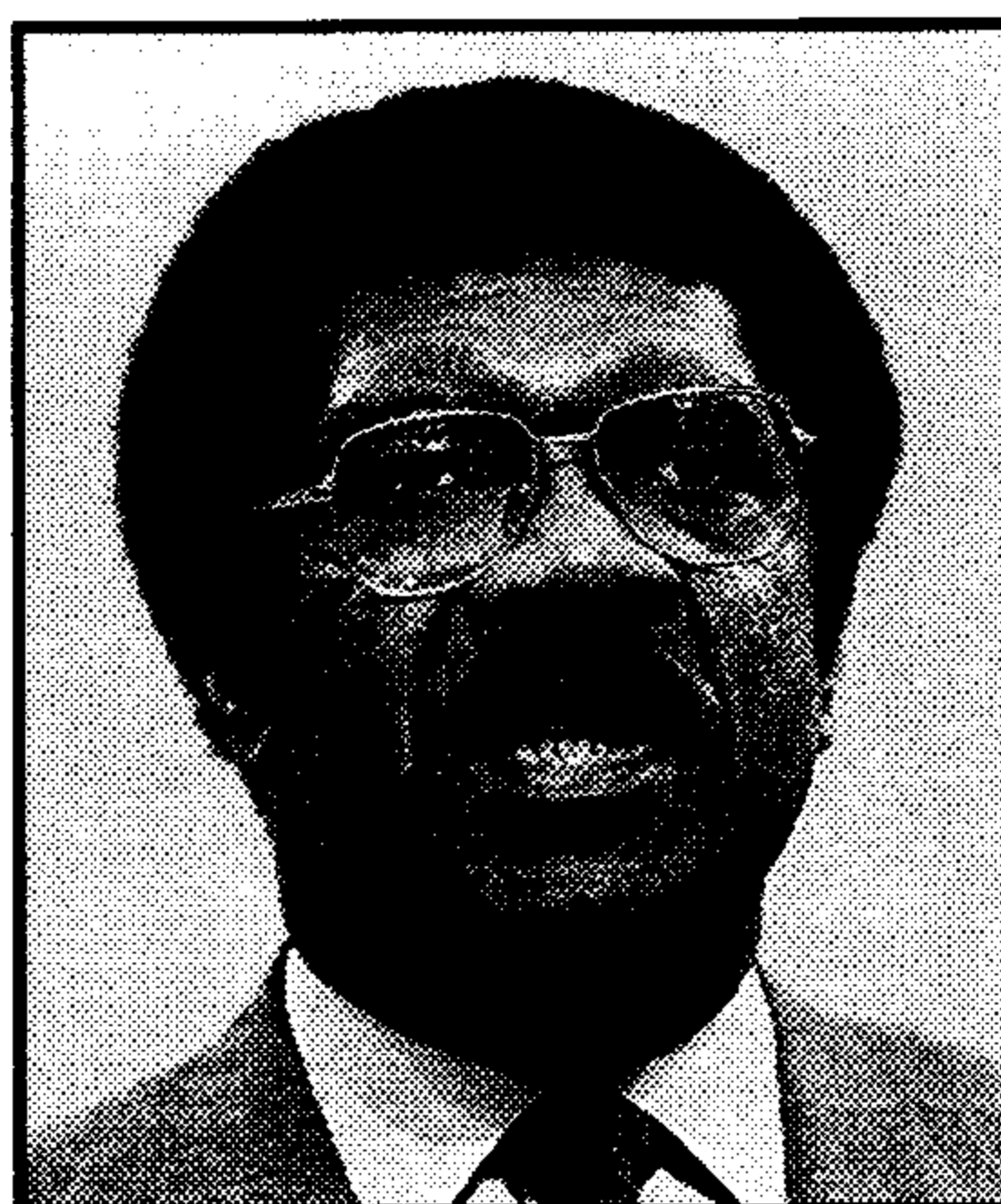
A string of leading businessmen - badly savaged by the deepening recession - have made outspoken public attacks on the Tories, putting themselves formally to the left of Labour's front bench.

\* Brian Pearse (chief executive of Midland Bank) and Sir Denys Henderson (chair of ICI) are openly calling for devaluation.

\* Sir Clifford Chetwood (chair of Wimpey) and arch-Thatcherite Amstrad tycoon Alan Sugar have both slammed the Tories for prioritising anti-inflation measures, demanding expansionary policies instead.

On the surface, Davies' speech simply reflects the current political conjuncture. But at a deeper level it must be set against the current drive to break Labour's links with the unions.

Davies sweetened his public sector pay restraint call with talk of 'social



Bill Morris: leading his members a merry dance

dialogue' and demands for more public spending on areas like transport and training.

As TGWU general secretary Bill Morris commented, 80 per cent of the statement could have been written by any member of the general council.

The TUC clearly sees its courtship of the employers' organisation as a step towards the 'social partnership' on the German model, with the unions playing a junior role in restructuring the British economy.

Davies made the terms of the deal crystal clear for his audience. The CBI sees three areas for dialogue with the TUC, on the express condition that unions 'share our general analysis.'

The first was manufacturing competitiveness, with 'pay increases settled in the light of the needs of business in international markets, and not by reference to some going rate.'

The second was platitudes on education and training. Significantly, the third was 'Europe', spelt out as common backing for Maastricht. If that's the dialogue offer, the labour movement is better keeping its trap firmly shut.

Davies concluded: 'I very much hope you did not agree with all of (the speech). If the TUC and CBI were to be at one on all points our members, and yours, might wonder what we did with our time.' Quite.

Consideration is even being given to inviting a senior Tory politician - probably employment secretary Gillian Shepherd, but possibly even John Major himself - to next year's TUC. The move would clearly and publicly underline the distance between Congress House and Walworth Road.

# Neo-nazis defeated in battle of Waterloo

**By Pete McDonald**

Hundreds of anti-fascists last Saturday thwarted an attempt by the Blood and Honour music front of British fascism to hold a public event unchallenged and unscathed.

Anti-fascist campaigners, the largest contingent coming from Anti-Fascist Action, took over Waterloo station for more than 40 minutes, before police cleared them in an attempt to allow fascists access to their 'redirection point'. The Nazis were headed for a racist gig in Gravesend.

## Scuffles

Large-scale protests and scuffles continued outside the station as neo-Nazi thugs tried to 'siege' themselves into a false sense of security.

One minibus full of black-uniformed boneheads (the 'master race') went careering down the fast lane on the wrong side of a dual carriageway, rather than confront protesters.

The fact that such events will be challenged was established on Saturday. As the *Sunday Independent* noted: 'As protesters chanted "police protect Nazi scum", the neo-fascists were divided into groups of 20 and escorted out of the area.'

## Police protection

In other words, only by the protection of the state can the Nazis hold an event like Saturday's.

However the need for discipline and organised self-defence at events such as this was shown by the fact that scattered anti-fascists were attacked by marauding thugs.

Given the short notice for the counter-mobilisation the attendance was good. Local skateboarding youth from the South Bank spontaneously joined the protest.

The turnout from the Anti-Nazi League was disappointing. There were a few committed individuals present, while those who head the SWP's ANL work trailed round

after camera crews hoping for an interview.

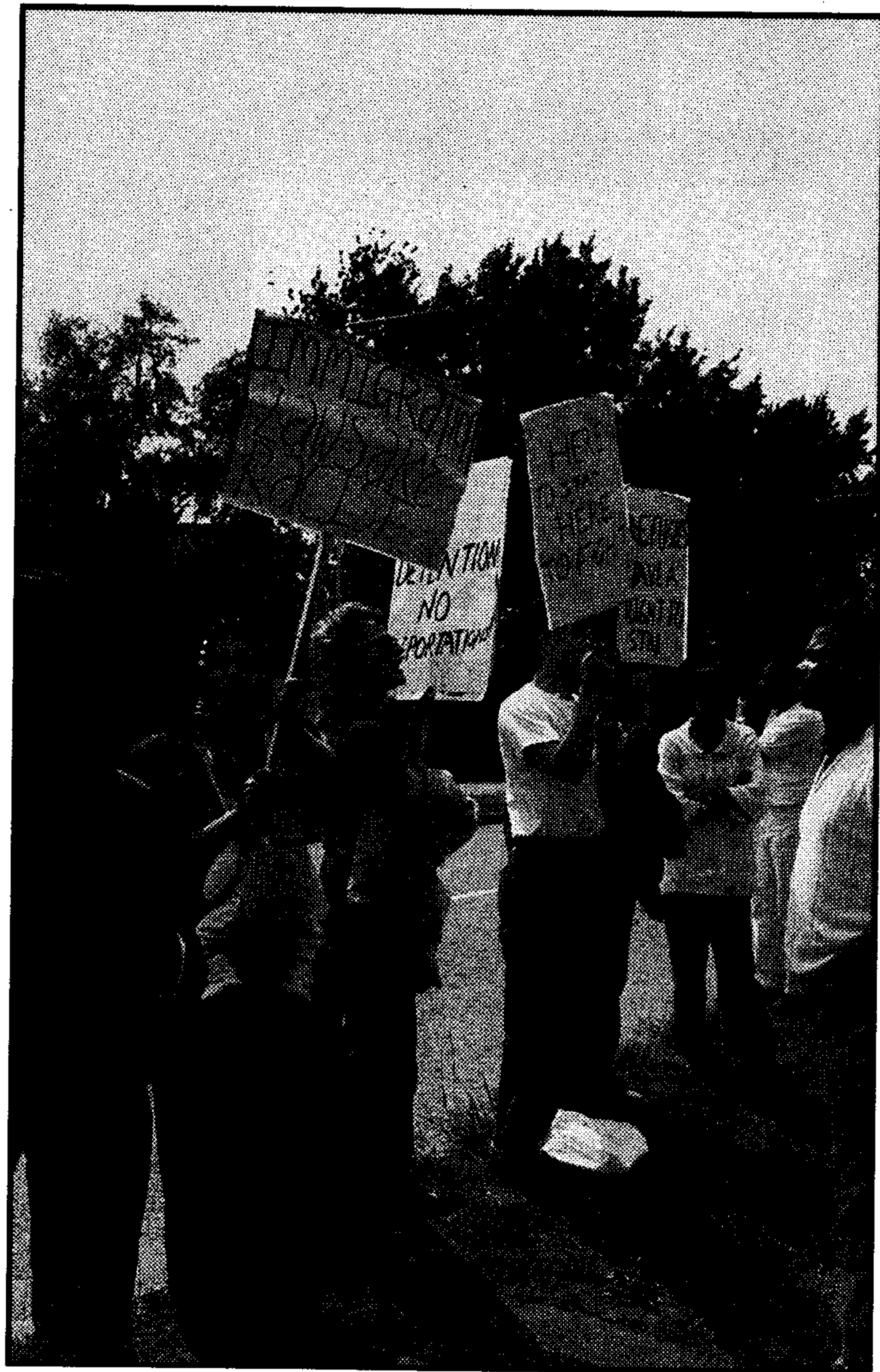
The leadership of the Anti-Racist Alliance was hardly in evidence.

Counter-fascist mobilisations are a necessary part of the overall anti-racist/fascist struggle. But considerable thought needs to be given to their organisation and especially legal monitoring and cover.

## Ruined

The Battle of Waterloo was a victory. One fascist was heard to scream that their day had been ruined, when they had people coming from all over Europe. So sad! The BNP's attempt to capitalise on Rostock took a nosedive to the nearest gutter.

● 28 anti-fascists and 5 nazis were arrested. Details of defence campaign for anti-fascists in the next issue.



Racist deportation is not just a German phenomenon. Protestors picket Britain's Harmondsworth Detention Centre

## After Rostock - German government takes on racist mantle

# Mass gypsy deportations start in Germany

**By Ben Wolfe**

The German government is to deport 40,000 Romanians, 60 per cent of them gypsies, starting on 1 November. The deportations will be carried out by the simple device of refusing requests for asylum.

The mass deportations, bringing back echoes of the mass deportations eastward during the war, are the result of a huge campaign waged by the fascists and other right-wingers alleging that foreigners are responsible for a 'crime wave'.

## Fallout

But this campaign is nothing new; what is new is the political fallout from the anti-immigrant pogrom in the eastern port of Rostock.

Rostock was just the tip of the iceberg of anti-immigrant attacks. In over 40 towns, including Berlin, Cottbus, Leipzig and Stendal, immigrants have been the victims of street violence.

And the violence continues after the dramatic 25 August Rostock attack.

But on the streets the Nazi, skinhead and racist gangs are

not having it all their own way. The left's anti-racist demonstration in Rostock on 29 August attracted 20,000 people - and the mobilisation was at very short notice.

In other towns the left and anti-racist groups have organised guards of immigrant hostels, and in several cases have saved immigrants from being firebombed or beaten up.

## Clampdown

But these successes at street level have not stopped the political stampede towards a clampdown on immigrant workers. Chancellor Kohl may be under the pressure of the right and racists, but he is only able to get away with the mass deportation plan because of the compliance of the SPD - Germany's Labour Party.

In a panic the SPD leadership has dropped its previous opposition to anti-immigrant policies. Their view that the only way to prevent racism is to reduce immigration is disastrous - giving ground to the fascists' argument that it is the immigrants who are responsible for mass unemployment and poverty.

