

56

# Socialist OUTLOOK

**UNIONS:** crisis of  
new realism p6-7

**SOUTH AFRICA:** WOSA  
leader interviewed - p8

**LIBERATION** 8-page youth  
paper - centre pages

**BOSNIA:** Back page

50p FORTNIGHTLY

● 5FF ● \$1 ● 2DM ● 1500 lire ● 30BF

No. 56, February 5, 1994

## Hit back at Tory tax rip-off

# SMASH

# THE

# PAY

# FREEZE!



### INSIDE:

- EDITORIAL - Bust the pay freeze - p3
- Opportunities in the unions - pp8-9

**Demand TUC Day of Action. Lobby General Council April 1**

# Brutal new Tory attack on homeless

## Dividing the poor

By Paul Clarke

ACCORDING to the housing charity Shelter, more than 1.7 million people are homeless.

This includes people out on the streets, in 'bed and breakfast' accommodation and the hidden homeless – families and individuals forced to live with relatives or friends, when they need somewhere of their own to live.

Now new government rules throw thousands more onto the streets. The Tories plan to cut back on statutory council duties to the homeless, but also to play off different sections of homeless people against one another.

The effect of the new rules is worsened by the new trespass law, which threatens to evict up to 50,000 squatters.

The changes will mean that people with any sort of temporary accommodation will not be regarded as homeless, and those with nowhere to live because of domestic rows will also not be deemed homeless.

Young people thrown out by their parents will not be 'homeless', nor wives and partners thrown out, or who leave because of domestic violence.

And if you're renting a room with friends and they throw you out, then you're not homeless either!

Single mothers living with parents will also not be defined as homeless.

The attempt to cause divisions among the poor and homeless comes in with the greater priority apparently given to families who have been on waiting lists for a long time.

Resentment is often caused by people on waiting lists for a long time seeing others given greater priority. This is one of the factors underlying resentment among council tenants on the Isle of Dogs.

According to Shelter, there are more than 1.2 million people forced to live with family and friends, who desperately need re-housing. Millions more live in sub-standard and decaying houses.

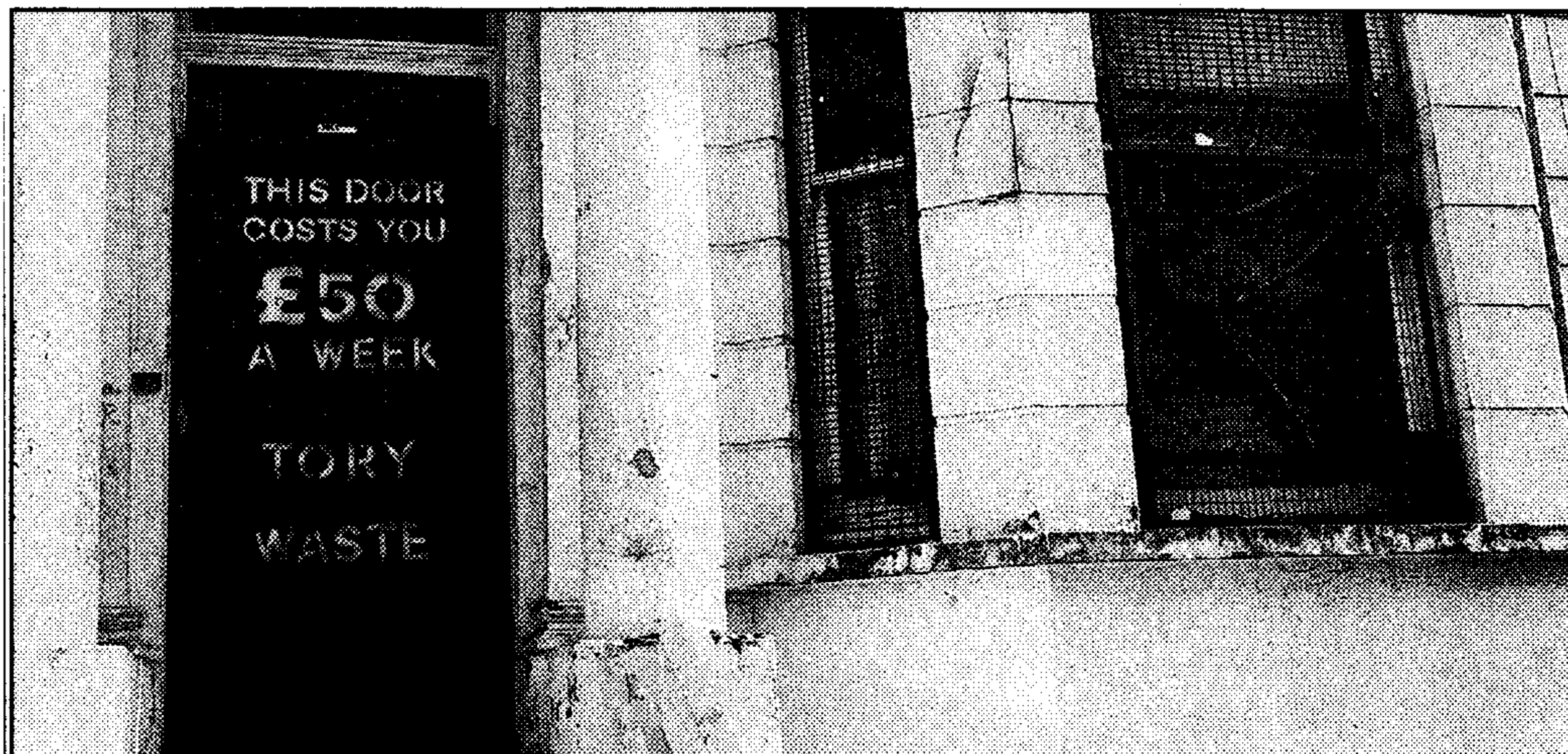
But the problem for people awaiting rehousing is not that single mothers or other people in desperate need are 'jumping the queue'.

### Destruction

The problem is the lack of cheap, socially-owned housing. This is caused by the insane policies of successive governments, and especially by the Tories 'right to buy' destruction of council housing stocks.

Private rents have sky-rocketed. Those unable to get a mortgage are often in a chronically difficult position.

It is worsened by the failure



Tory Westminster council prefers to spend money keeping out the homeless

to build new houses of any kind, and to renovate existing housing.

Britain's housing stock is among the most dilapidated – and amongst the most expensive – in any major country.

Tens of thousands of houses and flats are being left empty for want of buyers who can afford them, for the money to renovate them, or – as the Westminster scandal showed – simply because they are council properties waiting to be sold.

Housing costs an astronomical part of the income of working people, whether they are renting or buying. For the overwhelming majority of workers, buying or renting, housing is a millstone round their neck for life.

Meanwhile something like

on the dole!

The market policies which lead to this are not just cruel and oppressive – they are insane. Tens of thousands are homeless, millions live in run-down houses, building workers are on the dole – so who profits?

Only the banks, financial institutions and the private landlords and builders.

### Money-lenders

A real solution to capitalism's housing crisis can only be finally achieved by smashing the grip of the money-lenders and racketeers.

This means a programme of building tens of thousands of council houses every year, of nationalising the building in-

dustry, banks, and building societies, of putting the racketeers who trade on human misery out of business.

A final irony. The argument against building new council houses is often 'cost'.

But recent figures have shown that on an annualised basis it costs nearly *twice as much* per household to keep people in bed and breakfast than it does to build new council houses – £13,500 a year as opposed to £7000.

And that doesn't include the saving of putting building workers back to work!

There is only one kind of insanity which prefers to pay out twice as much *not* to house people – it's called capitalism.

HOME NEWS

## Romeo, Juliet, homophobia

### Stop the witch hunt against Jane Brown!

THE WITCH HUNT against Hackney head teacher Jane Brown, over her refusal to let children see a performance of 'Romeo and Juliet', is disgusting.

Hackney council – rushing to dump their 'loony left' reputation by sacrificing a ritual victim – have played into the hands of homophobic witch-hunters by rushing to de-

nounce her.

But they have been rebuffed by parents of children at Kingsmead School and by all but one of the school's governors, who have withstood the frenzied smears in the media and stood firm in defence of a head teacher who has saved the school from closure.

One of the reasons Jane Brown advanced for refusing

to let the children see the play – that it was simply a heterosexual love story – was mildly eccentric. But it was motivated by something positive – the need for children to be educated about different sexual orientations.

Parents and governors were also swayed by Jane Brown's explanation that the ballet performance she rejected was not 'free', but would have cost £7 per child, a lot for working class parents. In addition, there would have been the costs and staffing problems of transporting children half way across London to the theatre and back.

If council leaders – seeking support from Tory Education secretary John Patten – get their way, Jane Brown could lose her job and have her career wrecked. The only people to benefit from this would be the Tories and the bigots.

The case has been used to



John Patten: back to bigotry

unleash a wave of homophobia and anti-lesbian hysteria.

Witch-hunters in chief have included LBC/Sun commentator Richard Littlejohn and whacky education minister John Patten who says that people 'over-react' to 'politically incorrect' phrases like 'little Black Sambo'!

### Reactionary war

The attack on Jane Brown is part of the reactionary war being waged against 'political correctness' by the racist and homophobic right wing.

It's not just a war against anti-racism and anti-sexism, it's also a war against progressive education and radical teachers.

Many progressive teachers will think it is the wrong approach to try to stop children being exposed to material – especially in the classics – which has racist or sexist overtones.

William Shakespeare would be definitely off limits by such criteria, as would a vast amount of the artistic production of western society.

The point is to be able to freely discuss this aspect of these works, and to point out alternatives. But in the Jane Brown case, this is a side issue.

You don't have to want to stop kids seeing 'Romeo and Juliet' to see the main issue in this affair. Stop the witch hunt against Jane Brown!



Get ready for **SUMMER!**  
High quality T-shirts only £6 including post & packing. Make cheques to **SOCIALIST OUTLOOK** and send to PO Box 1109, London N4 2UU

## Bust Tory wage freeze!

# Break the economic consensus

So now it's official - the Tories lied when they said they wouldn't raise taxes. The last couple of weeks have seen enormous blows to the government's credibility on the whole range of its social and economic policies, from 'back to basics', to pay, to taxes.

The sleaze and corruption of the Tories has been revealed not just by the Westminster housing scandal, but by the revelation that foreign aid money has been used to buy arms deals with Malaysia and Indonesia.

At the heart of the government's unpopularity is a realisation in huge sections of the population that most working people are struggling economically; and that 'back to basics' is not first and foremost about personal morality, but about finding reasons to attack the welfare state.

All but the very rich know that keeping your head above water financially is very difficult; and nearly everyone knows someone who's unemployed or a single mother. And they know that neither reading hypocritical lectures about personal morality, nor pay freeze nor cutting the welfare state offer any solutions.

Last year the Tories were in deep difficulties over the miners and over Maastricht. They have for the moment solved both problems. But now they find themselves in yet another round of crisis.

Behind that crisis of course is the continuing recession. And the Tories' opponents have to have their own answer to the capitalist crisis.

### Incoherent

Labour economic spokesperson Gordon Brown is quite right to say the government's tax crisis is because of unemployment - the mushrooming cost of social security. But his own answer to how Labour would deal with unemployment is incoherent and unconvincing. A

bit of training here and an energy tax there won't change very much at all.