Apart from the far left, only

the SPD young socialists have stood out against the collapse on immigrant rights.

It is no accident that it is in east Germany that the fascist street gangs have been able to whip up sympathy. Unemployment at 20 per cent there is a direct result of the decision by the West German bosses to wreck the economy of the ex-GDR.

## Offensive

Many reports show that support for the racists is far from universal in the east. But what makes the situation dangerous is that it is the extreme right wing which has the offensive, and that the SPD and unions leaders are buckling under that offensive.

The danger in the situation comes precisely from the fact that the hopes and expectations of the workers of the GDR have been cruelly disappointed. Given the failure and semi-collapse of Stalinism in their overwhelming majority they supported the 'realistic'



Under racist pressure: Helmut Kohl

option - unity with the capitalist west.

The 'reward' of mass unemployment was always bound to lead to mass discontent; the question is, what political force can channel and organise it? On the streets, the left still can mobilise more than the Nazis, a lot more.

But the task is much deeper than that. The left has to combine anti-fascism with fighting for the rights of anti-immigrant workers. It has to raise and champion the fight against unemployment and the attack on welfare and other rights of the east German workers.

Anti-fascism in itself never defeated the fascists. That is a lesson which both the SPD and sections of the German far left have to re-learn.

# Pay boost for Plod

ONE GROUP of state employees is seemingly exempt from the government's tough line on public sector pay. The police have been awarded an inflation-busting 6.5 per cent from this month.

1992 will be the fourth year running that Britain's 130,000 coppers have topped the government's salaries league. In 1989, police got 9.25 per cent; in 1990, 9.75 per cent; and in 1991, 8.5 per cent.

Even civil service chiefs, military supremos and judges saw pay pegged at 4 per cent this year. Local government white collar staff got 4.1 per cent.

Prime minister John Major last week hinted at a 2 per cent public sector pay norm in the coming round. Wonder how the boys in blue will do in 1993?

# ANC under pressure after Ciskei massacre

By Charlie van Gelderen

The ANC has agreed to talks with the South African government over 'security' matters in the wake of the Ciskei massacre.

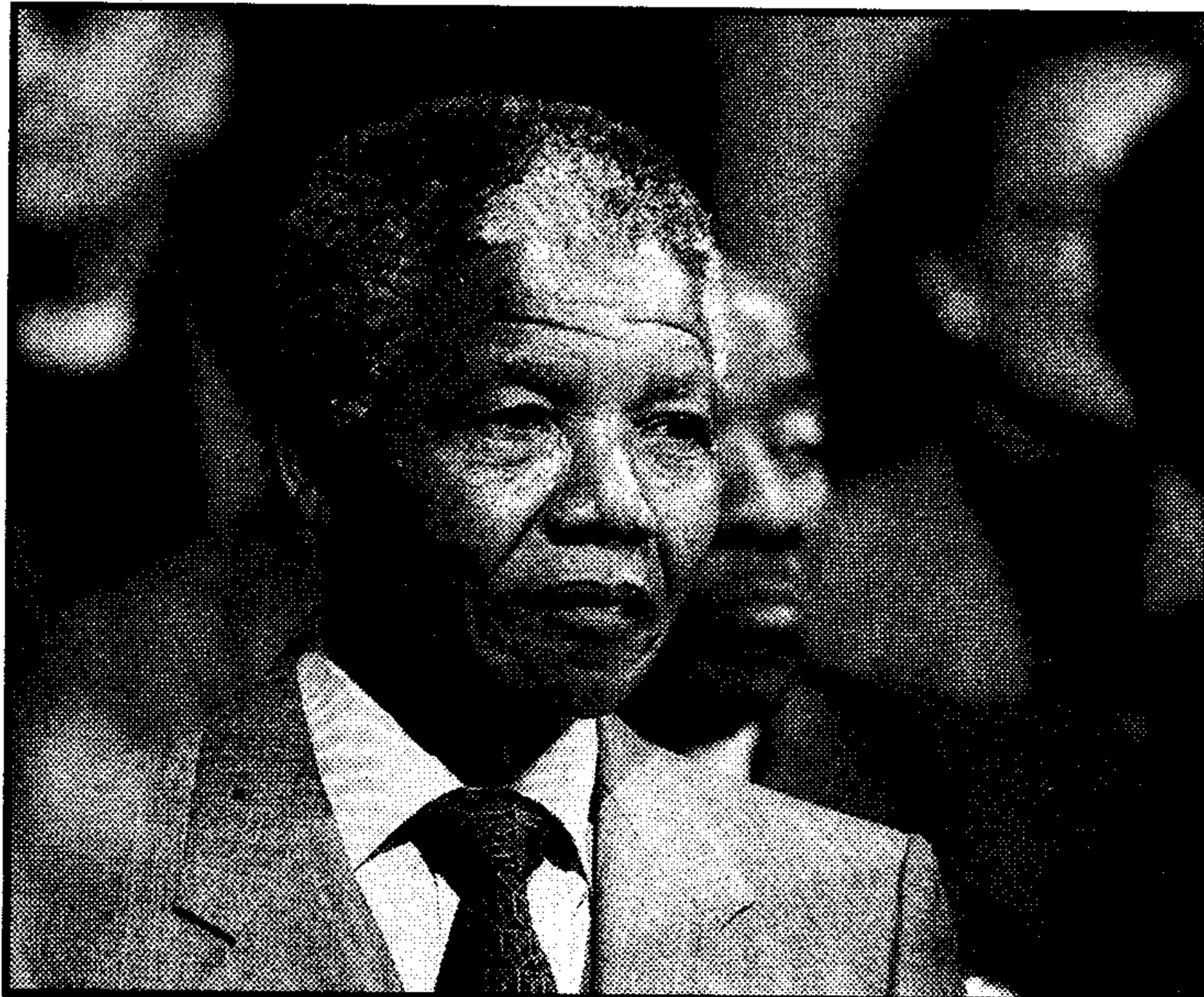
But after the fusillade which slaughtered 27 people on the borders of the puppet 'homeland' on 8 September the 'moderate' leaders of the ANC face enormous difficulties in re-opening the CODESA talks on a political solution.

All the evidence, and the eyewitness account of the neutral National Peace Secretariat, confirms that the Ciskei troops fired indiscriminately at the unarmed marchers.

A great number of the marchers were still on the South African side of the border when they were killed or wounded.

The South African police, escorting the marchers, disappeared shortly before the shooting started. They claimed they had to go to protect white-owned property in the 'homeland'.

Formal negotiations ground to a halt after the Boipatong massacre in July, although the talks continued between ANC



Trying to bridge the gap - Nelson Mandela

general secretary Cyril Ramaphosa and the Minister of Law and Order Hennis Kriel.

## Manoeuvres

The negotiations strategy of the ANC, begun when Nelson Mandela was still in jail, will no longer be accepted by a large section of the rank-and-file, already exasperated by what they see as the stalling manoeuvres of the regime and their own leadership.

The so-called 'homelands' amount to one of the key issues facing the liberation movement in its struggle for a democratic South Africa.

They were the very foundation of Verwoerdian apartheid. Areas were put aside and designated as the 'homelands' of various black nations.

Whole populations, some of whom had no contact with these so-called homelands for generations, were un-

ceremoniously driven out of their homes, their dwellings bulldozed, and dumped in these territories.

There they were forced to stay, trying to eke out an existence in very difficult conditions, unless their labour was required in the farms, mines, factories and homes of the white ruling class.

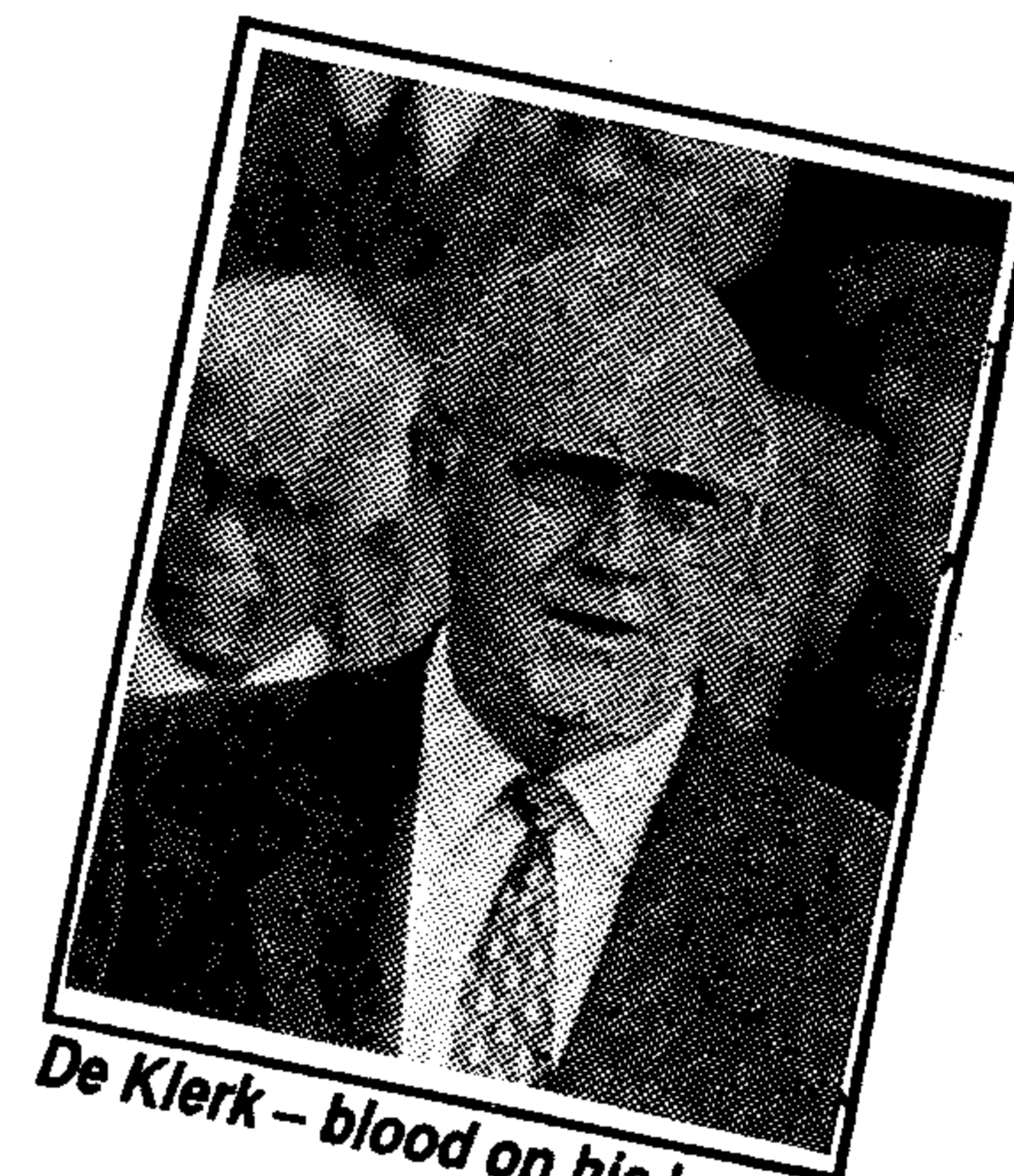
The Pretoria government usually made sure that obedient puppets were installed in the seats of power in these territories.

## Obnoxious

Ciskei leader Brigadier Oupa Gqozo was a particularly obnoxious and servile puppet of the Pretoria regime. After he came to power in a coup in March 1990 he ruled as an absolute dictator, subject only to the whims of his masters in Pretoria. Even the mildest criticism could land the perpetrator in prison for five years.

Pretoria saw in him a willing ally in its plans for a federal constitution in which minority rights (read: white privileges) would be safeguarded.

Now South Africa has denied responsibility for the



De Klerk - blood on his hands

massacre on the grounds that the Ciskei is an 'independent state' - although one recognised only by Pretoria!

Oupa Gqozo's coup, which overthrew the former dictator Lennox Sebe, originally aimed to align the Ciskei with the ANC. Alarmed Pretoria sent Col. Hugo of the South African defence Force to head the Ciskei's military intelligence and to turn the new dictator.

Within weeks this strategy had succeeded. Anton Nieuwoudt, an officer in charge of South Africa's military intelligence, set up *International Research* as the brigadier's personal intelligence organisation.

It organised the African Democratic Movement on the same lines as Buthelezi's Inkatha freedom Party. Funds and arms were provided to bolster Gqozo's power.

The De Klerk government's hands are dripping with the blood of the victims. They will be avenged.

# Will anti-Sendero crackdown save Peru government?

by Roland Wood



Not so shining now - captured Sendero guerrillas

It has become commonplace to describe Peru as 'on the brink'; will the state's recent capture of Sendero Luminoso guerrilla chief Abimael Guzman push it over the edge?

The worsening economic crisis bought on by President Alberto Fujimori's austerity programme has been accompanied by increasing militarisation, which began under former President Alan Garcia.

Despite Latin America's so-called 'democratic opening' in the early eighties, in Peru as elsewhere the military retained influence in the state apparatus.

The culmination was this year's coup, necessary so Fujimori could assure the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank that neo-liberal dictats would be continue to be applied.

Fujimori has formally announced elections to a new 'democratic constitutional congress', with a mandate to draw up a new constitution, for November 22. Many opposition parties may not take part, arguing the congress will be a mere veneer for continued dictatorship.

Yet the arrest of Guzman - and eight other members of the Sendero central committee on September 12 - may yet save the Fujimori



Fourth sword in the slammer - Abimael Guzman

government. Stamping out Sendero was the prime justification for the coup; this is the first tangible result. It is far too early to say whether the guerrillas will be paralysed or galvanised.

In the post-coup tension and violence Sendero

thrived. Layers of the poor and leftist intellectuals saw them as the only effective opposition.

The Peasant Confederation (CCP) and the General Confederation of Peruvian Workers (CGTP) were forced underground, with little experience of clandestine operation. The same is true of much of the Peruvian left.

## Offensive

Having increased their urban presence, particularly in Lima, Sendero believes it is on the threshold of the 'strategic offensive for taking power'.

This is the fifth and final stage Sendero theory dictates for the Peruvian revolution; full scale civil-war in which the people's army will move in from the countryside to surround the towns, with urban insurrection to complement the noose.

Such a view considerably overestimates Sendero's real backing, perhaps 5,000 cadre and a periphery of 100,000.

Initially, Sendero's violence was directed at families who had ruthlessly dominated whole communities for centuries. This won them support.

But with the increase in their activity, Sendero began attacks on left-wing opponents. Many Peruvian leftists began to characterise them as followers not so much of Mao but of Kampuchea's Pol Pot.

With its often indiscriminate bombing campaign in Lima, Sendero are now probably responsible for most deaths.

Squeezed between the military and Sendero are the poor and the democratic workers' and peasants' organisations. Their immediate response has been self-defence, based on independence from both bodies of armed men, and genuine structures of democracy and accountability.

But in other areas the military have been organising peasants' groups of the same name under the pretext of fighting Sendero.

Democratic self-defence organisations deserve and need our solidarity. Despite a real decline in struggles they have a potential to become centres of an alternative popular power - a third force that in the future will be better placed to assert itself in a chaotic Peru.

# Why Africa is starving

By Norm Dixon

ALMOST 40 million people are now threatened by hunger in sub-Saharan Africa, according to a United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation report released in June.

It estimated that in the Horn of Africa 20 million people need more than 2 million tons of emergency food. Another 18 million people are at risk in southern Africa.

Yet despite the FAO's warning, just one of many over the last two years, donors have promised only 2.6 million tons of emergency food as against the 6 million needed to prevent a catastrophe.

Famine in Africa is usually presented by the press and western governments as the result of sudden 'disasters' - a drought, a war. Yet Africa lives through a daily disaster of almost absolute poverty. When any factors worsens, there is simply no margin left to deal with the crisis.

What governments and their hired scribes deliberately confuse is the *symptoms* of African poverty with the *causes* to obscure one of the fundamental failings of the world capitalist system: that advanced countries continue to derive much of their great wealth from the exploitation of the majority of the world's population in the Third World.

In sub-Saharan Africa, one in every two people lives in absolute poverty. The number of children dying in the 1980s, was higher than in the previous decade. The rate of infant mortality is 180 per 100 (10-15 in the advanced countries).

Only 65 per cent of the urban population, and 26 per cent of the rural population, has access to safe drinking water. Life expectancy at birth is 49 years for men and 53 years for women. Only 32 per cent of Africans can

capita GDP ceased growing in 1974, stagnated until 1977, and declined from then on. It has dropped to the level it had reached in 1960 - Africa has been rolled back three decades economically.

## Long-term debt

The long-term debt of sub-Saharan Africa, \$6 billion in 1970, has now reached \$340 billion. Africa's foreign debt is 112 per cent of its annual gross domestic product, and three times its annual export earnings. Just servicing the debt costs 30 per cent of annual export earnings.

The countries of Africa inherited from colonialism economies highly dependent on the export of a few primary products. The European powers did little to develop Africa's infrastructure other

than to expedite export of raw materials to advanced capitalist countries.

After independence, corporations based in the former imperialist metropolis continued to own and operate these major export industries, and little capital was invested in other sectors.

Monopolisation of international marketing by multinational corporations kept prices paid to African countries to an absolute minimum.

In most cases the governments of newly-independent

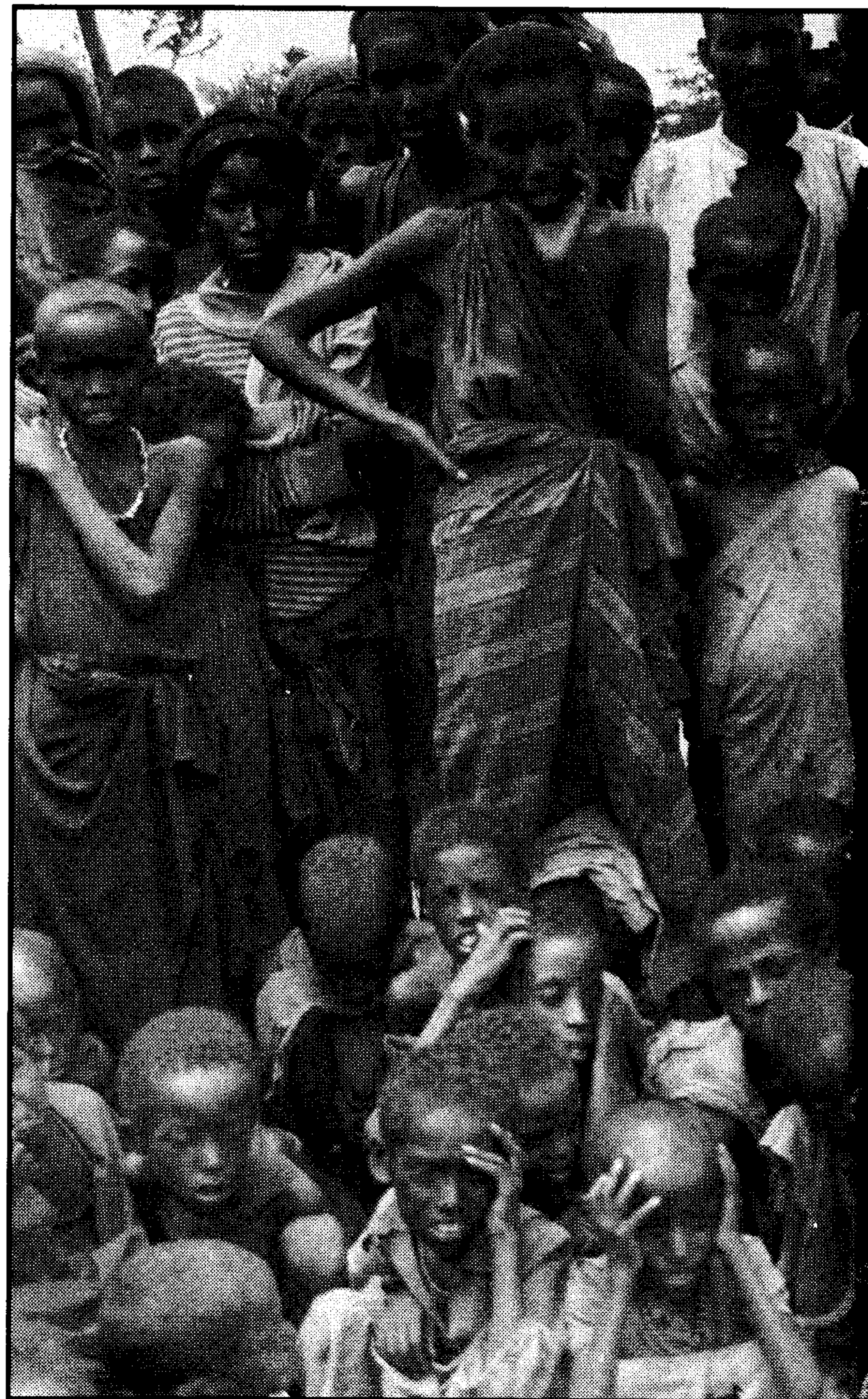
**"The long-term debt of sub-Saharan Africa, \$6 billion in 1970, has now reached \$340 billion. Africa's foreign debt is 112 per cent of its annual gross domestic product, and three times its annual export earnings"**

read and write; the figure is less than 10 per cent for women.

Wealth drains from the poorest parts of the world to the richest.

According to the UN's *Human Development Report 1990* 'The net annual transfer of resources to the developing countries has been reversed from a positive flow of \$42.6 billion in 1981, to a negative flow of \$32 billion in 1988'. The UN estimates that debt-related transfer of resources is at \$50 billion.

Africa has suffered from *capitalist de-development*. Per



The heart-rending pictures can sometimes divert attention from the real causes of the

Africa did not challenge this control by foreign companies. The ruling elites, often having been directly fostered by the colonial power, formed a close alliance with these imperialist companies and their governments.

Too poor to raise their own capital for investment, and with most of the profits generated by foreign companies exported, African countries were unable to diversify their economies.

Primary commodities account for more than 90 per cent

of the continent's exports. Most sub-Saharan economies depend on no more than three export commodities for 80 per cent of their total exports, making them especially vulnerable to fluctuations in a world market over which they have no control.

World primary commodity prices collapsed beginning in the mid-1970s. Prices for Africa's most important commodities have fallen almost 50 per cent since 1980. In 1986, average real commodity prices were at their lowest level this century. They have continued to fall.

## Exports

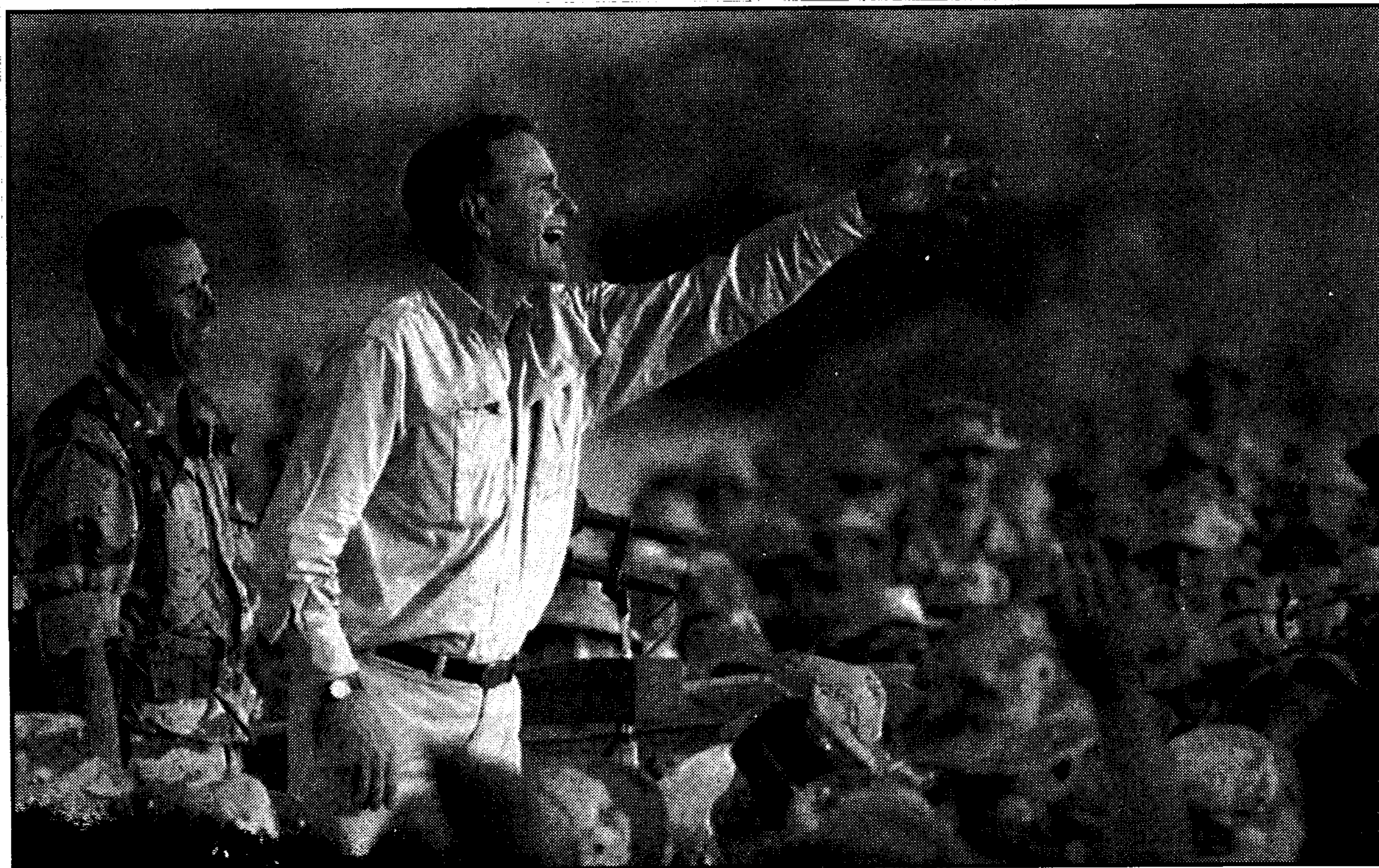
As a result of the massive drop in export earnings African countries were forced to borrow massively from Western governments, banks and institutions like the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank in order to buy essential imports (often staple foods).