The more unpopular the Tories get, the more they steamroller on with their reactionary agenda. This is the paradox of the situation: Major is more unpopular than Thatcher, and his government weaker. But the attacks on the welfare state, the attacks on living standards, go on and on with no respite.

### Allies

The Tories biggest allies in getting away with this con-job are the Labour and trade union leaders. The 'new realist' union leaders are silent and demobilising, and the Labour leadership ultra-cautious in putting forward any proposals that might sound the slightest bit radical.

Take rail privatisation. The logical thing is to say that Britain needs a state-owned rail industry with a huge state subsidy - as happens in nearly every other advanced capitalist country. There's nothing revolutionary in that at all.

Yet Labour is reduced to saying 'public or private is not the issue' - when



Protesting at Tory sleaze: Westminster council gerrymandering exposed

promise new spending because they refuse to promise to tax the rich or to reduce arms spending.

And they refuse to do anything which might increase inflation. They are tied to the Tories' free-market, deflationary orthodoxy. The net result is that while the Tories are in trouble, they can still get away with murder because the opposition is so feeble.

Major's government is in deep trouble with its public sector wage freeze. A declaration by the major public sector unions that they intended to put forward co-ordinated wage claims and fight for strike action would send the Tories reeling.

It is a sad comment on the political degeneration of the Labour leadership that it cannot even defend some minimal Keynesian reflationary proposals, let alone radical or socialist solutions.

But their position is leading to deep disquiet at every level of the labour movement.

### Opportunity

This means that the opportunity is there in both the Labour Party and the unions to raise the question of breaking the economic consensus and to demand Labour pledges itself to policies that defend the welfare state and full employment.

Of course, in this period the steps needed to carry through such a programme would be enormously radical and challenge the prerogatives of capital.

Full employment means a 35-hour week with no loss of pay. It means huge state investment project - in effect a programme of public works. The money to defend the health service and the rest of the welfare state will not be found without taxing the rich.

The Labour leaders can win yet another election for the Tories if they keep up their present performance. To prevent that happening the left of the labour movement must hammer home the message - mobilise against the wage freeze, defend the welfare state, break the bipartisan economic consensus.

**It is a sad comment on the political degeneration of the Labour leadership that it cannot even defend some minimal Keynesian reflationary proposals, let alone radical or socialist solutions.**

everyone knows it is precisely the issue.

Take housing. Why doesn't Labour demand a massive programme for building new social housing, and government grants for renovating the deteriorating housing stock? Getting the building industry going again would help the homeless and start to get 500,000 unemployed building workers off the dole.

Labour doesn't do any of these things because they could be interpreted as a spending pledge. And Labour won't

The Tories new crisis highlights the tasks for the left in the labour movement. In 1994 there has to be a big push for action against the Tory wage freeze and in defence of the welfare state.

Defence of the welfare state of course centrally involves the fight of public sector workers and service users against cuts and redundancies. But it is also a political fight to hammer out a popular alternative to the economic consensus between the Tory and Labour front benches.

## Spain shut down as millions back general strike

MILLIONS of workers in the Spanish state heeded the call for a general strike on 27 January. Nearly all industry and transport was shut down, and up to 50 per cent of small shops closed.

The scope of the mobilisation can be seen from the size of the evening demonstration in Barcelona - 130,000 in a city the size of Manchester!. Similar demonstrations were held all over the country.

Flying pickets were out in all the main cities and in front of all

the main factories.

The strike was called by the two main union federations, the Workers Commissions and the United Labour Federation. They were protesting against government plans to restrict social security and employment rights.

### Austerity

The Socialist Party government of Felipe Gonzalez has been one of the most 'Thatcherite' in Europe, presiding over austerity and very high unemployment.

Despite that, the Socialists

beat off the challenge from Spain's main right wing party in last year's elections.

Commentators noted that it was precisely the workers who last year rallied to the defence of the government who were carrying out the general strike.

A key political force in the movement for a strike was the United Left, a broad coalition led by the main wing of the former Communist Party.

The United Left has shown itself capable of winning more than 10 per cent of the votes in national elections.



NO SIGN of consensus in LEICESTER, where 2,000 students rallied on January 20 as part of a national day of action in protest at Tory plans to slash grants by 30%. The protest was backed by teachers' unions NATFHE, AUT and NUT.

EDITORIAL



Birmingham campaigners protest the violence of Bhopinder Basi against his wife and child

## Domestic Violence – Zero Tolerance!

By Helen Shaw

THE ASSOCIATION of London Authorities (ALA) launched a high profile publicity campaign 'Zero Tolerance' against violence against women last week.

The campaign is designed to raise awareness – and reduce tolerance – of violence against women and children.

Posters have appeared all over London backed up by leaflets detailing help and support available to women victims of violence.

Part of its aim is to expose the high levels of domestic violence in London. One hundred thousand women seek treatment for violent injuries received at home each year, four

in ten homeless young women leave home because of abuse, almost half of all murders of women are by a current or former partner.

### Unreported

Only two per cent of violent attacks on women are reported to the police and domestic violence accounts for a quarter of all reported violent crime.

The Chair of the ALA's women's committee, Jacqueline Abbott, said: 'the aim of the campaign is to make violence against women socially unacceptable. It carries a message for all men: violence against women is a crime.'

This campaign is to be welcomed and should be used as a springboard for further action against domestic violence. Calls for the government to

back the campaign need to be accompanied by demands to improve options for women who are victims.

Services to support victims are underfunded and scarce. Local government cuts profoundly affect women's choices.

Combating women's oppression is fundamental to the campaign against violence against women and the wider struggle against capitalism.

As Lynne Segal says in her book *Changing Men*, '...what we are confronting here is the barbarism of private life reflecting back the increased barbarism of public life, as contemporary capitalism continues to chisel out its hierarchies along the familiar grooves of class, gender and race.'

## Redundancy threat in the post UCW: stamp out Royal Mail productivity con

By a UCW member

AFTER POSTAL workers' emphatic rejection of the 'processing productivity scheme' and 'delivery remuneration packages' last year, Royal Mail management are now having another go.

The recent 4-1 vote to accept the 1.5 per cent pay limit has given them confidence to increase attacks on the workforce and attempt to further marginalise the UCW.

If they are successful in introducing productivity agreements for Delivery, Processing and Distribution, they will attempt to further restructure the workforce around the concept of 'team-working'.

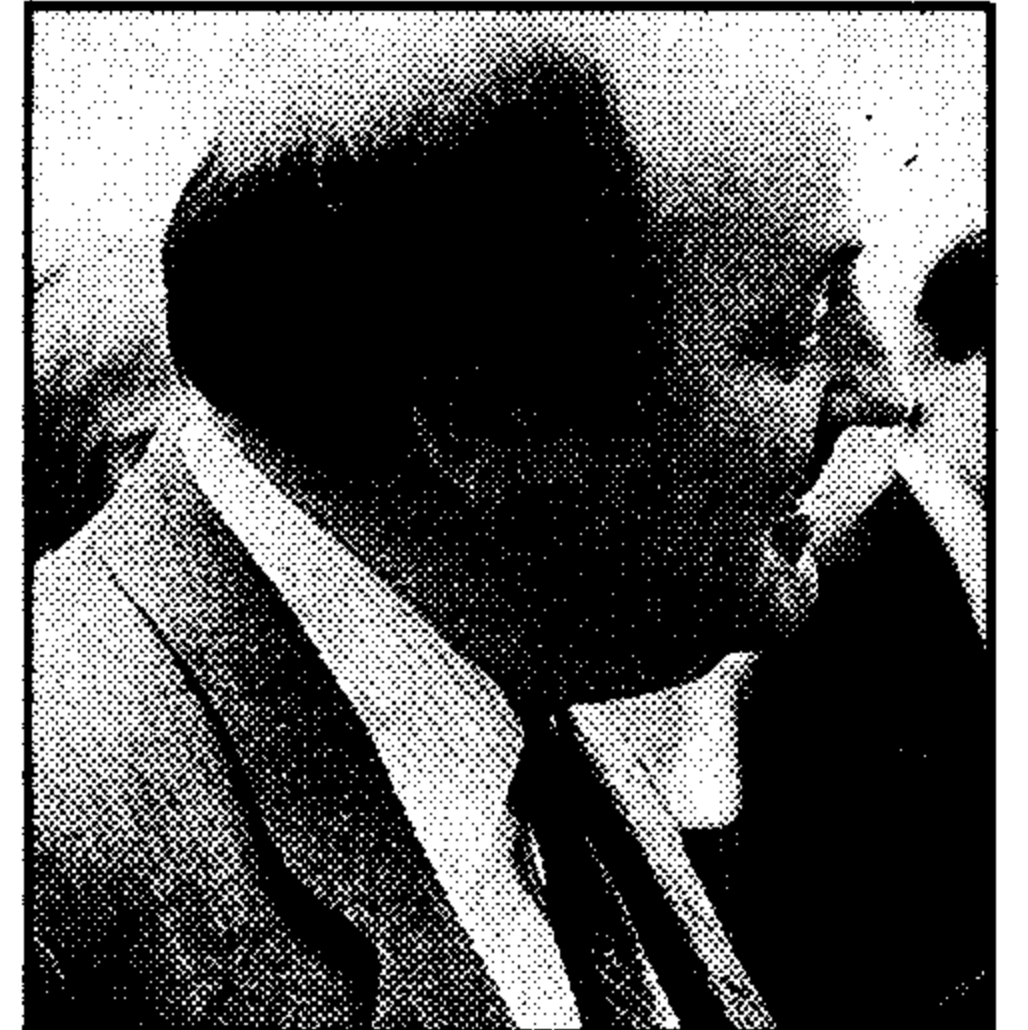
Millions have been spent restructuring management and investing in new technology.

They have made direct approaches to workers using focus groups, questionnaires and bulletins in an attempt to break the UCW's support.

But to inflict a decisive defeat, they have to go much further. This is now on the agenda.

The misnamed productivity agreement 'Sharing in Royal Mail's success' would sell tens of thousands of jobs and increase the use of part-time or casual labour while relying on a core workforce encouraged by bonus payments, to sell more jobs to increase those bonus payments.

This year underlying discontent on pay was shown in a number of significant minorities in the unions in favour of industrial action. The more unions are wedded to productivity, the more difficult it will be for them



UCW leader Tuffin

to build an effective alliance to defeat the wage freeze.

Royal Mail's agenda for job destruction needs to be decisively rejected. Instead the UCW should put forward the agenda for job creation by pursuing the shorter working week.

Despite policy passed at the last annual conference and reinforced by the special conference only the bare minimum has been done.

The executive needs to be in no doubt members want to see the campaign pushed to the top of the agenda not relegated to some distant aim in the future when the damage has already been done.

## Telecoms union in strike threat

By a BT worker

THE LONDON council of the NCU has called on the telecoms union NEC to organise a strike ballot over new moves to cut jobs.

BT plans to remove 1100 engineers from its 'core' workforce, while simultaneously introducing 150 contractors to cover engineering work.

Those removed from the core workforce will be counselled to take the company's voluntary redundancy package, and their long term future is unclear.

In response to the strike call BT managing director Michael Hepher has promised no compulsory redundancies in '94-5. But since BT is 'restructuring' its workforce, compulsory redundancies will come if voluntary redundancies are not taken up.

Board Left supporters who control the union's NEC have promised support for the strike ballot.

But preoccupied with the proposed merger with the UCW, the union leadership has shown little urgency. The committee will authorise the ballot meets on 8 February.

## HOME NEWS

### Decison day nears on age of consent

By Peter Purton

LAST WEEK 2000 people lobbied parliament in favour of equalising the age of consent for gay men to 16.

It is still not clear when the vote will be but whenever it is there will be a candlelit vigil from 7pm-10pm outside the House of Commons.

There has been a successful campaign to put pressure on Labour MPs to vote for Labour Party Conference policy on equality.

John Smith has made a public statement in support, and a large number of MPs have committed themselves to the vote on 16 where previously they were undecided.

The Campaign Group of MPs voted unanimously to support for 16 and the T&G and MSF are instructing their sponsored MPs to vote for 16.

Campaigning will continue up to the night of the vote and it is still important to contact MPs to ensure they support equality and that they will turn up for the vote.

Stonewall have called a rally supported by the Labour Campaign for Lesbian and Gay Rights on Saturday February 5 in Trafalgar Square from 2pm - 3pm.

There will be a platform including 16 year old gay men, celebrities and MPs supporting equality.

Everyone who supports equal rights is encouraged to attend.

### Labour councillor brutalised by Nazis

By Paul Wozny

PETER JENKS, Southampton Labour councillor and UNISON branch secretary, was beaten by five BNP thugs on Saturday 15 January, after going to the aid of SWP paper sellers.

Cllr Jenks, not known as a friend of the left, received a black eye and assorted cuts and bruises. One SWP member was hospitalised and later released with a dislocated shoulder.

The attack was inspired by John Morse, a leading BNP member who has deputised for John Tyndall while Tyndall was in jail.

Morse had been leading a re-

cruiting drive at the Bitterne Brewery pub, near the scene of the attack.

The Nazis left shouting 'seig heil' and giving the Nazi salute.

Morse's gang in Southampton are responsible for a series of violent attacks, including the desecration of Jewish graves, beating up an Asian bus driver and petrol-bombing Asian homes.

Morse works as a bus driver for Hampshire Bus. Southampton trades council and other union bodies have called for his expulsion from the RMT transport union.

But union leader Jimmy Knapp has shunted the issue to an organisational sub-committee, which has just put Morse on probation.

Ireland: as weeks drag on

# Still no sign of peace

By Liam Mac Uaid

**TAOISEACH** Albert Reynolds must have been disappointed when Santa didn't deliver his pipe dream of 'peace by Christmas'. It is now obvious that the process opened by the Hume-Adams talks and the London-Dublin declaration will only unravel slowly.

Despite the Republican leadership's desire to deliver an Ara-

fat-Mandela style sell-out, the British government seems uninterested for the moment. Together with its Unionist allies it is holding out for a defeat and capitulation of the Republicans.

If the British were seriously interested in a negotiated settlement, they could easily offer Adams the 'clarification' he is seeking.

Major can afford to hang tough because the Republicans are trapped by the contradiction which their brand of 'reformism with guns' has created.

By seeking alliances and

deals with bourgeois parties, by trying to put themselves in the same political framework, they end up playing in hostile territory where their opponents set the rules.

### Not questioned

It is the parties of the Irish and British ruling classes which are setting the agenda. The problem is reduced to the validity of republican rule. Britain's right to rule Ireland is no longer questioned.

It is disingenuous for Adams

to seek 'clarification'. A document which allows Reynolds to say that the joint declaration allows for the possibility of a united Ireland, and for Major to reassure the Unionists at the same time, should set alarm bells ringing.

It does not need to be clarified, only rejected. There is little difference between the declaration and the Labour Party policy of 'unity by consent'. The *Irish Post* was right to observe: 'There is little which now separates Fianna Fail, Sinn Fein and the SDLP'.

It is not clear that British imperialism will allow the republicans the clarification they want. But if a deal on British terms were done, it would be a major setback.

In one sense, however, it would change little for British socialists. Our task is not to demand that Major talks to Adams or to advise Sinn Fein on negotiating tactics.

Our task is to demand that Britain quits Ireland.

Unconditional and immediate British withdrawal remains our slogan.



Despite the rhetoric, not much has changed on the streets of Belfast

## Tories flunk nurseries test

By Emma Teitelbaum

IT MAY have been the 'season of good will' that prompted John Major to speak about the need to improve nursery education. But, like most New Year resolutions, this is unlikely to be carried out.

Once again women will suffer most from the Tories' false promises, and working women will be excluded from the Tory dream of a 'happy family'.

Nursery education can produce huge benefits in adult life. A recent long-term American study in Michigan showed that those who received good quality pre-school education were four times more likely to earn well by the age of 27.

The Tories' verbal commitment to nursery education started in 1972. Education Secretary Margaret Thatcher said free nursery education would be available to 90 per cent of four-year olds and 50 per cent of three-year olds within 10 years.

But the Tories have not delivered. A European commission study showed Britain behind all European Union countries except Portugal with only 26 per cent of children receiving nursery education.

A further 23 per cent are early entrants to reception classes in primary schools. Playgroups are used by half of the British under fives.

The four year olds who enter



Major: doing things for kids?

primary education early, are often taught in crowded conditions, with one teacher for up to 35 children.

This way of 'doing it on the cheap' does not allow for the child's full development and future in the education system.

Most nurseries and playgroups, operate on a half day basis (2.5 hours).

In this way the local authorities increase the numbers in pre-school education on their books, without spending more.

Parents have to supplement this provision with childminders, friends and extended family if they are to do even part-time work. Even if the child has a full time place in a school nursery it operates to school hours of 9am - 3.15pm.

Full day nursery provision is available for the two ends of the economic scale. Local authority nurseries are means-tested. With limited resources, most of the places are taken by children on the 'at risk' register.

Most work-place and private nurseries also operate from 8.00am to 6.00pm; but these cost hundreds of pounds each

month per child.

The government's latest proposal is to provide vouchers for nursery places. But unless resources allocated to full-time quality nursery education are increased, there will be no benefit to children and working parents.

Its another example of Tory hypocrisy and double standards. Single mothers who live on benefits are seen as a burden on the community. Working women are seen as taking men's jobs and possibly leaving their children 'home alone'.

The Tories' 'back to basic family values' campaign is supplying a cover for the government's failure to make adequate childcare provision.

## Councillors fined for voting against cuts

**Bow Street magistrates found three Lambeth Councillors, including Socialist Outlook supporter Greg Tucker, guilty of voting to defend jobs and services.**

Councillors Hollifield, Tucker and Webb were fined a total of £250 on Tuesday January 11 - for voting against council cuts whilst in poll tax arrears.

From the dock the three denounced 'an outrageous attack on local democracy and a tax on principle'.

'This law is designed to punish those of us who helped defeat the poll tax. Poor people will be discouraged from standing for election. It is a disgraceful attack on democracy'.

A Fighting Fund has been set up to support the three and 20 others facing similar charges around the country.

● Send donations made out to 'Campaign to Defend Local Democracy', to Cllr Anne Hollifield, c/o Lambeth Town Hall, London SW9.

**All out to back TUC demonstration**

**Fight RACISM and FASCISM**



**SATURDAY 19 MARCH**

**Assemble 11am Spitalfields Market, East London  
March starts at 12 noon for rally at London Fields**

**This will be the biggest anti-racist demonstration since the 1970s. It is being supported by all the main anti-racist and anti-fascist organisations, including ARA, YRE and ANL. Every socialist and anti-racist should be there!**

HOME NEWS

# New openings for socialists in the unions

## When bureaucrats fall out ...

By Harry Sloan

GROWING political divisions in the top echelons of the labour movement offer new possibilities for struggles and campaigns at rank and file level. There is a real opportunity for left activists to build a serious challenge to the defeatist political positions of the trade union bureaucracy.

Ever since Neil Kinnock was manoeuvred into the leadership of the Labour Party by a union-orchestrated coup, the rightward and backward progress of the Party has revolved around an alliance of union and Labour bureaucrats.

Under the banner of 'new realism', unions abandoned any pretence of serious resistance to the Tory onslaught, seeking to curb any action by their members, who were told to pin their hopes of solving problems on the return of a Labour government.

For their part, Labour's leaders noisily jettisoned any residual commitment to class politics, socialist policies, and any hint of social radicalism or internal democracy, in a pathetic effort to placate the wrath of the Tory press.

### Attrition

The result has been repeated, ignominious electoral defeats for Labour, and a terrible attrition against the unions, which have lost five million members, with whole industries and their workforces decimated.

The union leaders have been marginalised by the government, derecognised by the most brutal employers, and increasingly pushed aside and regarded as an embarrassment by their own political co-thinkers in the Labour Party.

With John Major's scandal-worn and unpopular government appearing weaker than before, and the prospect of a new Labour government appearing ever less convincing as a solution to the immediate problems of workers under the hammer of aggressive employers, a new spirit of resistance is beginning to make itself felt in the unions.

Teachers have defied and beaten Education Secretary John Patten on the im-

**"If Trade Unions For Labour without the GMB was hard to imagine two years ago, the TGWU's decision to slash £600,000 from its contribution to Labour is equally significant."**

position of schools testing. A left candidate has won the vice-presidency of the 'new realist'-led NUT.

Central line tube workers in the RMT managed to loosen the shackles of the latest anti-union laws sufficiently to take strike action and defend victimised militant Pat Sikorski. Civil Service unions showed their potential strength to fight privatisation with a powerful day of action early in November.

There have been long and powerful strikes at Timex and Burnsalls despite the right wing leaderships of the AEEU and GMB. A handful of health workers at London's University College Hospital raised the banner of strike action against NHS cuts and closures for vital weeks last summer. Postal workers and BT engineers have been balloting for strike action.

This new stirring of traditional forms of struggle at rank and file level has helped spur union leaders into an assessment of where new realism has got them: the balance sheet is universally negative, and its future prospects are worse.

As a result there has been a fracturing of the block that has paralysed both the unions and the Labour Party. Right wing union leaders frustrated at the low profile and weak performance of Labour's front bench, and angered at their refusal to co-operate with the unions, are seeking new ways to make their influence felt.

The new realist alliance was always going to be self-defeating as far as the unions were concerned. Kinnock's team sought a Labour Party modelled on European social democratic parties or even Clinton's Democrats. They were therefore driven towards eventual severing of



Unlikely challenger of Labour's front bench wimps: GMB leader Edmonds

the link with those irredeemably class-based organisations that had founded the Party itself – the unions.

It was obvious from the start that once he had cynically used union block votes to ram through wholesale right wing changes to Labour's policy and constitution, Kinnock would seek to pull up the ladder by scrapping the block vote itself.

In the event it was John Smith who underlined the commitment of Labour's right wing to distancing the party from the unions. Despite pleas from two prominent union chiefs – Bill Morris of the TGWU and John Edmonds of the GMB – he forced a vote on a minor constitutional change on selection procedures at last year's conference.

Smith won by a whisker – ironically on the strength of a switched block vote from white collar union MSF: but he is paying a heavy price for his brief moment as the darling of the Tory press.

Already the unthinkable has happened. The GMB, for years synonymous with the right wing Labour establishment, and then under Edmonds the pillar of new realism, has withdrawn its £500,000 a year support from Trade Unions For Labour.

If TUFL without the GMB was hard to imagine two years ago, the TGWU's decision to slash £600,000 from its contribution to Labour is equally significant.

These unions are not only hitting back through their cheque books, they are increasingly sponsoring events which undermine the continued rightward drift of Labour policy under Smith and his team of 'modernisers'.