The policies of the IMF and the World Bank plunged these countries into even deeper crisis. IMF/World Bank loans come with stringent conditions.

Governments have no choice but to implement 'Structural Adjustment Programmes' and comply with World Bank and IMF advice. A refusal results in a cut-off of further loans from all public or private sources in the capitalist world.

The thrust of these programmes is to force the debtor to export more and spend less. Countries are forced to slash public spending, remove protection for domestic goods and allow unrestricted penetration by multinational corporations.

Budgets for health, education



George Bush - billions for arms, but not even peanuts for the starving





suffering

# Somalia: From cold war to catastrophe

'THE DESPERATELY thin baby hung in the weighing harness, kicking and screaming in protest. Loose folds hung down from her skeletal arms and legs... Bishar weighs less now than when she was born a year ago.

'The Somalian director of the Save the Children Fund, Mr Paul Simon, said Bishar was only one of 30,000 dangerously malnourished children in a city of 80,000 on the brink of starvation.'

That dispatch appeared in the *Times*—almost 15 months ago. It illustrates that Western countries, the United Nations and its agencies, and the international news media, were aware of the impending catastrophe. Nothing was done to prevent it.

It what has now become a chilling reality, Paul Simon predicted at the time: 'Until the international organisations come in here with vast quantities of food that are needed, these people will simply continue to deteriorate rapidly from bloody hungry to starving.'

At least two million people are now at risk. This terrible famine is a result of the international community's refusal to come to the aid of the Somali people immediately after the mass uprising which ousted the dictatorship of Siad Barre in January 1991, and of the West's support for the corrupt and brutal Barre regime from 1978, when it broke from Moscow, until its fall.

## Famine and chaos

The world's indifference compounded the crisis created by Barre's regime, which over two decades shattered Somalia's society, economy and infrastructure. It is these factors that have plunged Somalia into famine and social chaos, not simply drought and factional blood-letting in Mogadishu.

Somalia gained independence in July 1960. It united two former colonies, British Somaliland in the north and the Italian Trusteeship Territory of Somalia in the east and south. Half the country's population of 6-7 million people live as nomadic herders. In 1988 almost 70 per cent of the export income was derived from livestock, while bananas accounted for 23 per cent. Per capita income is just \$170; the foreign debt is \$2 billion, almost twice the GNP.

After independence a series of civilian governments plagued by corruption, nepotism and favouritism made little progress in developing the country. In 1969, army and police officers, led by Major-General Siad Barre seized power and appointed Barre head of state.

## Friendship treaty

At first the new regime announced reforms which would benefit the rural population. A friendship treaty was signed with the Soviet Union in 1974. Moscow sent 6000 civilian and military advisers, and Barre allowed the use of the Red Sea port of Berbera to the Soviet navy.

But an increasingly authoritarian Barre tried to whip up nationalism over Somalia's claim on Ethiopia's Somali-speaking Ogaden region. His

decision to invade Ogaden in 1978 led to falling out with the Soviet Union, which then helped Ethiopia to defeat the attack.

Barre embraced Washington. The United States navy took over the Berbera port, and US economic and military aid began to flow to Somalia.

Clan-based guerrilla movements began to organise. Barre devastated the home areas of the various guerrilla fronts. The hardest hit area was northern Somalia, where the Somali National Movement (SNM) was active.

In May 1988, the SNM captured and held the major northern cities of Burao and Hargeisa.

## Genocide

Barre responded by launching virtual genocide against the Issaq people, the backbone of the SNM's fighters. Somali army tanks and jets decimated every village and settlement they passed through in the north. Burao was all but obliterated. Only five per cent of Hargeisa's buildings were left standing.

The entire population of the towns was dispersed. Power and water facilities, bridges, communication links and hospitals were destroyed. In the countryside the wells were poisoned and livestock killed. Landmines were strewn throughout the pastures.

The majority clan in the Mogadishu area and central Somalia, the Hawiye, formed the opposition United Somali Congress, which began to infiltrate the capital. Now it was the turn of these areas to face Barre's wrath. In late December 1990, the USC launched its offensive for the capital. In a final act of desperation, Barre ordered his troops to pound the rebel-held districts of Mogadishu day and night for weeks.

Barre scuttled out of Mogadishu towards his homeland near the Kenyan border in a tank convoy on 26 January 1991. On 31 January Hargeisa fell to the SNM; on 18 March the SNM declared north Somalia the independent Republic of Somaliland.

The country's economy was smashed, its infrastructure destroyed. Millions of Somalis were displaced and unable to plant crops or tend their livestock. The whole region was now in the grip of a terrible drought that even in 'normal' circumstances would have been a terrible burden.

In the final period of the Barre regime virtually all aid was halted. Three months after the fall of Barre, Mogadishu was already in the grip of famine.

The UN, its agencies and the West, ignored the chorus of warning by aid agencies that only massive aid could relieve the mounting hunger and defuse the armed squabbling over scarce food resources.

Only a full 18 months after the fall of the Barre regime did the UN Security Council belatedly authorise emergency food aid to Somalia. The terrible situation in that country is now being cynically manipulated to justify armed intervention, and the setting aside of national sovereignty, on 'humanitarian' grounds.

**"IMF/World Bank loans come with stringent conditions. Governments have no choice but to implement 'Structural Adjustment Programmes' and comply with World Bank and IMF advice. A refusal results in a cut-off of further loans from all public or private sources in the capitalist world"**

ditions to the labour force and reduce absolute poverty by 50 per cent; and significantly accelerated growth rates.

What would it take? These goals could be achieved if;

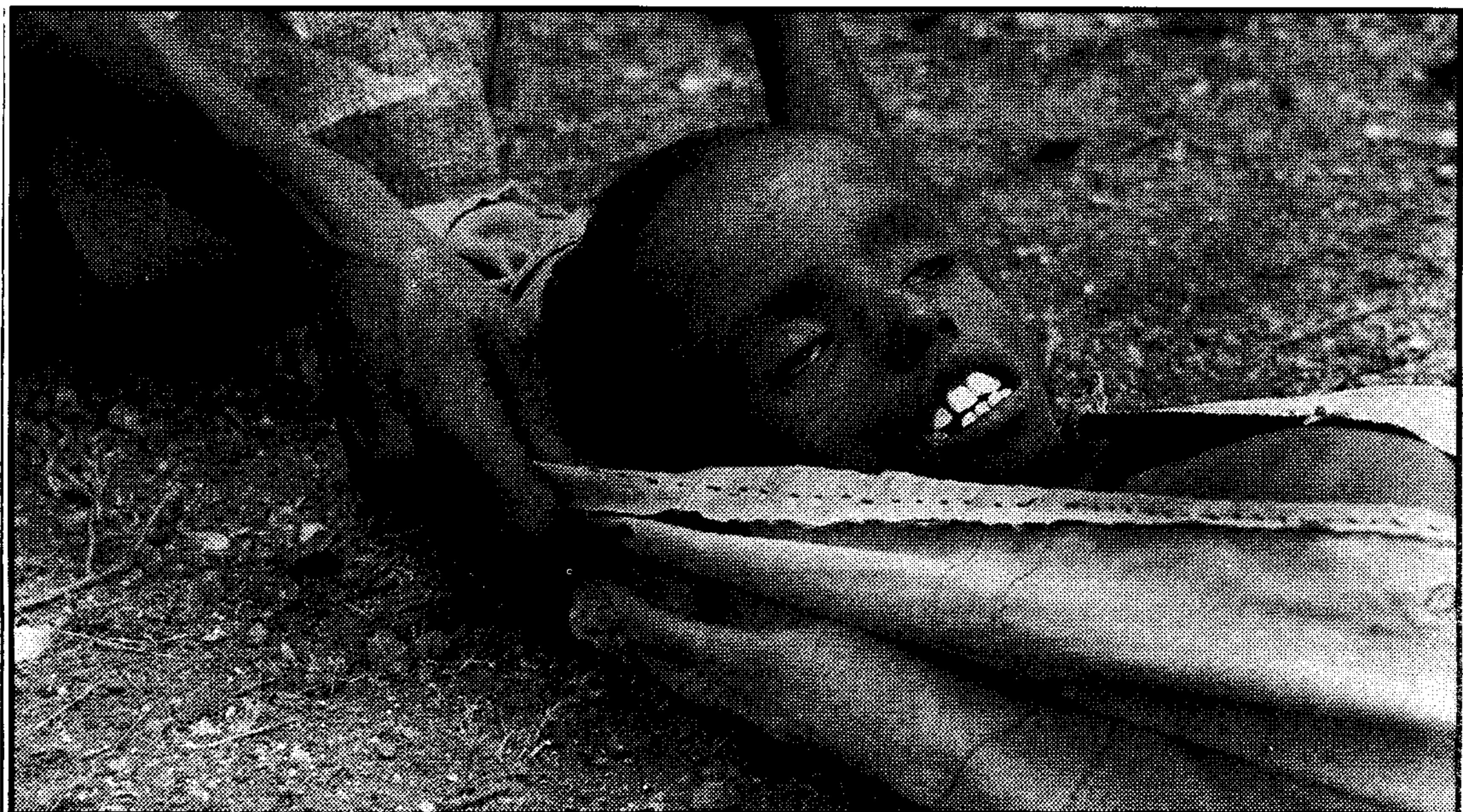
a) the current debt-related net transfer of \$50 billion a year from the poor countries were halted by the cancellation of the debt;

b) if military spending worldwide were reduced by three per cent a year a 'peace dividend' of \$15 billion would be available by the year 2000;

c) if OECD countries increased their foreign aid budgets to reach 0.7 per cent of GDP.

Is the New World Order capable of such tasks? Bush's willingness to spend \$50 billion to destroy Iraq, and the deliberate neglect of hunger in Somalia and throughout Africa, surely gives us the answer.

\*The two articles on these pages first appeared in the Australian paper Green Left.



Killed by a cynical New World Order

and welfare are the first to be cut. In the poorest 37 countries (most of which are in Africa), per capita spending on health has fallen by 50 per cent over the last few years, and education by one quarter.

Madagascar, which has a 'strong' adjustment programme according to the World Bank, has doubled infant mortality since 1980. Today one million people are desperately hungry in a largely unreported famine in southern Madagascar.

## Discontent

Rarely does the IMF demand cuts in military or police expenditure. This is not surprising; only governments prepared to use harsh repression will survive the political discontent that usually follows implementation of structural adjustment programmes.

For Africa to escape this nightmare requires a new, just and equal system of international economic relations.

One proposal that points in the right direction comes from the United Nations Development Programme. It suggests a number of 'essential human goals' that can be attained by the year 2000.

These include basic education, primary health care and safe water for all; the elimination of serious malnutrition; at least 50 per cent access to family planning; the creation of employment to absorb new ad-

**In the poorest 37 countries (most of which are in Africa), per capita spending on health has fallen by 50 per cent over the last few years"**

# World-wide attack on abortion rights

Last July the United States Supreme Court sanctioned a massive attack on abortion rights through its judgement on the *Roe vs Wade* case. This supported the 1989 decision that individual states have the right to determine abortion laws.

Since 1989 virtually every state has voted on proposed amendments to abortion laws, as the 'moral majority' (sic), especially those connected with Christian fundamentalism and the right wing of the Republican party have stepped up their anti-abortion offensive.

Because of medical advances abortion is now a straightforward and safe procedure. More women world-wide have access to abortion, either through public health or private clinics, than ever before. But the issue of abortion has become a major political fight in the US, Australia, Ireland and the countries of the former eastern bloc.

## Restrictive

Louisiana and Pennsylvania have already passed restrictive abortion laws. Louisiana's law makes abortion illegal except in cases of direct threat to the woman's life, or in cases of rape and incest - and in these cases only in the first three months of pregnancy.

In Pennsylvania abortions for women under 18 require parental permission, and the compulsory 'counselling' of women contemplating abortions. Another 14 states have highly restrictive anti-abortion laws in the pipeline; there are only 10 of the US states where abortion is not highly restricted.

Against this, a Reproductive Freedom Bill is now before Congress, which would restore unrestricted right to abortion. Bill Clinton says he supports it, but has shied clear of the abortion issue in the campaign, in the face of the extreme right-wing programme adopted by the Republicans.

US anti-abortion campaigners have staged well-publicised sieges of abortion clinics, harassing and physically threatening women. Arson attacks and bombings have also occurred.



"GET READY TO EXTEND OUR HOURS. THE SCHOOL BOARD CANCELLED ALL SEX EDUCATION CLASSES."

By a special  
correspondent

But this Spring a pro-abortion march in Washington, mobilising three quarters of a million people, was probably the biggest demonstration ever in US history.

The attack on abortion rights has spread to include attacks on access to contraception. Over the last five years, research programmes to develop new contraceptives has fallen 50 per cent; this is largely due to the anti-abortionists claim that new techniques amount to 'abortion'.

Despite the fact that the US has the highest teenage pregnancy rate of any advanced country, now the anti-abortionists are launching a campaign against sex education in schools.

The attack on abortion and contraception is growing in eastern Europe. In Bulgaria, because of inflation, contraception has become a luxury. In Hungary the constitutional court is to make a ruling on the legality of existing liberal legislation soon. In Czechoslovakia, because of market reforms, abortion for most women will become very expensive.