### Break consensus

The GMB has thrown official support and funding behind Bryan Gould's Full Employment Forum, which is lobbying for a Keynesian 'back to basics', but crucially calls for an end to Labour's damaging economic consensus with the Tories. Three other unions have also backed the FEF, as have dozens of MPs and constituency parties.

Public sector union UNISON, politically dominated by NUPE's arch new realist Tom Sawyer, joined the TGWU and GMB in sponsoring a conference on defence of the welfare state late last year, chaired by Ken Livingstone MP. Again a central theme was the need for Labour to break from its consensus with the Tories.

Other issues, too, have brought a difference of approach. While Labour remained shamefully silent, Bill Morris took the lead over Christmas in challenging the racist deportations of the planeload of Jamaicans and the establishment of the Campsfield detention

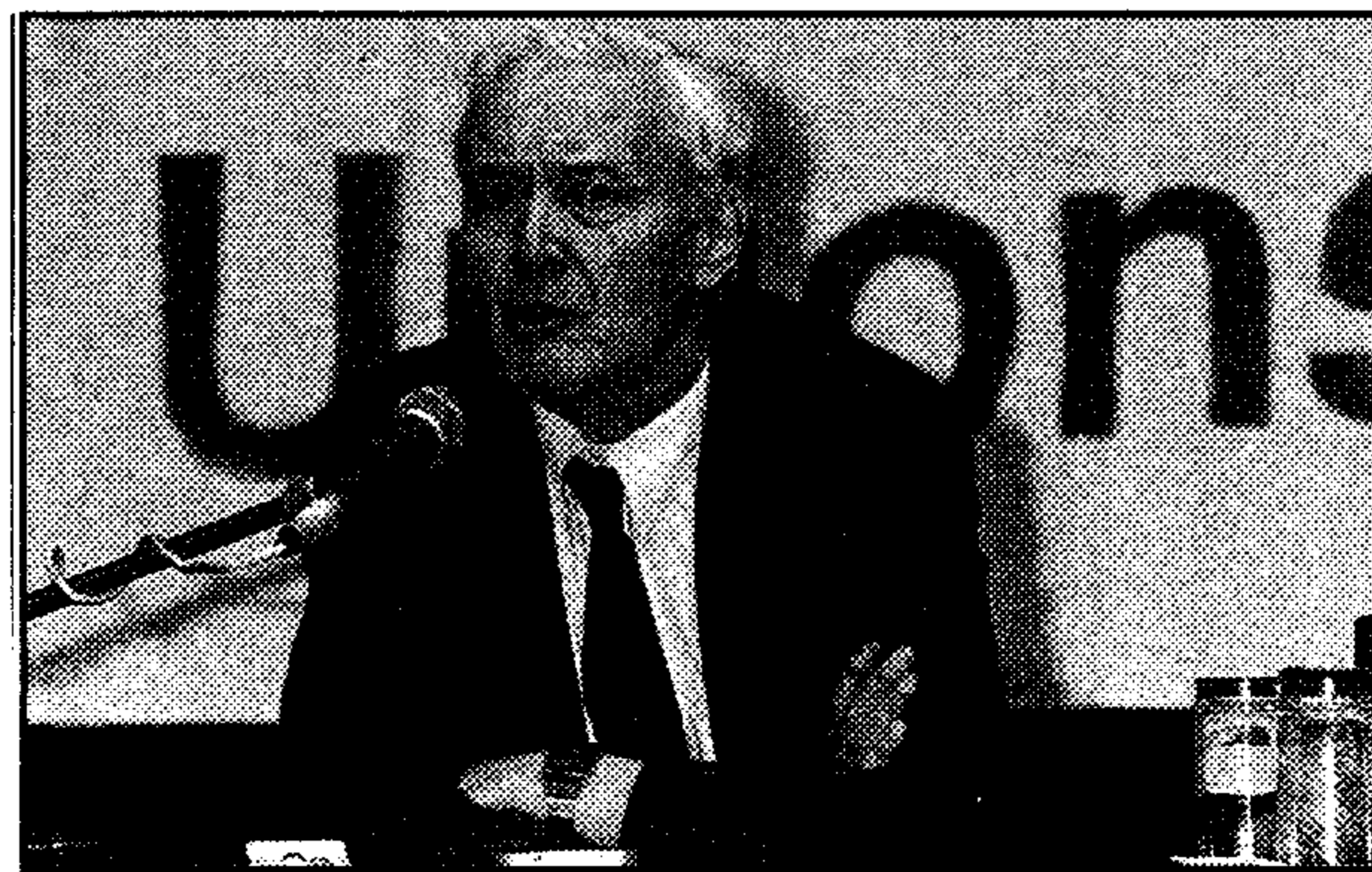
CENTRE STAGE

## Build the Fightback – Unshackle the Unions Conference

Saturday - Sunday Feb 5 - 6,  
Conway Hall, Red Lion  
Square, LONDON

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS include Tony Benn MP, Ronnie McDonald (OILC) and Jaide De Barrieros (Teachers Union and PT South Para, Brazil), John Hendy QC, Patrick Sikorski (RMT), Christine Hulme (CPSA).

SATURDAY EVENING RALLY and SOCIAL at 7pm with speakers from Cuba, Bosnia, Sinn Fein, Kurdish solidarity and Jaide De Barrieros from Brazil.



**"The possibilities for action to combat and defeat the pay freeze would be also improved by moves to synchronise pay claims from different sections of public sector workers - health workers, local government, civil service, teachers, fire fighters and so on. This is already being proposed by the left within UNISON"**

centre.

Of course these divisions within the Labour and trade union establishment do not mean that Edmonds, Morris or Sawyer have swung over to the left. Far from it. Edmonds sees no contradiction between the GMB abandoning the Burnsall strikers and sponsoring Livingstone's conference or Gould's campaign.

The technique of giving limited union backing to selected left initiatives - which have shown little interest in mobilising rank and file workers - is intended to pile pressure on Labour's leaders, and divert pressure from the union bureaucrats who have helped create today's impasse for trade unionism.

Time and again under Thatcher and Major there have been key moments when the British working class could have been brought into action and onto the streets like the mass strikes and demonstrations in Italy, Spain, Belgium and France.

### Wasted chance

The tremendous opportunity opened up by the mass movement in defence of the miners late in 1992 was squandered by the TUC at the point it could have rallied and focused opposition to the Tories.

On this front, nothing much has changed. There is no sign of disgruntled new realists seeking to enlist the active support of union members for their limited rebellion. Edmonds and Morris in particular know that a mobilisation of the rank and file would make it more difficult for them to stitch up a truly mega merger of two of the country's least democratic, most bureaucratised unions into a huge new body.

Elsewhere, too, union leaders taking stock of the dire results created by new realism are turning not to radical recruitment campaigns or class struggle politics, but bureaucratic mergers, redundancies among officials, asset-stripping closures of union offices and substituting tribunals and court cases for



**Synchronising struggles of healthworkers, council workers and others can bust public sector pay freeze**

disputes and negotiation.

But the questioning by union leaders of Labour's right wing consensus politics, and the public voicing of anger at the party's toothless opposition, opens up a vital space for debate in the unions at a point where more workers are considering the possibilities of struggle.

### Wage claims

While Labour's front bench haggles pathetically with the Tories on who would have imposed the higher income tax, the message for union members at shop floor level is that tax hikes this year and next make wage claims far more important than the inflation figures might suggest.

This in turn helps focus attention on the Tory move to impose a two-year pay freeze on five million public sector workers - and creates improved conditions for a fight. Major's government escaped trouble in imposing its 1.5% public sector pay limit last year partly because of historically low inflation.

Now the demand for the TUC to call a Day of Action on April 11 against the pay freeze has already found an echo in some public sector unions, despite the predictable pessimism of some union leaders that it could 'expose our weakness'.

### Lobby TUC

The TUC General Council on April 1 which will decide on this Day of Action should be lobbied to press for strikes on that day.

The possibilities for action to combat and defeat the pay freeze would be also



**TUC failed to build on backing for miners**

improved by moves to synchronise pay claims from different sections of public sector workers - health workers, local government, civil service, teachers, fire fighters and so on. This is already being proposed by the left within UNISON.

Unions must also reject cynical Tory efforts to split the opposition to the pay freeze through making selective concessions to nurses and other high profile sections covered by Pay Review Bodies. The old slogan 'We're all a special case' should be used to exploit the gains of any section breaking through the freeze.

But public sector unions must also combat the damaging economic consensus view, according to which public spending must be restrained or cut, and therefore services can only be provided at the expense of the jobs and conditions of public sector workers.

The full-scale Tory offensive against the welfare state, targeting the sick, single mothers, the unemployed, the homeless, pensioners, students and the poor in general, also raises the need for union action to defend hard-won rights and services.

Unions have done little to alert members to the scale of the Tory onslaught, while Labour's mealy-mouthed opposition has been constrained by the morbid fear of pledging radical policies or any expansion of public spending.

Central to defence of the welfare state is the political fight in the labour movement to reject the suicidal line of economic consensus, and spell out

an alternative approach centred on economic expansion, full employment, and increased spending on welfare and public services, financed by a system of progressive taxation. A programme of useful public works, including housing, transport and infrastructure renewal should be the means to create tens of thousands of new jobs.

These popular demands fall short of a socialist programme, but run flatly counter to the bare-toothed market forces of capitalism which dictate Tory policy and have intimidated Labour's leaders into total incoherence.

They also link in to the need to fight a new wave of privatisation, which is now threatening British Rail, Royal Mail, British Coal, civil servants ('market testing'),

health and local government staff.

Again Labour, hung up on its concessions to the ideology of the free market, has been shown incapable of categorically defending the principle of a nationalised railway system. In building mass campaigns and industrial action to beat back privatisation, public sector workers need to combat consensus politics.

### Offensive

The stakes are high. The Tories have responded to their crisis by forging ahead with a brutally reactionary offensive against welfare and public services, while employers continue their war of attrition against union strength from behind barricades of repressive legislation.

But this also forces the unions to some form of self-defence. The latest anti-union laws contain a deadly attack on the soft underbelly of the unions: the check-off system of collecting union dues.

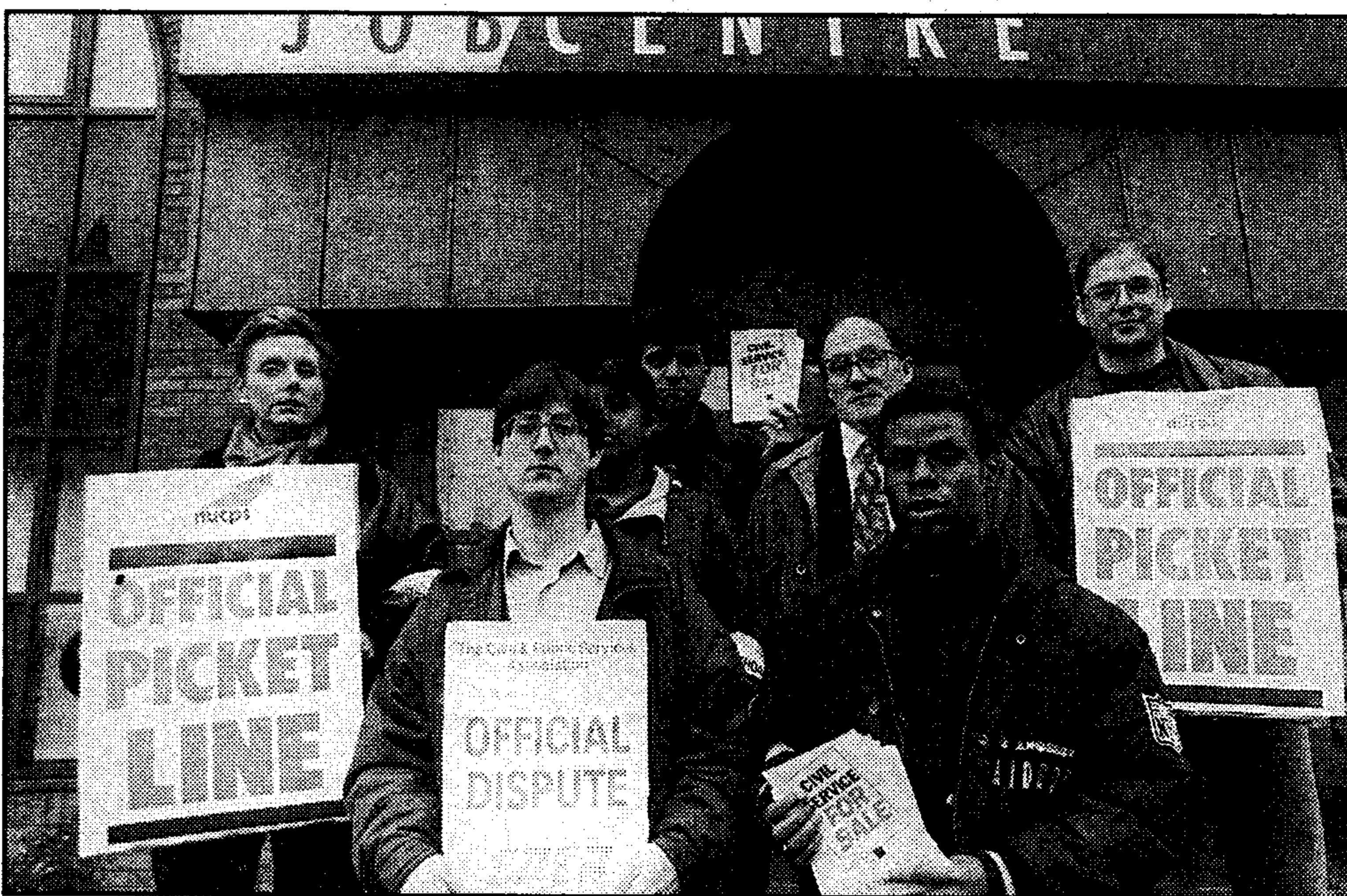
The TUC calculates that this could result in a membership loss of 20% from affiliated unions when it takes effect in October. UNISON has warned that even a 5 per cent loss of membership would cut its income by £5 million a year.

To retain the members, unions have to contact them and persuade them to 'sign up' by September.

Those unions which can be seen to be acting most energetically to defend their members, and those which are most successful in mobilising them will be the best at retaining them.

Full time officials cannot do this job: a key layer of stewards and branch officers must be mobilised. Strong campaigning against the Tories and employers can be the cornerstone of a revival of union strength - from the shop floor upwards.

And socialists can build strong support if they throw themselves into this activity.

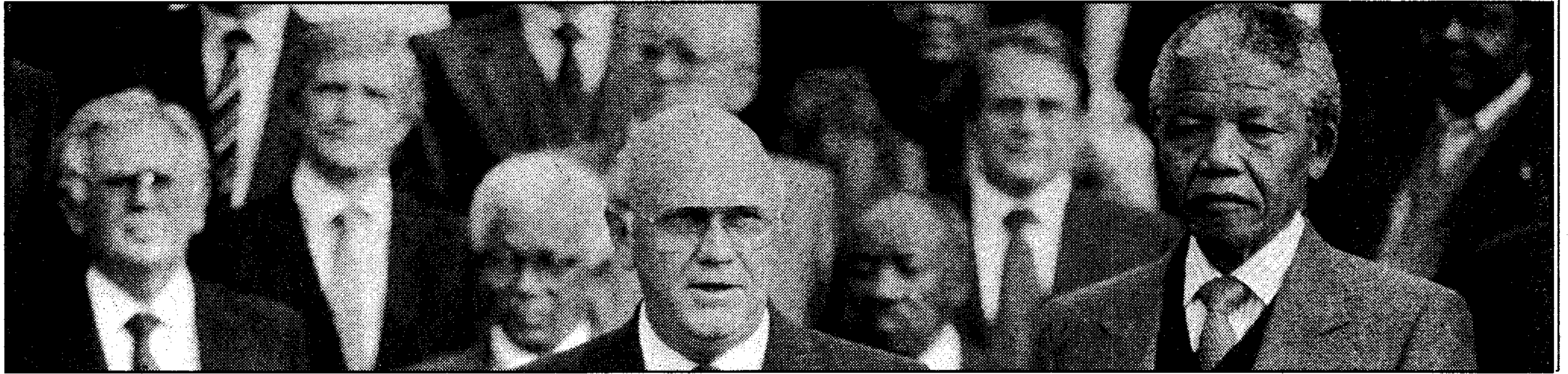


**Civil service unions' November 5 strike showed potential for fighting market testing**

**CENTRE STAGE**

# South African socialists to campaign for new mass workers' party

Key protagonists: De Klerk and Mandela (centre foreground), with Communist Party leader Joe Slovo in background (left)



The South African Workers Organisation of Socialist Action (WOSA) was formed in 1990. It brought together many long-standing militants from the Trotskyist tradition with a newer layer of members from the liberation struggle who were disillusioned with the ANC-SACP (Communist Party's) soft-peddling of basic working-class demands and backroom compromises with the apartheid National Party.

Here, NEVILLE ALEXANDER, WOSA's national chairperson, speaks to Socialist Outlook.

WORLD NEWS

**"The mass workers' party is an idea whose time has come. Sixty per cent of a random sample of black people recently believed that a mass workers' party is necessary and desirable in South Africa"**

**SO. What is WOSA's analysis of the current situation in South Africa and the likely short-term developments?**

NA. WE STRESS that the settlement presently being negotiated is a 'historic compromise' between the more strategically conscious section of the white capitalist class and the leaders of the ANC.

Its purpose is to stabilise and de-racialise capitalism in South Africa in order to more effectively exploit the African market, throughout Southern and Central Africa.

The ruling National Party have opted for this strategy for a number of reasons. The mass actions of black people, particularly through the mass trade union movement they built in the late '70s and through the 1980s, were wreaking havoc upon the economy.

The more conscious ruling class elements realised the time was ripe for a settlement, with the end of the '80s seeing a slight downturn in the liberation struggle in South Africa combining with the ANC back-peddalling – and then collapse of the bureaucratic Soviet regime and the general trumpeting of the global triumph of market forces.

However, as revolutionary socialists, we also stress that the settlement, coming as it does in the depths of global capitalist recession and with the tacit agreement of the ANC leaders not to threaten the commanding heights of white-dominated capital, cannot satisfy the real demands of the black working class for decent housing, education, welfare services and jobs.

Therefore the class struggle in South Africa will not only continue, but will intensify and the consciousness of the black masses will increasingly sharpen and shift from race to class.

The debate that we are now helping to initiate around the need for a mass workers' party is an indication of this.

At the moment, however, socialist revolution here is very unlikely in the short to medium term. But the influence of socialist demands and organisations will increase, and at least here we believe there is a glimmer of hope.

Ultimately here, as throughout the world, the possibility of successful and sustained socialist revolution depends on the global situation, and the strength both of the left and of the workers movement internationally.

**SO. What is WOSA's position on the forthcoming elections?**

NA. THE LIKELY outcome, an ANC-National Party dominated government of National Unity, will effectively be a white veto on changes in state and business structures.

But we also recognise that one-person one-vote elections are a fundamental advance, won as a result of the mass pressure of the liberation movement. To denounce and boycott them is to marginalise yourself.

We are hoping to put up a workers' list in participation with other socialist groups and independent union and civic militants. How extensive this list will be depends on the degree of unity we can achieve with these other comrades in the available time, but steps have been taken and limited progress has been made.

**SO. Can you tell me about WOSA's belief in the need for the formation of a mass workers party in South Africa?**

NA. YES. THE fundamental goal of WOSA is to make a practical contribution to the founding of a mass workers' party that is truly and seriously for workers' interests and workers' government, and is democratic both in its internal and external practices. Far more like the Brazilian Workers' Party (PT) than the British Labour Party in other words!

We cannot build such a party on our own, we believe, and we hope that ultimately its membership will come together from many areas; from independent socialists in the unions, the civics and some now in the ANC, from currents in the South African Communist Party and from other socialist groups.

The mass workers' party is an idea whose time has come. The present situation is ripe for a sharpening of the class consciousness of the black masses, with their increasing expectation for radical social change (and the increasing visibility of a small black middle-class) combined with the inability of capitalism to satisfy their demands.

I believe the chances of a mass workers' party becoming deep rooted, and even of being elected in the short to medium term, are strong. Sixty per cent of a random sample of black people recently believed that a mass workers' party is

necessary and desirable in South Africa.

This reflects, and indeed increased the pressure from the rank and file of these organisations on their leaders to engage in the mass workers' party debate, and to work with us in a general non-sectarian fashion.

The next step in the process we hope will result in the formation of the mass workers' party is the convening of a conference in February where a steering committee will be elected, the purpose of which will be to further promote the mass workers' party idea, and hopefully organise around a workers' list for the elections.

This workers' list will stand on a basic socialist programme, but there is no fixed blueprint for the mass workers' party. It must evolve as more forces are drawn into the project, but obviously we will fight for our politics within this party the same way revolutionary socialists in the Brazilian PT do.

This can be seen as a high risk strategy, but we believe it carries forward the possibility of real living workers' power and democracy, and ensures we won't be marginalised into a 'pure' sectarian ghetto.

**SO. You mentioned WOSA's understanding of the need for internationalism. What international links does WOSA have, if any?**

NA. WOSA is not formally affiliated to any international organisation, but it does have strong informal links with the Fourth International and more formal links may come, but only when our membership is ready.

We are very wary of being ensnared in the scholastic and often petty arguments that come within international alignments at such an early stage in our life as an organisation.

But as I have said, we do have an acute understanding of the international character of socialism, and WOSA does see it as one of our tasks to contribute towards a real living international socialist movement, and I would stress that it should be a movement rather than an attempt at an international socialist party.

Yes, we need to unite internationally around certain transitional demands and the transitional method, and strong regional links between revolutionary socialist organisations are both practical and culturally appropriate.



# Homage to the father of 'state capitalism'

The Tragedy of Bukharin by Donny Gluckstein (Pluto Press £9.95 pbck). Reviewed by DAVE OSLER

**THE TRAGEDY of Bukharin offers a concise and readable account of the political ideas of a key leader of the Russian revolution.**

In doing so, it knocks a number of holes in the author's own brand of Marxism, namely that of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP).

Nikolai Ivanovich Bukharin was rightly hailed by Lenin as an important Bolshevik theoretician, despite the ultra-leftism which marred his early work.

After Lenin's death, he shifted to the hard right of the party, arguing that market mechanisms in agriculture should be actively encouraged while 'socialism in one country' was built, in his own words, 'at a snail's pace'.