## Regulations

The attack is worst in Poland. In May 1990 new regulations were imposed requiring written approval by three doctors on medical and psychological grounds before an abortion could go ahead.

But the application of this regulation has been subject to a



huge campaign of intimidation from the Catholic church and other reactionaries. The result in that doctors have been intimidated by pressure inside hospitals from giving their approval. Many doctors will not give their approval to any abortion, no matter what the circumstances. The number of abortions in state hospitals has decline dramatically.

State subsidies on contraception have been abolished, making it three times more expensive. Catholic campaigners have been picketing pharmacies selling contraceptives; priests are refusing to give absolution to or marry anyone who has not signed an anti-abortion petition.

In these circumstances women have been turning to private clinics for abortions; these charge more than a month's salary for an average factory worker (and of course many women earn much less than that).

The absolute banning of abortion was blocked in the lower house of the Polish parliament. But the issue is still before the parliament and has not been resolved.

## Last bastion

Addressing visiting Polish politicians in the Vatican two years ago, the Pope said that the country's 'moral standing' resided in revoking the 1956 abortion law which he said was 'the last bastion of Communism'.

The Polish branch of the International Planned Parenthood Association has had its state subsidy drastically reduced, resulting in the



closure of nearly half its branches which give abortion and contraception advice.

Despite the role of the Catholic church, a public opinion poll still, found 58 per cent of the population opposed to any restriction on abortion.

## East Germany

The situation for women in the former East Germany has worsened. Subsidies for contraceptives, creches and kindergartens have been withdrawn or severely reduced. The question of how to unify the liberal East German laws of those with the Federal Republic has not been resolved. But the Bundestag decided in June to allow free abortion in the first three months if counselling from a doctor is obtained.

In the ex-Soviet Union the problem is not the lack of access to abortion, but rather the lack of an alternative. Because of the lack of contraception under the old system, the average woman had six terminations during her reproductive years.

In 1989 it is estimated that the contraceptive supplies

produced only met 30 per cent of the demand. Oral contraceptives were never produced in the ex-Soviet Union. IUDs were produced in small numbers and were of poor quality. So were domestically produced condoms, often publicly derided, with many men refusing to use them.

The countries discussed here are just the tip of the abortion struggle world-wide. In many other countries, particularly Ireland and Australia, abortion is a major political divide. Everywhere that liberal laws have been established, right-wing and reactionary religious interests are engaged in a fight to overturn them. In a world where extreme reactionary forces are getting stronger in many places, feminists and their allies face a long, hard struggle.

The National Abortion Campaign has moved. It can now be contacted at The Print House, 18 Ashwin Street, London, E8 3DL Phone: 071 923 4976 or Fax: 071 923 4979.

ENWRAC, the European network of pro-choice groups can also be contacted there.

Birmingham ... London ... Downpatrick ...

# Stop hospital closures!

By John Lister

BITTER struggles are developing to defend hospital services against the impact of the Tory government's market reforms.

● IN BIRMINGHAM, health workers and campaigners are opposing a £7.5m cuts package that would close the Accident Hospital and the Royal Orthopaedic and axe 600 jobs.

● IN DOWNPATRICK in the six counties of Ireland, a massive 20,000-strong demonstration – equivalent to millions in London – showed the scale of opposition to the closure of rural hospital services as part of a £12 million cuts package by the Eastern Board.

● IN LONDON, despite a grim silence from Labour, health unions are taking the lead in fighting leaked government plans to close four teaching hospitals and thousands more beds, as the capital's NHS goes bankrupt in the 'internal market'.

## Hit list

In October the government will publish the findings of the Tomlinson Inquiry into London's NHS, which was set up a year ago to propose a hit list of hospital closures.

According to the latest leaks in the *Evening Standard*, Professor Tomlinson will propose the closure of:

- St Thomas's Hospital
- Charing Cross Hospital
- University College Hospital
- St Mary's Hospital

The report is also likely to recommend the closure or merger of additional specialist hospitals such as the Royal Marsden and Moorfields.

In all, these proposals would axe around 2,500 beds, handling at least 125,000 in-patients a year – more than 10 percent of the present London caseload.

Thousands of health service jobs would also be axed, adding new misery to the wave of redundancies that has already swept away over 1,000 jobs.

Nor will the cuts stop at inner London. Tomlinson is reported to be proposing a total of 3,000-5,000 bed closures. As Health Minister Brian Mawhinney said recently:

**"No hospital is safe, no matter what their size. Some of the big hospitals are in for a shock ... and any smaller hospitals who may be hiding away thinking they have been missed have not been forgotten."**

With 130,000 people still on London's growing waiting lists, there is little evidence that that capital is 'over-bedded'.

There is no time to lose if these plans are to be fought.

The common demands must include an immediate end to the brutal 'market' system, an immediate £1 billion injection for the NHS, and the abolition of opted-out Trust Boards, returning Trusts to direct management.

## BMA surrender

The possibilities of a fightback are clear. Though the BMA has publicly thrown in the towel in London, refusing in advance to fight in defence of up to 700 consultant posts and countless junior doctors, health trade unions have already shown their readiness to fight back.



● A successful London-wide demonstration in August was jointly called by the UNISON unions, COHSE, NUPE and NALGO, following local strikes over jobs.

● Technicians' union MSF has also staged strikes and protests against cuts and redundancies.

● Local campaigns, pensioners' groups and community organisations have also

been at the forefront of resistance to attacks on services.

To link up the various organisations wanting to fight the London cutbacks, London Health Emergency has convened a meeting at Camden Town Hall on Tuesday November 10, starting at 7pm.

## A 5-point plan to stop the cuts

London Health Emergency has put forward the following as a 5-point plan to save London's NHS. It has been supported by COHSE London Region.

- AN IMMEDIATE cash injection of at least £100 million to remedy the current cuts facing hospitals and units in London.
- ABOLISH the market system that has bankrupted London hospitals, abolish Trusts and return all units to the control of local health authorities.
- ESTABLISH a Greater London Regional Health Authority with responsibility for strategic planning, to take control of the Special Health Authorities, the London Ambulance Service and the Blood Transfusion Service.
- NO CLOSURES of any acute beds or health care units until alternative and improved services are in place and ready to take over.
- UPGRADE primary and preventative health care services across London, and GUARANTEE full government funding of community care plans for the elderly and mentally ill.



# Blues hunger blunted by success

*I was warned*

By Robert Cray

**Unplugged**

By Eric Clapton

Reviewed by Dave Osler

Blues is a direct reflection of black experience in America. While lyrics mostly centre on personal relationships, a significant proportion graphically depict black oppression, firstly as rural labourers in the deep south and, after the mass migration to northern cities in the forties, as industrial proletarians.

Explicitly political subject matter, while not unknown ('Eisenhower Blues', 'When The Welfare Turns It Back On You') is comparatively rare. Telling it like it is is usually enough.

Musically, the rudiments are far simpler to master than jazz, yet the scope for instrumental subtlety is paradoxically considerable. It can even have mass pop ap-

peal, as the appearance of these two new releases in the UK album charts demonstrates.

Robert Cray is regularly attacked for yuppifying the blues, pandering to elements who want their tales of lost love and hard times smoothed over with sixties soul and then retailed to them at grossly inflated CD prices.

This is all very unfair. His best work, like 'Bad Influence' and 'Strong Persuader', testifies to major talent. Cray is not just a fabulous guitarist, but a convincing singer blessed with songwriting ability somehow transcending the normal limitations of the genre.

His abilities in any one of these areas would have guaranteed him commercial success. For one person to be so talented in all three areas is almost unnatural.

Yet Cray is a victim of the rock 'n' roll success syndrome. The big time has blunted his edge. As Springsteen once remarked, 'you gotta stay hungry', and the adage is doubly true for bluesmen.

Nevertheless, 'I Was Warned' represents a relative return to form after 1990's disappointing 'Midnight Stroll' set, easily his weakest album. The standout track, 'On The Road Down', was co-written by Steve Cropper, the (white) soul legend whose minimalist efforts graced most of the classic Stax dance singles of the sixties.

No socialist is ever going to forgive Clapton his astonishing 'Enoch was right' outburst at an August 1976 gig in Birmingham, all the more reprehensible from someone who built a career on black music. The comments, incidentally, were a major factor behind the formation of Rock Against Racism.

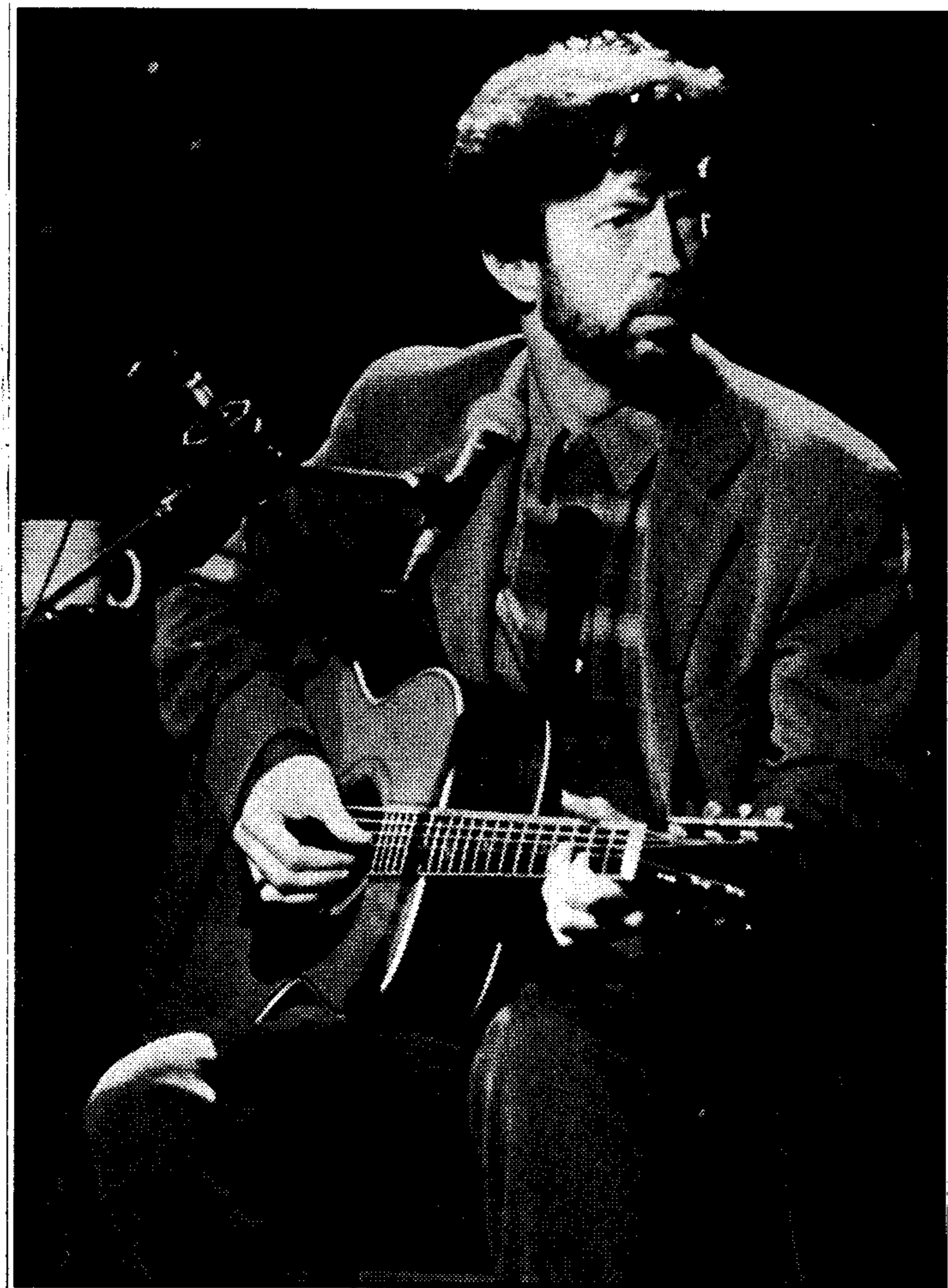
Yet on the electric guitar, Clapton has few equals. Yes, hundreds of players are heavier, or jazzier, or faster. But Clapton's music often has the rare power to move the listener emotionally where guitarists with too much technique would leave them cold.

'Unplugged', however, features EC and his band entirely on acoustic instruments. On the acoustic guitar - effectively a different instrument altogether - the man is altogether more average.

This is not to say 'unplugged' is a bad album. It's ideal mellow late night listening. It's just that you expect it to start burning, and it simply doesn't. The new version of 'Layla', for example, is positively plodding.

The best tracks are the cover versions of blues classics by Robert Johnson, Bo Diddley, Muddy Waters, Big Bill Broonzy and Leadbelly, and 'Old Love', co-written with close friend Cray.

Two solid and entertaining if not outstanding efforts.



Clapped out? Eric Clapton

# Singing his way to Washington

**Bob Roberts**

Written, directed by and starring Tim Robbins

Reviewed by Kate Ahrens

When the credits came up at the end of Bob Roberts, the entire cinema sat in silence. It took a good two or three minutes before anyone got their breath back enough to move.