Bukharin became the ideas

man for the Stalin faction in its clashes with Trotsky and the party left, who wanted industrialisation to proceed at a formidable pace. Yet his subsequent opposition to Stalin's post-1928 policies, although muted in the extreme, was sufficient to ensure his execution in 1938.

By the mid-1970s, Western 'market socialists', most notably Stephen Cohen, were actively promoting Bukharin's anti-Stalinist credentials.

## Revival

In the *glasnost* period, Bukharinism even underwent a revival in its homeland, as Russian historians argued that Bukharin's ideas were the only realistic alternative to a deliberate conflation of Trotsky and Stalin as 'super-industrialisers'.

Such questions are of more than academic interest. Justifications of dangerous alliances with pro-capitalist forces in the countryside will be seen again and again in future revolutions. Hence the clear value of Gluckstein's book.

The author has made extensive use of Soviet archives

only now open to researchers for the first time, and the scholarship is both obvious and admirable.

But the work is also a, presumably inadvertent, and necessarily partial, critique of the theory of state capitalism as developed by the author's father, Tony Cliff.

The text exposes acutely the difficulties which the SWP, to which both men belong, has in explaining the class nature of the USSR between 1917 and 1928, when, we are told, the first five year plan constituted a counter-revolution, ushering in state capitalism.

Thus Gluckstein tells us that in the 1920s, 'the class character of Russian society lay between the two poles of state capitalism and socialism. It was a degenerated workers' state'. This is clearly no slip of the word-processor; similar formulations abound.

This is the first time, to my knowledge, that an SWP theoretician has used the term, with the party hitherto holding the view that such a phenomenon is a logical impossibility, that either the proletariat is the ruling class or it isn't.

Unfortunately the author



**Russian Revolution achieved by force of arms in 1917: was it overturned by 1928 events?**

does not define the meaning of 'degenerated workers state', a singular omission in the circumstances.

Gluckstein only comes back on side by ripping up Marx's *Eighteenth Brumaire* and depicting the events of 1928 as a social revolution, somehow resulting in the rule of a new class without smashing the existing (degenerated workers') state machine!

## Positive view

Gluckstein is also forced to positively evaluate Bukharin's first major work *Imperialism and World Economy*, which postulates a 'very strong tendency toward transforming the entire national economy into one gigantic combined enter-

prise under the tutelage of the financial kings and the capitalist state.'

This idea is acknowledged as a building block for the theory of state capitalism, which holds that the driving force behind accumulation in the ex-USSR was military competition with other blocks of unified state capital.

Yet such development can only ever be a tendency under capitalism. It is precisely only where capitalist relations have been destroyed - namely in degenerated and deformed workers' states - that such a tendency has ever been actualised.

To suggest otherwise is to fall prey to Bukharinism - of its earlier, ultra-left variety.

# The rights and wrongs of 'Political Correctness'

*Oleanna*, play by David Mamet, directed by Harold Pinter *Duke of York's Theatre, London WC2*

Reviewed by S Doyle

TWO CHAIRS face each other across a desk. On the higher one sits a middle-aged American academic, on the other a student who timidly enquires after her grades.

Her lack of understanding of the subject and his inability to enlighten her eventually reduces her to tears of frustration. He places his arm around her for comfort.

In the following act the student returns with charges of sexual harassment based on the physical contact. Elitism, sexism, classism, promoting pornography, and - eventually - rape, are added to the accusations. As a result the professor loses his job.

The play has had an enormous impact in America. It ad-

resses 'Political Correctness' (PC) head-on.

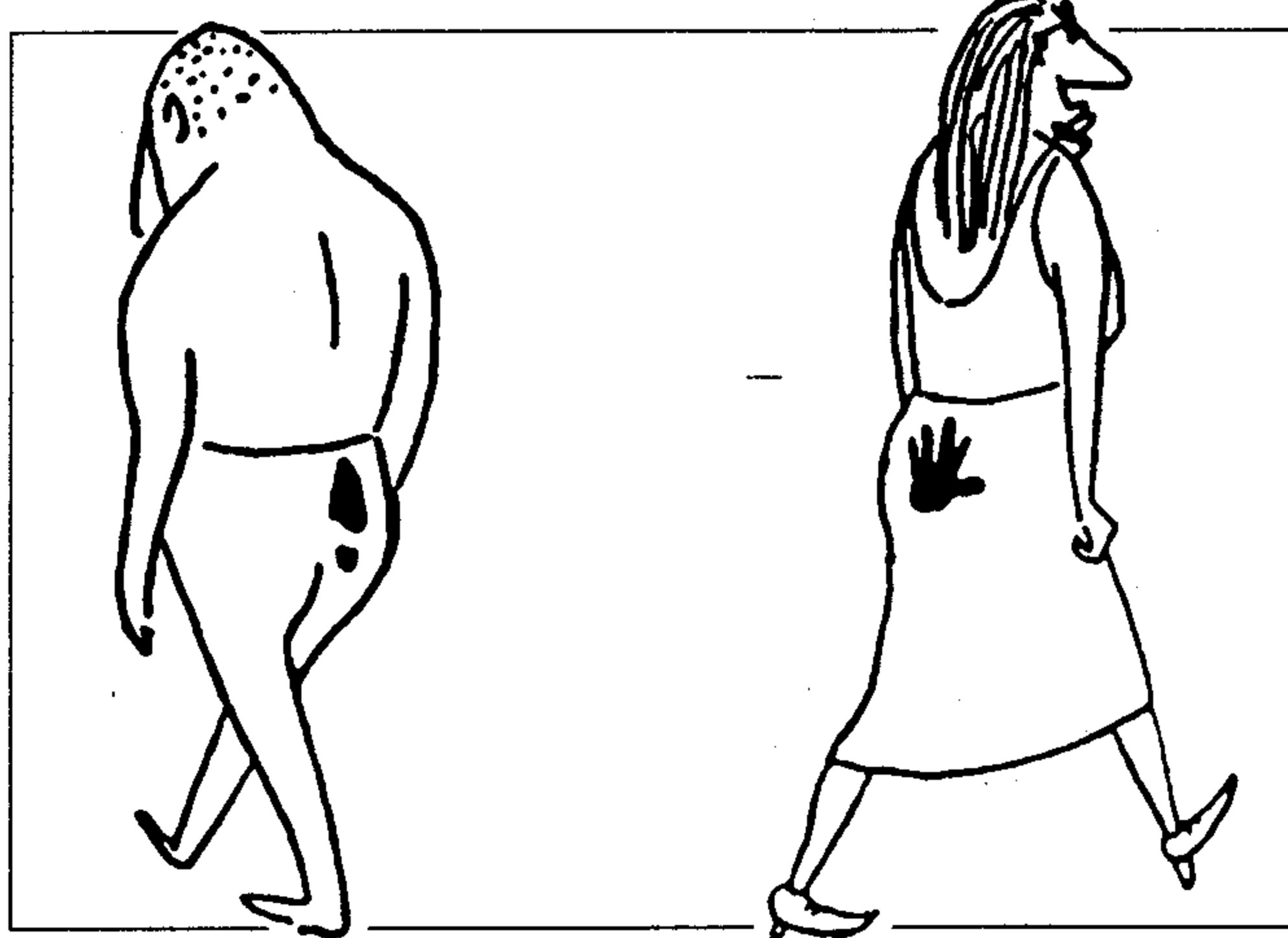
PC's voice in the play the student 'Carol', depicted as a ferocious pitiless adolescent intent on wrecking the life of a well-intentioned - if slightly inept and insensitive - liberal academic.

In pursuit of her dogma she undermines not only his position, but symbolises PC's frightening threat to intellectual openness. When in the final scene the academic physically assaults her the audience has nothing but sympathy. In New York they even stood up and cheered.

Mamet's all-out attack on PC is misplaced. The problem with PC is not its dangerous extremism but its lack of radicalism. By focusing attention on language it substitutes individual change for a change in society.

More than an 'error', it is a basic flaw at the heart of liberal individualistic politics: 'if only enough people thought differently then things would change'. Persuasion becomes strategy.

The problem lies in its ignorance of the fundamental divisions of class that determine



access to the means of persuasion. Such a strategy can't work - and never has.

Unable to achieve any significant return using persuasion, a campaign of legislative coercion becomes the course of action for the advocates of PC - struggle and solidarity are written out of a politics based on individual behaviour. This is the turn PC has taken in the USA.

Mamet's counter-position of 'freedom of speech' to PC should be debunked for the same reason. His is a defence of a cosy middle-class 'freedom' of the academic establishment to churn out

self-promoting mediocrity unfettered by any sanction.

Any threat to intellectual endeavour comes today not from women's groups or 'extremists', but from governments increasingly determined to fashion a workforce of uncritical, docile, compliant consumers and producers.

This tirade against PC remains as much trapped in individualistic politics as are its supporters. Mamet's freedom is one of individuals to say what they please. Socialists in the West know only too well how limited this freedom can be.

Without proper access to

the media it is a more convenient means of propaganda for the powerful than a way of conveying alternative viewpoints. Access is the key matter here: *who owns and controls what*.

This limits and determines what is said, when and to whom. Similarly it is not right-thinking individuals free to express themselves who have the ability to change the status-quo, but social forces: collectivities built out of shared interests, *classes*. Mamet's antipathy for 'groups' shows how far he is from this understanding.

Oleanna joins the nascent anti-PC backlash in Britain before the PC campaign has really got off the ground. Perhaps a debate is due nevertheless.

Just what do we expect to achieve by changes in our language? Language reflects relations of power and domination - so we need to be aware of the prejudices that accompany words, and try to avoid them. But getting rid of oppression and exploitation will take more than a change of words. US-style PC is more a diversion from this task than a threat to 'freedom'.

REVIEWS

# Fingers In the TILL

A regular look at the world of business, compiled by Insider Dealer.

## Darling of the fiddlers

IT WAS a double whammy for investment analysts everywhere when the House of Commons debated insider dealing in January.

Gobsmacker number one; the government actually proposed tightening up existing legislation.

Gobsmacker number two; Labour argued *against* the idea, calling instead for 'more effective operation of free market forces in the sale of securities'. Next time you bloody entrists come round canvassing, put me down as a definite!

The Tories at least had an excuse for their disgraceful action, namely an EC directive to comply with. Until now, a loophole make it OK for a Brit with inside information to one of the many securities quoted in both London and another market (Paris, Frankfurt, New York or Tokyo, for example) to make a killing for the price of a 'phone call.