This film has such a powerful message and hits you with such force, that some time to recover is essential.

It is a story, in documentary

form, following the senatorial campaign trail of Bob Roberts, a folk-singing, entrepreneurial right-winger.

The film follows Roberts and his entourage on their campaign bus from one town to the next where he plays concerts, finds photo-opportunities with small children and promotes himself through 'Broken Dove' his anti-drugs charity.

Wonderfully funny and terrifyingly serious at the same time, the film manages to combine humour and stark reality to create a chilling vision of what is happening today in American politics.

It was one of the most frightening films I have seen for a long time. Not because it was full of scary moments, but because it was so easy to see elements of Bob Roberts in all of the politicians leading America, not to mention the rest of the world. And it was also far too easy to believe that the opposition to the sort of crass offensiveness that Roberts comes out with is so muted.

It doesn't seem strange that hardly anybody even seems to notice how offensively racist and sexist he is. Even the opposition that does appear is centred around allegations of corruption, not about what he is actually saying.

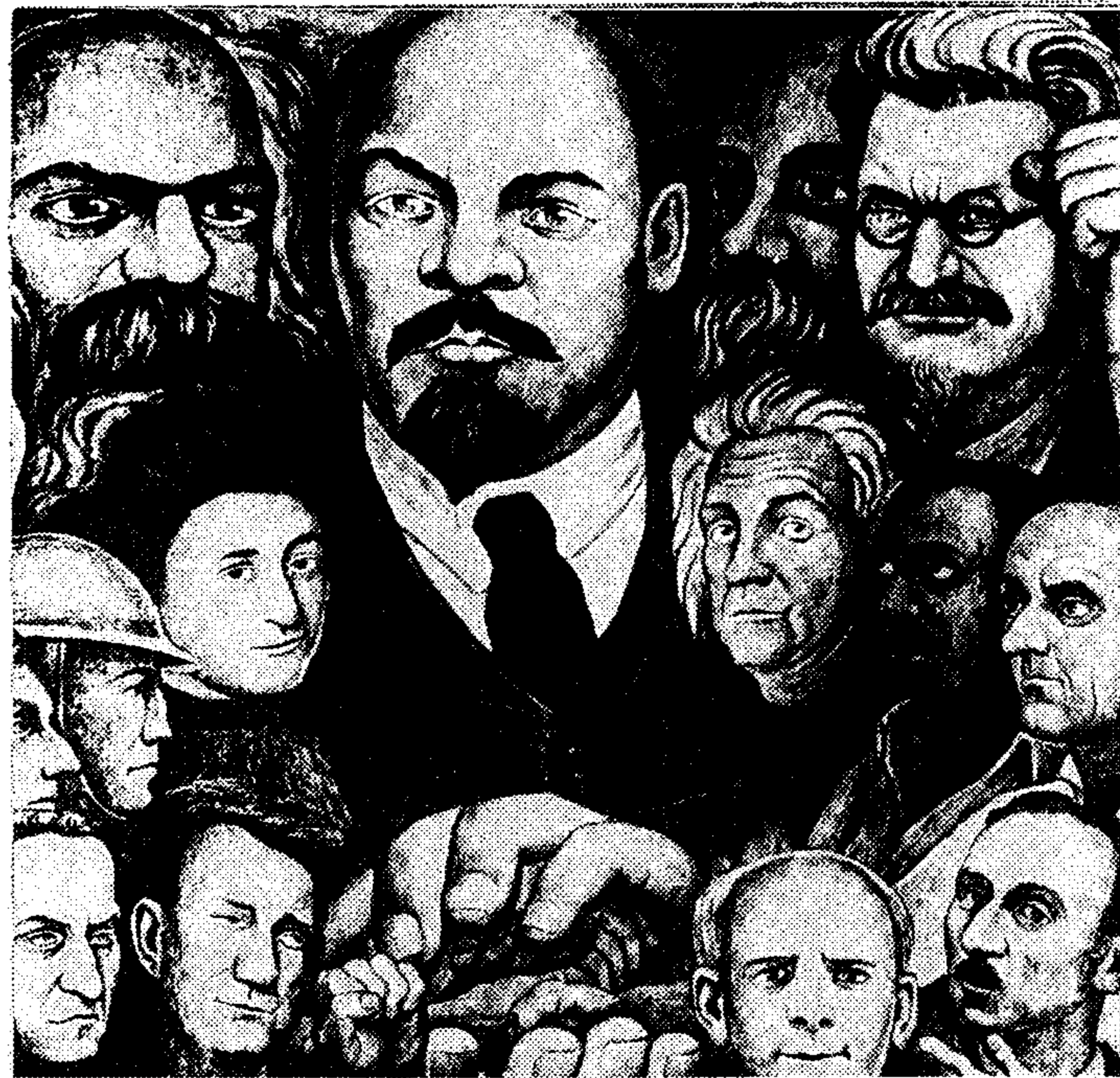
This film has so few faults that I'm finding it difficult not to just say 'It's brilliant - go and see it' and not even attempt a criticism. I can't say that I enjoyed this film because it made me think too much about the vicious and repressive nature of the society we live in - but then, that is what it intended to do.

People should go and see this film. It presents a vision, not of the future, but of the present, that gives a chilling clarity to what the real issues facing us all are.



Introducing your Republicrat candidate - Bob Roberts

## socialist **OUTLOOK**



**National Rally**

**75 years of the Russian revolution**

**In defence of October**

**Ernest Mandel**

(United Secretariat of the Fourth International)

*Kingsway College  
off Grays Inn Road,  
London WC1*

*Friday October 23, 7.30pm*

## Anger in Athens

# Greek tragedy for bosses

by Greek socialists Sissy Vovou and Andreas Ydriotis in Athens

Greece is being rocked by a series of one-day general strikes, the biggest trade union upsurge in the country for years. No photographs could adequately paint a picture of Athens and many other big cities today.

Pickets are everywhere, in front of power stations, banks, post offices, company head offices. In many cities, clashes with riot police are an everyday event.

Tear gas and CS gas have been used twice in Athens, canisters aimed directly at strikers, not fired into the air as the law demands.

The chaos stems from the right-wing New Democracy government's attempt to attack every layer of the population at once in a bid to get to Maastricht paradise.

Stunts over the past year include:

- increased direct and indirect taxation and extra taxes on homeowners
- selling off highly profitable state enterprises at knock-down prices
- freezing public sector pay and pushing less-than-inflation awards in the private sector
- sacking 1,500 Athens bus workers and – when 7,000 colleagues struck in support – shutting the company down completely
- promoting new social security legislation to slash pensions and other benefits despite higher contributions, and increasing retirement age for both men and women
- a higher education bill that will cut state funding, introduce fees for books, restrict democracy for both lecturers and students, and gear higher education to the needs of the private sector
- overseeing massive cuts in living standards for peasants (27 per cent of the population) after withdrawal of EC farm subsidies

The package aims to cut state debt, trim the public sector and modernise the Greek economy in preparation for the single market. The government is ready to see it through at almost any cost.

Protests called by the private sector General Confederation of Labour have not been successful, because member unions have been seriously weakened in recent years.

But state employees, public sector companies and the banks are in continuous mobilisation, using mass participation to build effective picketing.

This militancy has seriously damaged the economy, not to mention the government's best efforts to tame the working class and the labour movement.

The right's slogan is: 'We must relieve the citizens of this country from the yoke of the guilds', as it calls the strong trade unions.



Bus workers' bust-up with the bureaucrats

'We need less state, better state', declares prime minister Mitsotakis, preparing mass sackings of state employees, privatisation of electricity, telephone and transport concerns and a build up in the police force.

'This government is anti-popular, an electoral minority, and must fall,' declares president Papandreou of PASOK, Greece's mass workers' party, between two votes in favour of Maastricht.

After promising repeal of the right's laws, he adds: 'If, I say if, we need austerity measures, they must apply to everyone.' So there you are, then. Austerity is to be multilateral rather than unilateral.

'Right wing policies are what must be defeated,' state both wings of the ex-CP in parliament, skirting the basic obligation of the left to fight to overthrow right-wing governments. And what if the next PASOK government tries it on, too?

Yet the unexpected strength of the movement has created divisions within all parties, especially the governing one. New Democracy's 'traditional', 'serious', 'historic' cadres fear the leadership's antics will cost the party the next elections.

### National unity

The same goes for PASOK, with pro-European elements arguing that without 'national unity' and 'wisdom', our country won't rise to Maastricht level.

The Union of Greek Industrialists has come out in opposition to the government's plans. Needless to say, it isn't motivated by altruism.

After talks with the unions, it came it up with a middle-of-the-road, sacrifices-on-both-sides policy. The next day, the government rejected it outright.

The only force that supports the strike practically and politically is the far left, mainly Trotskyists such as the Fourth International, OSE (sister organisation of the British SWP) and left PASOKites aligned to Britain's Militant Tendency, but

also student left independents, anarchists and former CPers.

Moves are afoot to regroup the trade union left. Demands include union democracy – decisions to be taken at rank-and-file meetings and not by the bureaucrats – and repudiation of the recent 'class peace' deal the PASOK-led General Confederation signed with the bosses.

The sacked busworkers have proved especially militant. Daily mass marches bring traffic to a standstill, while strikers guard depots to prevent government forces taking out the vehicles.

### Irresponsible

The few circulating buses get attacked by strikers, despite union official's denunciation of 'irresponsible' action as 'the work of provocateurs' by union leaderships. Army lorries driven by soldiers are substituting for public transport, with many accidents as a result.

The government tried to split the busworkers by offering 3,600 of them the chance to become shareholders in a new bus company to replace the existing one. The idea attracted a few

hundred.

The militants made their opinion plain; about ten 'shareholders' were badly beaten up and stripped naked in Omonia, Athens' central square. Both government and opposition denounced this 'outrageous act'.

Scabs have been helicoptered into power stations outside Athens. The use of pensioners and unskilled personnel has already resulted in an explosion in one of them.

While powercuts are routine everywhere, electricity bosses deliberately concentrate them on the poorest areas. About 70 power workers have been sacked, adding the demand for their reinstatement to the struggle.

The extreme right of the governing party wants the return of para-statal organisations; fascist calls in the press to 'open the heads of strikers like a rose' have not been prosecuted.

Some 3,000 strikers planned a 'visit' to Mitsotakis in Salonica as he inaugurated the annual international trade fair, a major economic event in Greece. It was a breathtaking decision, carrying a direct class message.

Sixty-two coaches set off on a

600km journey from Athens, despite a police ban on public meetings in Salonica for the first time since the dictatorship. Around 3,000 riot police were mobilised to meet them just outside the city.

Politicians, union chiefs and media stars pleaded with them not to go. After the trip had already started, the strikers' own leader held a press conference begging them to return. A mass meeting decided to go ahead.

Meanwhile, Salonica's trades council had cancelled a mass welcome meeting and supporting demonstration. Only a few leftists were present to greet the coaches at the cops' cordon. Many workers understood the meaning to this betrayal, deciding to return to Athens.

Slogans of the struggle include: 'law is the right of the worker', 'terrorisation will not pass' and 'students and workers, one voice, one fist'. As these events dramatically prove, all the acres of pseudo-analysis about 'the end of class struggle' are not exactly verified.

Sissy Vovou and Andreas Ydriotis are members of the Greek section of the Fourth International

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# Step up campaign against schools opt-out

**By Richard Hatcher**

Will schools begin a mass opt out from local authority control this summer? That's certainly the aim of July's white paper on education, *Choice and Diversity*.

Tory determination to destroy local education authorities (LEAs) and create a market system of grant maintained (GM) schools, introducing selection by the back door, is now abundantly clear.

## Appointed

LEAs will gradually be replaced by funding agencies (FAs), government-appointed bodies similar to district health authorities.

Once 10 per cent of secondary or primary pupils in an LEA area are in opted out schools, the FA will share responsibility for providing all school places in the area.

'Dual power', with an FA veto over the LEA, will continue until 75 per cent of pupils in secondary or primary schools are in GM schools, when LEA responsibility will cease - unless it chooses to hand over before then.

FAs give the government an instrument to intervene directly in the closure and creation of schools. It's an admission that the carrot of bribing schools with extra money to opt out has failed, with only 400 out of a possible 24,000 takers. Now they have a stick as well.

The FA's immediate task will be to get rid of government-defined 'surplus places' by closing schools, clearing the ground for new or expanded GM schools.

The white paper also gives the government powers to take over 'failing' schools by sending in hit squads of ex heads and businessmen to sack teachers and impose a new management regime before handing them over to the GM sector.

Opting out will be made easier. The second ballot is abolished, shortening the time available for campaigning against opting out. LEAs will only be allowed to spend the equivalent of one leaflet per parent on anti-opt out campaigns, with an equivalent amount provided to the governors to campaign for.

A key theme of the white paper is encouragement of 'specialisation'. In spite of education secretary John Patten's disclaimers, the outcome will be selection.