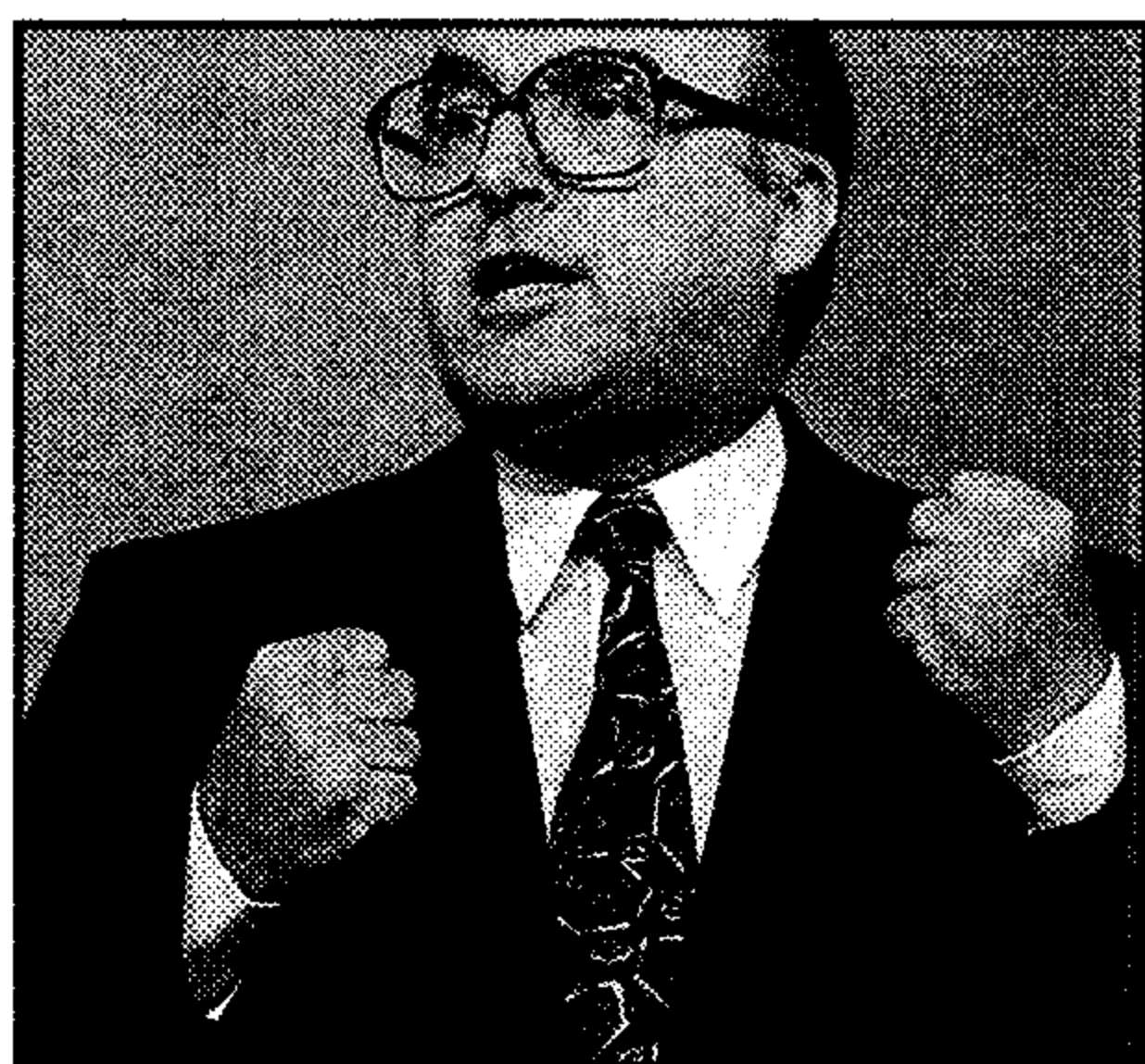
Now this freedom is to end! Thankfully the Labour Party is still around to speak out against such draconian infringements on the liberty of the individual.

Step forward Alistair Darling, Labour MP for Edinburgh Central, and the most junior member of Gordon Brown's infamous treasury team. Mr Darling complained that the proposals were far too complicated.



'I fear that unless the government takes action to ensure that legislation is workable and enforceable, it will not act as a deterrent to the minority of people who are determined to exploit the system for their own considerable personal gain.'

Have I got news for you Alistair, darling. Absolutely everyone involved in the financial sector is out to exploit the system for their own considerable personal gain. That's the bloody point.



Bankers' friend: John Smith

Darling continues: 'Insider dealing is far more widespread than the government cares to admit. The record shows that the legislation is little deterrent. Since 1987, 104 cases have been reported. Only 33 have been prosecuted, and only 16 of those cases resulted in a conviction.' Take five, lads. You'll probably get away with it.

'Anybody operating in the financial services industry will say that insider dealing is taking place all the time, to a greater or lesser degree,

not just in London but throughout the world. That is the very nature of the industry.'

Precisely! This presumably explains why Britain is a world leader.

## Sting leaves broken mugs

Up pops Paul Marland, conservative MP for Gloucestershire West.

This is a man who got ripped off something rotten at Lloyd's insurance market, and who has since taken up cudgels on behalf of his fellow victims.

Marland outlined the infamous 'baby syndicate' sting, under which Lloyd's insiders made sure that they pocketed all the sure fire profits business, while the risky stuff was dumped onto the mug punters.

Proles among you will readily draw the analogy to doing the gee-gees. At least you've got an outside chance of winning at the bookies.

Marland quoted Robert Hiscox, deputy chairman of Lloyd's, as arguing: 'If God had not meant them to be sheared, he would not have made them sheep.' He then quoted a member of Lloyd's regulatory body saying: 'If we find a mug, we use him.'

## Names hung up over Lloyds dead loss

The next bit had me reaching for my hanky: 'So far more than 30 Lloyd's investors have killed themselves or died early as a direct result of their Lloyd's losses.' Stop sniggering, you heartless Trots.

'Mr Harold Weston, a 51-year-old solicitor, hanged himself from the banisters of his home in north west London. Several others have hanged themselves.

Some have shot themselves and others gassed themselves in their cars.' All to no avail, apparently: 'The fact is that Lloyd's liability continues beyond the grave.'

## Labour's market values

Geoff Hoon, Labour MP for Ashfield, justified Labour's opposition to the Tories' rather minimal clampdown thus:

'I am surprised that Conservative members are not calling for tougher legislation on insider trading, because that would ensure a free market in securities. Insider dealing prevents the operation of that free market.

'When the opposition argue for tougher regulation and enforcement, they are arguing for more effective operation of free market forces in the sale of securities.' Vote for the consistent Thatcherite party. Vote Labour.

# WHERE WE STAND

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

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

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

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

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

New realism is the latest form taken by the politics of *reformism*, seeking no more than improved conditions within the framework of capitalist rule.

*Socialist Outlook* rejects reformism, not because we are against fighting for reforms, but because we know that the needs of the working class – for full employment, decent living standards, a clean environment, peace and democracy – can never be achieved under capitalism.

Nor, as we argued long before the collapse of Stalinism, could these demands ever be achieved under the bureaucratically deformed workers states and degenerated USSR, whose regimes survived only by repressing their own working class.

We are a *marxist* current, based not on the brutish totalitarian parodies of state marxism, nor on the tame, toothless version of 'marxism' beloved by armchair academics, but the *revolutionary* tradition of Marx,

Engels, Lenin and Trotsky.

Our socialist alternative is not based on parliamentary elections or illusions of peaceful legislative change. We fight to mobilise and unleash the power of the working class – the overwhelming majority of society – to topple the corrupt and reactionary rule of capital and establish its own class rule.

We struggle against fragmentation by building solidarity, working to link and unite the various struggles of workers, the unemployed, of women, of pensioners, of the black communities and ethnic minorities, of lesbians and gay men, of students, of youth – and of those fighting imperialism in Ireland and throughout the world. *Socialist Outlook* is above all an *internationalist* current, in solidarity with the Trotskyist Fourth International, which organises co-thinkers in 40 countries world-wide.

Unlike some other groupings on the British left, we do not believe a mass revolutionary party can be built simply by proclaiming ourselves to be one. Too often this degenerates into sectarian posturing and abstention from the actual struggle taking shape within the labour movement, playing into the hands of the right wing.

Nor do we believe that the demands of women, black people, lesbians and gays or the national demands of people in Scotland and Wales should be left to await the outcome of a socialist revolution. The oppressed must organise themselves and fight now around their own demands, which are a part of the struggle for socialism.

But propaganda alone, however good, will not bring socialism. The fight for policies which can mobilise and politically educate workers in struggle, must be taken into the unions, the Labour Party and every campaign and struggle in which workers and the oppressed fight for their rights.

To strengthen this fight we press for *united front* campaigns on key issues such as fighting racism and fascism – in which various left currents can work together for common objectives while remaining free to debate their differences.

**If you agree with what you see in *Socialist Outlook*, and want to join with us in the struggle for socialism, readers' groups meet in towns across the country. Contact us now, get organised, and get active!**

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

Name .....

Address .....

Phone .....

Age .....

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

HOME NEWS

## KEEP AN EYE OUT: for the biggest prize this side of the Rio Grande!

SOCIALIST PAPERS aren't known for bringing their readers amongst the super rich. But our fantastic monthly 300 Club draw offers you the chance to win a cash lump sum or an impressive gift!

JANUARY'S draw gives Gordon from Aberdeen £50, while Ed from Cardiff goes home happy with the *Sheffield Socialist Choir* cassette. Why not join them?

To: (Your bank) .....

(Bank address) .....

Please pay Socialist Outlook Supporters Fund (A/c 701862897) at the Co-op Bank, 78/80 Cornhill, EC3 (sort code) 08-02-28 the sum of £..... (in words) £..... (in figures) on the \_\_\_\_ day of .....

..... (month) 1994 and thereafter every month from my account, number .....

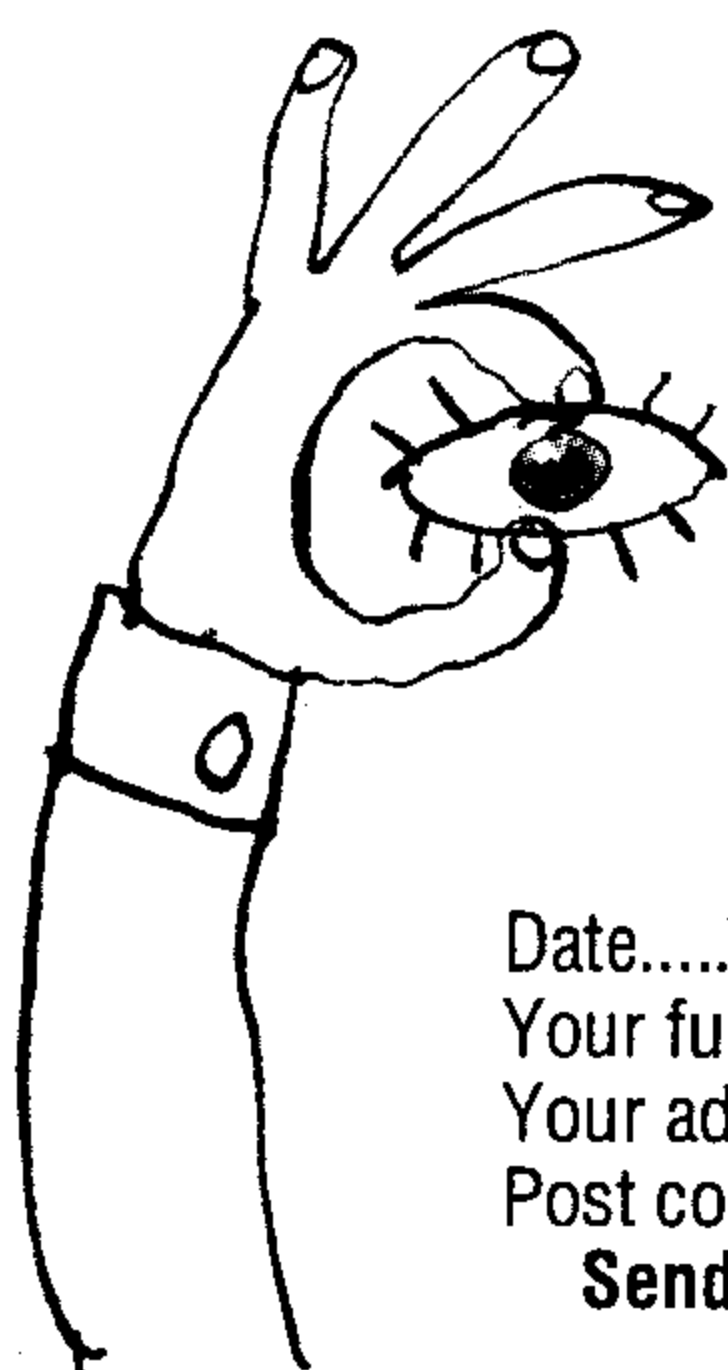
Date..... Signed .....

Your full name .....

Your address .....

Post code.....Tel.....

Send to: 300 Club, PO Box 1109, London, N4 2UU.



# What's HAPPENING

**WANT YOUR event included?**  
**Send details by February 12 to What's Happening?, P.O. Box 1109, London N4 2UU.**

## FEBRUARY

### Sat 5 & Sun 6

**SOCIALIST Movement Trade Union Committee conference Conway Hall Red Lion Square WC1 tickets £10/£6/£3**

### Saturday 5

**STOP CUTS on Mental Health service 11.30am Beckford Centre Warminster Bath**

**PROTEST harrasment of Turkish community by Stoke Newington Police 2pm Hackney Town Hall**

Sixth Forms Conference organised by Birmingham NUT 11am Carrs Lane Church Centre Brum

### Monday 7

**DEFENDING Amazonia and its people. public meeting with Jaide Barreiros, woman leader of the Brazilian Workers' Party 7.30pm Oxford Town Hall**

### Tuesday 8

**BOSNIA has the right to live! Liberation! forum 3.00pm Students' Union, Thames Valley University St Mary's Road Ealing**

**CARRY on the Boycott! Lobby the NUT 4-5.30pm Hamilton House Mabledon Place WC1 TEACHERS against the Nazis launch meeting 5.30pm Friends Meeting House Euston Road NW1**

### Wednesday 9

**TEACHERS against the Nazis launch meeting 5.30pm Sadacca The Wicker Sheffield**

### Saturday 12

**FRIENDS of Özgür Gündem launch meeting with Harold Pinter, Lord Avebury and Jake Ecclestone (Dep. Gen. Sec. NUJ) 2-5pm School of Oriental and Oriental Studies Russell Square WC1 details 071 586 5892**

### Monday 14

**DEMONSTRATE against the Child Support Act 1.30pm Hyde Park to Trafalgar Square**

**ANTI-IMPERIALIST Strategy Today Socialist Outlook discussion with Sarah Parker 7.30pm Stationers' Park Community Centre Mayfield Road off Weston Park N8**

### Fri 18 & Sat 19

**RE-THINKING Worker Democracy Conference Centre Congress House Great Russell Street WC1 details CAITS 404 Camden Road London N7 0SJ**

### Wednesday 23

**DEMONSTRATION against cuts in student grants London**

**EUROPE between Recession and Revolt Socialist Outlook forum with Duncan Chapple 7.45pm Queens Head pub 66 Acton St WC1 Kings Cross BR**



3,000 Birmingham students joined the January 27 protest at grant cuts called by West Midlands Area NUS

### Saturday 26

**SOCIALIST OUTLOOK Social, Approach Tavern, Approach Road, (off Old Ford Road) E2 (cost £1.50) Quiz night starts 7.30pm. Vegetarian meal available from 6.30pm**

**BETTER Housing; Better Health. Socialist Health Association conference 10.30am - 4.30pm St Alban's Centre Baldwin's Gardens Holborn EC1 details 071 490 0057**

**RACISM, Fascism & the Euro-elections Conference details Reading Labour Party, 81 Kings Rd, Reading Berks RG1 3DD Tel: 0734 573756**

### Sunday 27

**ROGER and Me London Socialist Film Co-op showing 1.30pm for 2pm Conway Hall Red Lion Square WC1**

tickets £3.50/£2.00

### Monday 28

**PROTEST closure of old peoples' and childrens' homes Wakefield**

**NATFHE week of action opens**

### MARCH

### Saturday 5

**LIBERATION! committee meeting 11.00am**

**SECTION 11 teachers conference 11am-4pm The E Club Mosely Road Birmingham**

### Tuesday 15

**THE HEALTH of London conference, called by London Health Emergency and ALA, 9.30am-3.30pm Central Hall Westminster. Details: LHE on 081 749 2525**

### Saturday 19

**TUC NATIONAL demonstration against racism in East London meet 11am Spitalfields Market move off at 12 noon to march to London Fields**

### Sunday 20

**THE PATRIOT Game London Socialist Film Co-op showing 1.30pm for 2pm Conway Hall Red Lion Square WC1 tickets £3.50/£2.00**

### APRIL

### Saturday 9

**LIBERATION! editorial meeting 11.00am**

### Saturday 23

**ANTI-NAZI League carnival London**

# Lies, dam bribes and Tory arms deals

By K. Govindan

BRITAIN'S declining aid budget is being cynically used to secure foreign export orders for the arms industry. Sir Tim Lankester, a senior civil servant attached to the Overseas development Administration (ODA) has confirmed this to a parliamentary select committee.

The controversy was started over the Pergau electric dam in the north-eastern Malaysian state of Kelantan. The dam will cost a total of £400m, of which £234m is British aid money being personally approved by Douglas Hurd and John Major.

### Thatcher

Shortly after this package was raised, a record £1 billion arms deal was initialled by the then prime minister Margaret Thatcher.

Kickbacks and bribery significantly inflated the value of the export order. It is alleged that £60m was donated to the leading government party, UMNO



That dam woman again

Baru, and that a further £40m greased the palms of several Malaysian officials.

Britain's aid is generally 'tied' 75 per cent must be spent on British goods and services. Thus even if local firms offer cheaper products, the aid recipient has to buy British and thus lots of the money comes back to Britain. Consultants, contractors and engineers will be British even if local expertise is available.

In the case of the Pergau electric dam there was not even a tender to find the cheapest bid. The British firm Balfour Beatty

was awarded most of the work.

To top it all, the aid was not a grant but a so-called 'soft' loan, repayable over 14 years!

The Pergau dam has been bitterly opposed by local people, environmental groups and opposition parties. It is a long-standing issue of dispute between the Kelantan state government and the federal government. But this is largely a squabble over the division of future revenues.

More serious is the severe economic and environmental dislocation that the 600MW power plant will cause. The reservoir behind the dam will inundate thousands of acres of agricultural land across two states.

### Dry up

The dam will also dry up water to downstream areas for at least 10 months a year.

Due to heavy siltation, the dam will only be able to work for about 35 years. Meanwhile thousands of people will lose their farming lands and will be driven away from their villages and communities.

The rising water will threaten

much of the unique wildlife in this densely forested region including Samatran rhino, tigers and leopards. Lush Malaysian rain forest is being mercilessly destroyed, denuding the land and laying the ground for soil erosion, landslides and calamitous floods.

### Protection

Local environmentalists point out that water supply to the dam would only be enough to power a 150MW plant. They argue for a smaller scheme, or at least the adoption of stringent environmental protection.

Malaysia's prime minister Mahathir has given the dam his full backing because a doubling in the country's energy capacity is part of his pet theme, Vision 2020. This aims to make Malaysia a 'fully developed' country by 2020.

Part and parcel of this process is a growing authoritarianism, control of the mass media, money politics and electoral chicanery.

The arms deal with Britain will beef up Mahathir's repressive machinery.

HOME NEWS

# Socialist OUTLOOK

**LIBERATION**  
Your copy  
of 8-page  
youth paper  
**INSIDE**

## Bloodbath threatens Bosnia

# ARMAGEDDON in Europe

A new and savage attack on multi-ethnic Bosnia is being prepared by the Serbian government. Because of the refusal of the Bosnian government to agree a three-way split of Bosnia, the 'Yugoslav' army - in reality the army of Serbia and its ally Montenegro - is mobilising to crush Bosnian resistance.

Tanks, artillery, anti-aircraft guns and other weapons are pouring into Bosnian territory together with Serbian troops, UN officials have reported. They are preparing a spring offensive.

Now that the Serb Chetniks have failed to crack the Bosnian resistance in Sarajevo and the area around Tuzla, the regular army is being called in to smash them.

If such an assault is launched against the Bosnia government troops, who are hobbled by the international arms embargo, there could be a much bigger bloodbath than has already occurred.

Ethnic cleansing will look like a picnic compared with the slaughter if the Yugoslav army were to break into the major



Weapons are pouring in to arm Serbian aggressors in Bosnia

centres of Bosnian population.

The new Serbian mobilisation comes when the Croat HVO and other militias are engaged in a major offensive in central Bosnia. The Serb and Croat governments have signed their own 'peace' deal, effectively leaving both sides free to concentrate on defeating the Bosnians.

The assassination of British aid worker Paul Goodhall is part of the continuing attempt to obstruct aid getting to the people in and around Tuzla.

The killing shows the necessity to open Tuzla airport, easily within the power of the UN, to ensure that aid gets to the central Bosnian population.

The Western powers have refused to do this because they

are using aid, supplied with an eye-dropper, to pressurise the Bosnian leadership into accepting the carve-up deal.

It is not true that the conflict in ex-Yugoslavia is a 'civil war'

between three groups of nationalists, equally responsible. The war, and the rise of ethnic nationalism, was pioneered and launched by the Serbian leadership in Belgrade - as a means of popular mobilisation to keep them in power.

Bosnia has for centuries been a multi-ethnic, multi-national entity. They have resisted the attempt to carve up ex-Yugoslavia on the reactionary basis of single-nation states.

Hundreds of thousands have been killed in this war, and two million made refugees. But the war could last a lot longer.

The people resisting aggression from Serb and Croat forces

in multi-ethnic Bosnia deserve our solidarity and support. The campaign and convoys run by International Workers Aid are an important means not just of practical support, but of political pressure on Western leaders to lift the arms embargo.

Yugoslavia is dead and cannot be rebuilt. The only way forward now is through establishing the right of self-determination - and that means for Bosnia as much as for Croatia and Serbia.

Help the Workers Aid convoy planned for the spring. Send money to IWA, 12-14 Thornton St., London SW9 0BL.

## Should newspapers take sides?



Socialist Outlook thinks so! We put forward a socialist, feminist and ecologist alternative to the bosses' newspapers. From Arthur Scargill's latest thoughts to the defence of Colombian telecom workers, you'll read it first in our new-look fortnightly.

And as an introductory offer if you pay by direct debit, a year of Socialist Outlook and International Viewpoint the monthly review of the Fourth International, cost just £25. A saving of £20!

Surface rate: Britain £17, Rest of world £22 for 1 year; £9 or £12 for six months.

Air Mail: Australasia and far east £38, Rest of world £30; £20 or £16 for six months.

Multi-reader institutions: £50 air mail worldwide.

I enclose a cheque/postal order for £.....

Send me a direct debit for for the combined Socialist Outlook/IVP offer.

Name .....

Address .....

Mail to Socialist Outlook PO Box 1109, London N4 2UU

### Just Out!

New and updated edition of

## ARMAGEDDON IN EUROPE

Why we defend  
multi-ethnic Bosnia

By Geoff Ryan 80pp

Send £2.50p (inc p&hp) to Socialist Outlook, PO Box 1109, London N4 2UU