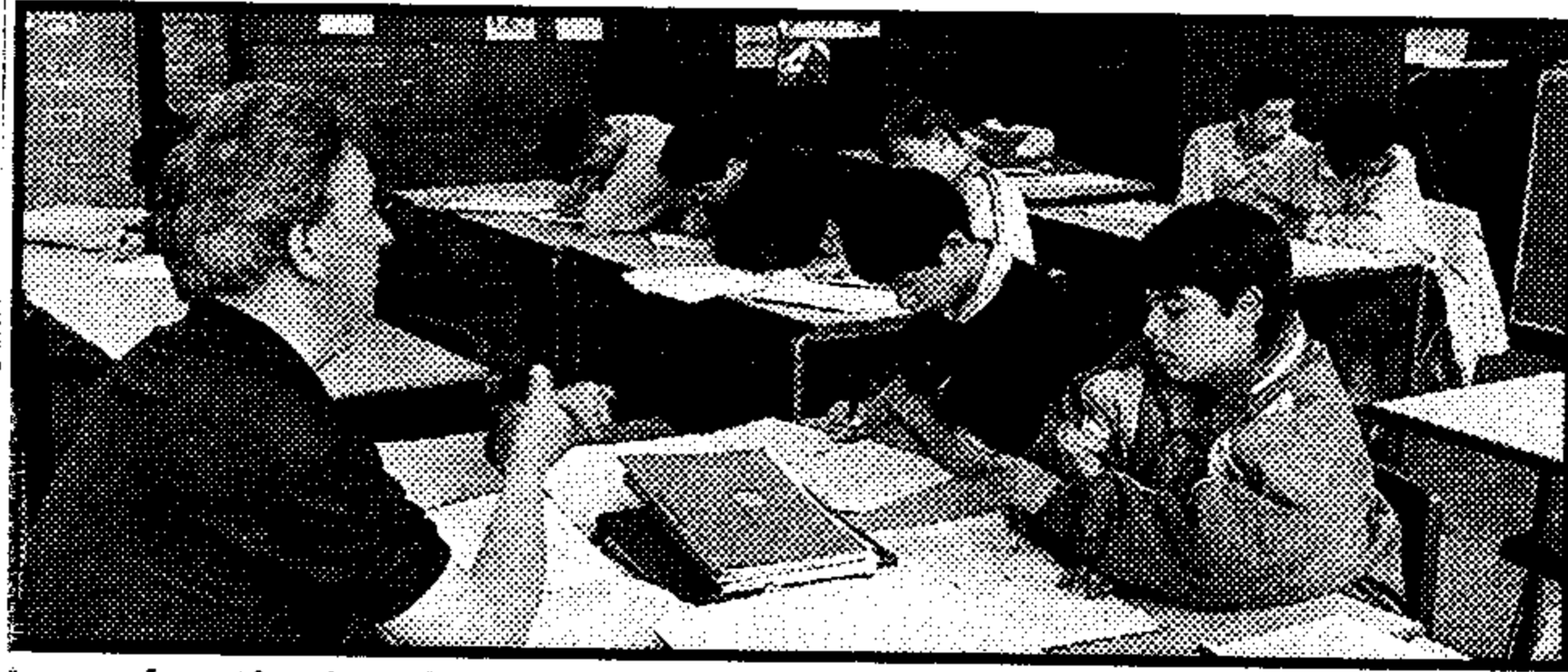
## Aptitude

Secondary schools, driven by market funding, will inevitably choose pupils on what they regard as ability and aptitude, reinforcing class, gender and racial discrimination.

The new selective system - a graded hierarchy of schools and courses - represents a more sophisticated version of the old grammar-secondary divide.

Patten has to step cautious to assuage Tory voters' fears that their own children may not gain a privileged place.

*Choice and Diversity* gives business the opportunity to directly influence teaching by putting money into schools and occupying a new category of 'sponsor governor' places on governing



*Learning the hard-up way*

bodies. It's an alternative to the failure of the over-ambitious city technology colleges policy.

But the white paper has a fatal flaw that may keep the gates to mass opt outs firmly shut - funding policy. At present GM schools get the equivalent of what the local management of schools formula gives LEA schools in the area, plus 15 per cent to (over-)compensate for loss of LEA central services.

## White paper

The white paper proposes a gradual shift to funding GM schools on the basis of the standard spending assessment, the target figure which government gives local authorities to cover education spending, starting in 1994.

The vast majority of councils spend well in excess of education SSA on schools; those that opt out would actually get less money.

Since *Choice and Diversity*, Patten has promised to top up this missing cash under some new funding arrangement, but the basis won't be specified until next summer.



## Getting the low down

### Them and us

During the last 5 years the top five per cent of the US population has seen its wealth increase by 50 per cent. One in five US children now lives in poverty.

### Fair point?

According to famed US evangelist Pat Robertson, campaigning for the re-election of President Bush, feminism 'is not about equal rights. It is a socialist anti-family political movement that encourages women to leave their husbands, kill their children, practise witchcraft, destroy capitalism and become lesbians.'

### Indecent

The number of people earning below the Council of Europe decency threshold (now £190 a week) has increased by one million since the Tories came to power. In 1979 there were 3.9 million, now there are 4.7 million.

### That's privatisation!

Norwegian ship building giant Kvaerner has bought the world-class Warnow shipyard in Rostock for a piffling £350,000. The shipyard is worth tens of millions. In addition the German government has guaranteed more than £200 million to cover losses in the shipyard's restructuring.

### Hypocrite of the week

According to ex-Eurocom guru Martin Jacques: 'Respectability has become Labour's motif, the defining characteristic of the new model party, in which policy is a question of adding one's voice to the chorus. Labour has abandoned any desire to shape the character of political debate. Politics has become... a matter of market positioning. If it was interested in debate, it would not be so keen to suppress differences within its own ranks'. In other words *Labour has done everything Jacques spent the whole of the 1980s arguing for!*

### Worth every penny

The government spent £10 billion defending the pound. This could have paid the yearly salary of an extra 854,700 nurses or 40,000 hospital consultants. Or repair 20,000 primary schools and build an extra 2,150 new ones.

### Sacrifice

We all have to make sacrifices in a recession - right? Lord Weinstock, chairman of GEC, has insisted on limiting his pay increase to £3000 this year. This puts him on a measly £472,000. But to keep the wolves from the door, he and his 40-year old son Simon own £85m worth of shares between them.

### Maxwell signs on

Kevin Maxwell who owes £400 million quid and probably has millions stashed away in secret bank accounts has signed on and is claiming benefits of £194 a week.

### Howard nicked

Tory environment minister, upper class twit Michael Howard, has been caught fare dodging by BR inspectors. He had to pay a £10 instant fine.

### Shop staff axe

70,000 shop staff were sacked in just the first three months of this year because of the recession. The total for this year could top 150,00.

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## Will NUT fight for claim?

**By Andy Wragg**

Six per cent, plus a £1,000 flat rate increase for all teachers - this is the National Union of Teachers' headline grabbing pay claim.

It was announced just after the government's declaration of a two per cent public sector pay limit and two days before the pound fell through the floor of the ERM.

It is hardly an auspicious time to submit such a substantial claim, and no doubt this will once again provide the right-wing leadership of the NUT with an excuse not to mobilise the membership in an effective campaign with a real prospect of success.

General secretary Doug McAvoy and his cabal will limit themselves to presenting the review body - chaired by arch-Thatcherite Rover chief Graham Day - with their glossy 80 page submission.

It will be left to association and division activists to make the case with the membership. This will be no easy task, with widespread demoralisation among teachers.

Many NUT members regard the claim as unrealistic, although thoroughly deserved in the light of massively increased workloads. Yet the union's submission

does contain some elements which could be used to mobilise teachers and unite them in a campaign.

These include; limiting parents' meetings to six; a 50 hour limit on activities connected with the wider educational needs of the school (curriculum development, in-service training, preparation of teaching materials, etc); no more than one after school meeting a week; at least 20 per cent of time without pupil contact.

All are capable of drawing the membership into activity in a way that a pay campaign alone can never do. The NUT is also calling for a national maximum class size, an issue which could be used to build alliances with parents.

This could open up the debate about educational standards and the funding mechanism for school, and break the stifling consensus of Labour and the Tories.

Faced with local authority budget cuts, a curriculum and assessment procedures which are both unworkable, and creeping privatisation, much of state education and many of the teachers who work for it are close to breaking point.

The NUT should campaign not just for pay but in defence of state education - now, while there is something left to defend.

# Is Bryan Gould doing a Hezza?

by Dave Osler

WHY ARE Bryan Gould and David Blunkett risking the boot from the front bench by putting on a left face over devaluation and Maastricht?

Are they hoping to emulate the calculated histrionics of Tory primadonna Michael Heseltine when he walked out on Thatcher?

Gould and Blunkett have been proven right on the first count by last week's ERM meltdown, and are arguing the same line as Tony Benn, Dennis Skinner and *Socialist Outlook* on the second.

## Sources

As a result, 'sources close to John Smith' have been leaking thinly veiled threats of the sack to the national papers. Yet these men have never been renowned for putting their principles ahead of their careers.

The crunch comes at the Wednesday 23 shadow cabinet meeting (the day after *Socialist*

*Outlook* goes to press), where Labour's line is to be debated.

While no change of policy beyond a recognition of fait accompli is likely, the so-called doctrine of collective responsibility will thereafter be invoked to stifle dissenting voices.

Gould's stance is undoubtedly sincere. He was a confirmed Eurosceptic years before the term was coined.

## Critic

When first elected to parliament in 1974, he became parliamentary private secretary to Peter Shore, Labour's foremost critic of what was then the Common Market, and has never wavered since.

During his recent double whammy bid for both the leadership and deputy leadership of the Labour Party, Gould elevated his opposition to ERM into his major principled difference with Smith.

Yet Gould had serious difficulties even getting 20 per cent of the parliamentary Labour Party to sign his nomination papers.

Many MPs only did so to prevent Smith being returned unopposed. When the votes came in, Gould was hammered in both contests.

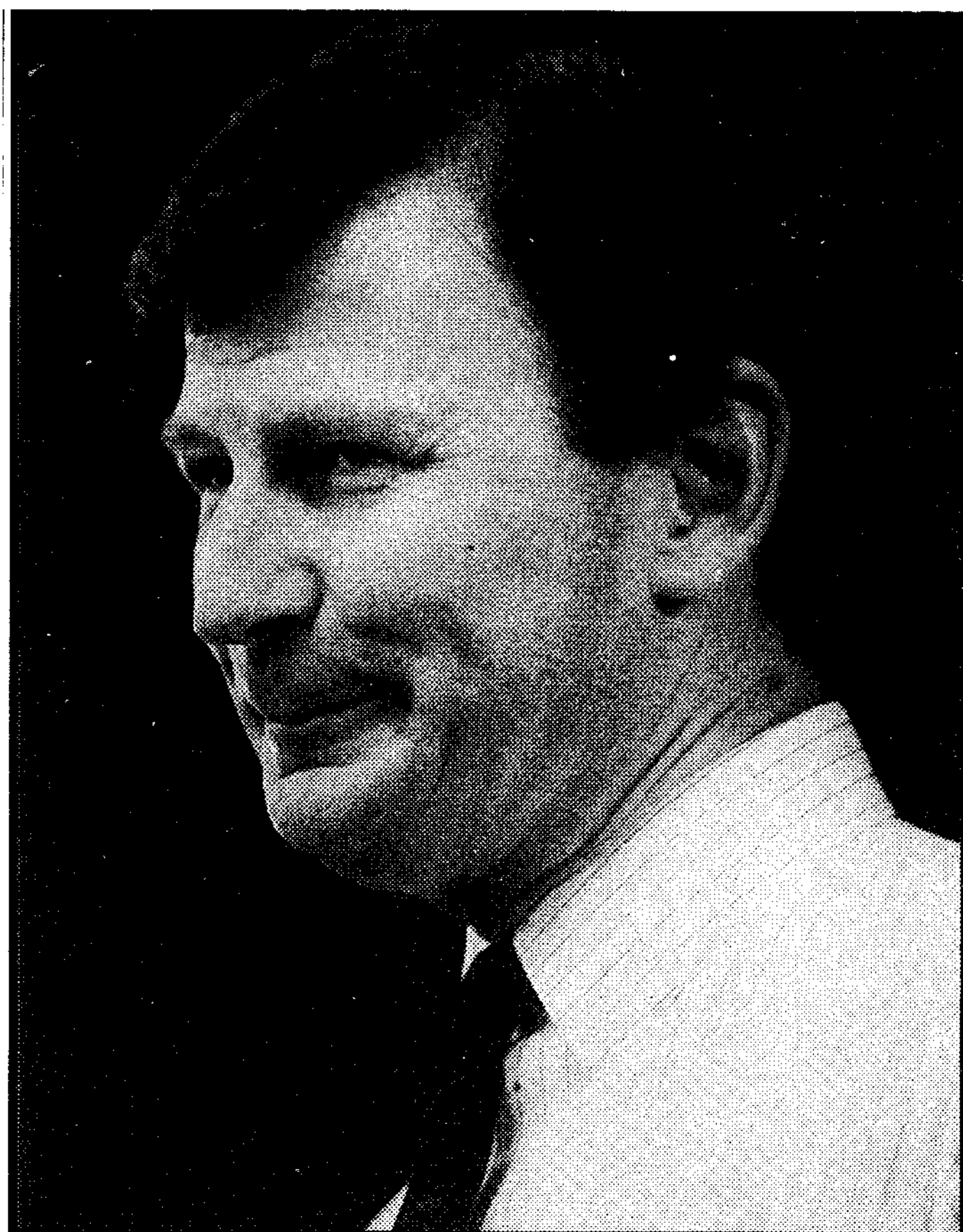
In the shadow cabinet election, he was humiliated with the minor portfolio of shadowing David Mellor at Heritage, scarcely one of the great offices of state.

David Blunkett this year secured election into the shadow cabinet at the fourth attempt. Yet as Gould's campaign manager, he is scarcely in Smith's good books.

But now a massive head of steam is building up for a referendum inside the parliamentary party. Proponents include

- Benn, Skinner and most of the Campaign Group left
- senior backbenchers like Alan Williams and Brian Sedgemore
- confirmed rightwingers such as shadow attorney general John Morris and oldtimer Shore.

Even Smith's campaign manager Robin Cook is reputedly privately in favour.



Setting a new Gould standard

Given the likelihood of imminent major reform of the electoral college system, speculation persists that Smith may have to seek a fresh mandate within two to three years, freeing himself of the so-called 'taint' of the block vote.

If Gould emulates Heseltine's 1986 Westland

walkout now, leaving on an issue of principle with a cast iron guarantee of retrospective vindication, he may massively boost his presently slim chances of ultimately leading the party.

It would be a high risk strategy, but maybe it will pay off

## NALGO

# Gloves off in Islington strike

ISLINGTON council has raised the stakes in the 12-week strike by NALGO workers against compulsory redundancies by using vicious anti-union methods.

This week they will sack all temporary workers on strike. They have also started using private agency staff as scabs.

Despite the council's intimidation the strike of 700 workers remains solid with more workers joining the strike as a result of management tactics.

Levels of picketing at the council's neighbourhood offices are high. In response to the

use of agency staff, 50 workers occupied the offices of CSL who are providing scab benefit teams to Islington.

If the agency does not withdraw its contract the strikers have vowed to return in greater numbers. Documents seen at the offices of CSL show that they plan to provide strike breakers to Newham, Tower Hamlets and Hammersmith in the event of strikes taking place.

The high cost of agency scabs and the wage rises offered to staff still working show that it is not lack of cash preventing the council negotiating a no redundancy package. Redeploying existing staff would cost no

more than the strike-breaking operations carried out by the council.

What lies behind the council's 'tough' stand is a determination to establish the right to enforce compulsory redundancies; and behind that are its plans to voluntarily privatise many councils services, anticipating forthcoming government legislation.

In response to the sacking of temporary workers, the branch is seeking authorisation from NALGO's national executive to ballot the 2000 NALGO workers not yet called out on strike.

# Court rules in favour of NALGO Normal strike action resumed in Newham

COUNCIL workers in Newham, east London, are back on strike after appeal court judges overturned an injunction against their union, NALGO, earlier this month.

The Labour local authority used Tory anti-union laws to secure a return to work judgement, on the grounds that the union had 'promoted' the strike by calling for a yes vote.

If the ruling had been upheld, it would have effectively gagged every activist in Britain who holds a union position.

Newham was refused leave to appeal to the House of Lords, but leader Stephen Timms said the authority would apply direct to the Law Lords.

NALGO members first came out on August 3 after a 63 per cent vote to escalate a dispute over three compulsory redundancies in the poll

tax collection department, which has been running since January.

When action resumed on Monday last week, picket lines were reportedly strengthened, and the dispute may now be extended to take in school employees.

■ Messages of support and requests for speakers: Newham NALGO, 081 519 0799

## NALGO calls London-wide day of action

NALGO's Metropolitan District committee has called a London-wide action day and demonstration in defence of local government on 4 November.

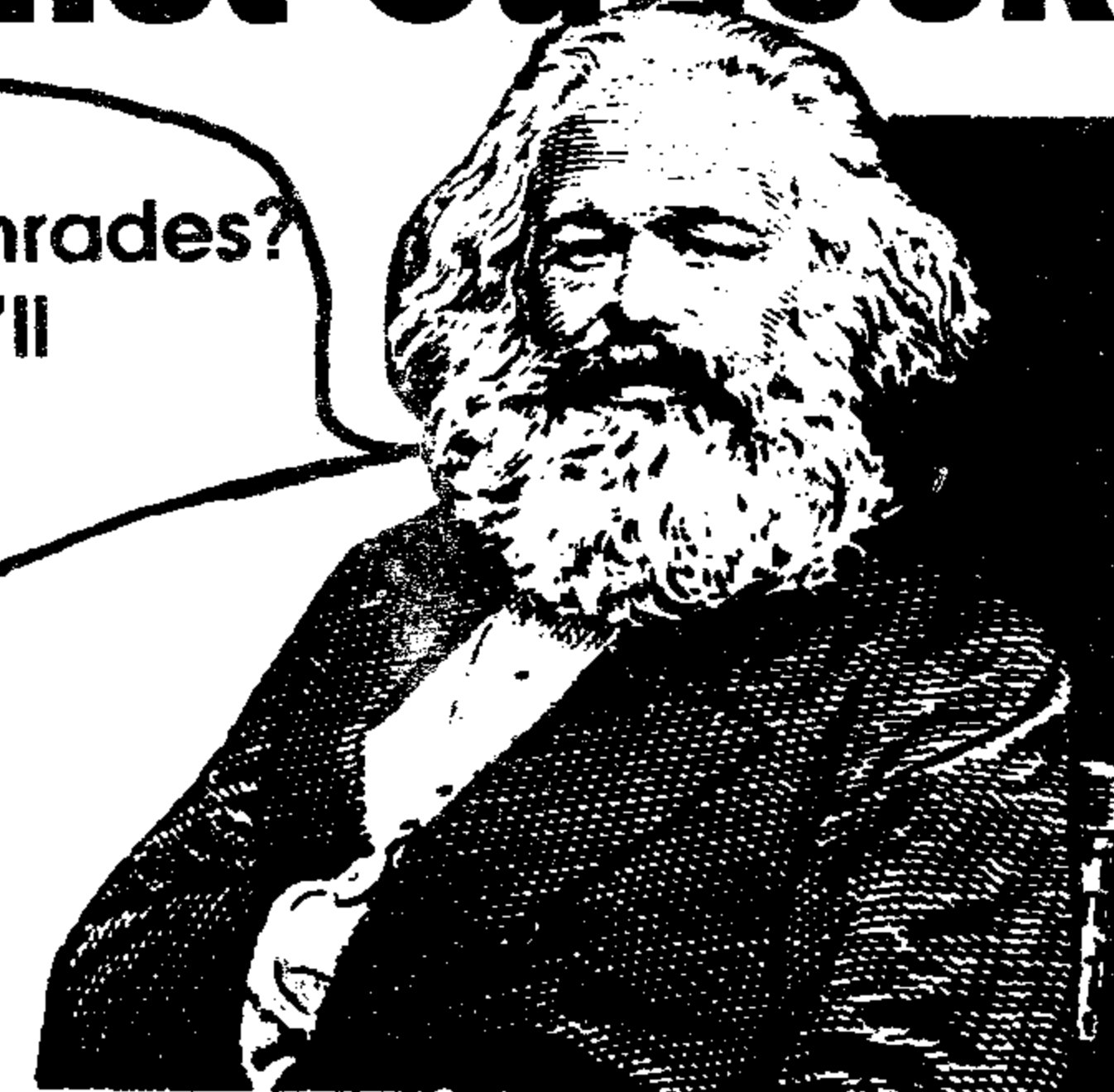
Other public service unions including the NUT will be ap-

proached to support this initiative.

The calling of this demonstration is the result of pressure from the left and of branches like Islington, Camden, Hackney and Newham that have been involved in strike action against the cuts. Details in *Outlook's* next issue.

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26 September, 1992

# socialist OUTLOOK

## Labour: break from Tories!

# Demand Maastricht referendum!

**THE TORY government is in crisis.**

■ Norman Lamont's economic policy has collapsed, with sterling devalued by over 14 percent. The Tories are now under pressure to undertake a full U-turn, reflate the economy, and let inflation rip.

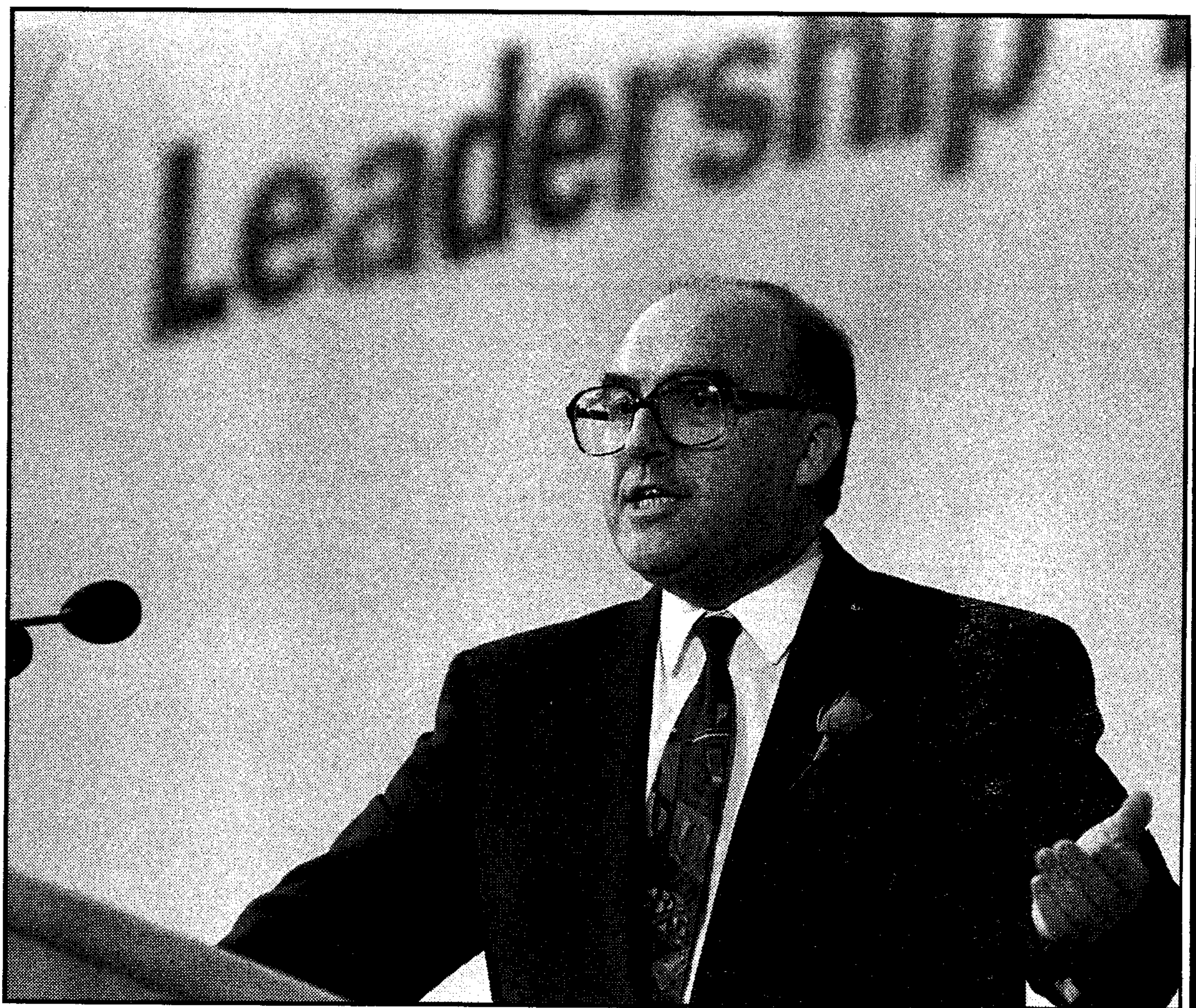
■ The currency crisis and the wafer-thin French majority in favour of the Maastricht Treaty raise huge problems for Major. His commitment to force through British adherence to Maastricht without a referendum – despite overwhelming public opposition – is now dividing his own party.

■ With these splits potentially destroying his small, fragile majority in parliament, the future of Major's government now hangs on the complete absence of any opposition from John Smith's Labour Party.

■ Major could well be forced to rely on Liberal and Labour support to hold the line against his own Euro-sceptics, and to avoid allowing the electorate to have their say on the Maastricht Treaty.

■ Labour has effectively adopted a bipartisan policy on Europe and on the ERM: front bench Labour spokespeople offered no opposition as Norman Lamont threw away billions pursuing his hopeless policy, and now have no alternative policy to offer.

■ The refusal of the Labour leadership to call for one is now the main obstacle to a referendum on Maastricht. Euro-fanatic John Smith knows as well as Major that



*Don't ask me for policies, I only work here*

opinion polls show less than 30 percent of British voters support the plan for a bosses' Europe. A heavy defeat would deal a fresh, decisive body blow to the Tories, and could even force them to call a fresh election.

■ This situation must be ended. Trade unions and Labour Parties must echo Bryan Gould's demand that the Labour

leadership take up the call for a referendum – and impose a three-line whip to vote for this in parliament.

■ After six disastrous months in which Labour has become the bag-carriers of Tory policy-makers, now is the time to get even for the humiliating defeat of April 9. **Break with the Tories! Force a referendum!**