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SUPPORT THE RAIL STRIKERS

Derail Tory sell-off!

ASLEF train drivers have voted to stage a series of one-day strikes in their battle for a pay increase to match the soaring cost of living, beginning this week.

With most RMT members in the former British Rail having voted against strike action, it is left to the drivers to defend the strength of trade unionism as management prepare the rail network for privatisation.

The strikes against BR could coincide with action on the London Underground, where a majority of RMT members have voted for action in support of their 6 percent pay claim.

But with union leaders in both RMT and ASLEF retreating from the original pay demands, and hinting that any offer above 3 percent would be referred back to the members, it is clear that the strike vote represents a wish to fight on more than just the wages issue.

This is likely to be the last chance for rail workers to stage coordinated nationwide action: there is obviously a feeling among ASLEF members that effective strikes could yet put a spoke

in the wheel of the Tories' unpopular privatisation plans, and create a more favourable balance of forces in struggles to come with the franchise bosses.

The rail workers have already seen BR bosses pocket huge pay increases for their 'success' in screwing greater productivity out of staff, while they have been offered a miserable hand out below the rate of inflation.

Their action is an important challenge to the growing scandal surrounding privatised utilities.

The full weight of media hostility will be aimed against them; they will be attacked by right wing union leaders who have done nothing to fight the Tory offensive, and by Tony Blair's Labour leadership --still smarting over the rail unions' Clause Four defiance -- who would be quite happy to see the Tories take them down a peg.

But the fight can, like last summer's signal workers' dispute, serve as a rallying point for working class opposition to the hated Major government.

Solidarity with the rail strikers!
Derail the Tory sell-off!



A victory on NHS pay would strengthen the fight against hospital cuts and closures

July 29: all out for NHS pay!

THE NATIONAL demonstration called by the health unions for July 29 to press their pay dispute should be a rallying point for everyone fighting the Tory offensive on the NHS.

More than a million workers have rejected an insulting 1% offer coupled to another 2% with local strings attached, and are battling in defence of the national agreements which underpin their pay and conditions. If these are broken, staff in each Trust will be left to fight in isolation

for their pay demands: there would be no more nationwide action.

However it appears that many national union leaders have already effectively given up the fight.

Instead of building up the real anger by encouraging local branches to stage protest strikes which could stimulate a 1988-style wave of action, UNISON and other key unions seem to be trying their best to damp it all down.

Three weeks before the July demo, there are still hardly any leaflets or posters promoting it. Even the

venue has been left out of the skimpy leaflets sent to UNISON stewards.

The dispute has been dragged on in hopes that members will get fed up and throw in the towel, or the Royal College of Nursing will let the unions off the hook by striking a squalid deal.

But it's still not too late to turn the tide.

There are three weeks left in which health workers and all those trade unionists and Labour activists who support them can mobilise a real show of strength on July 29.

Did Tory MPs plump for a turkey?

By Harry Sloan

'Turkeys voting for Christmas' was the way the *Sun* described Tory MPs reelecting John Major. Popular ideas that might restore the Tories' flagging fortunes were in desperately short supply throughout the Tory leadership contest.

Major ran on a platform of continuing the present government policies which have received such overwhelming and humiliating rejection from the electorate in the Euro-elections, by-elections and three rounds of council elections.

Sections of the Tory press and top employers who took their distance from Major aimed their criticisms at precisely this weakness.

They are worried that without a fundamental change, the appearance of new policies and a more popular touch, Major will prove unelectable.

Bottled out

But of course many more recognise that the agenda of



Major: it's the policies that are unpopular

the far right is equally unpopular. Even Redwood bottled out of presenting a full-blooded right wing platform, in the knowledge that the electorate would not accept it.

That's why, far from offering a clear alternative, Redwood was left at the level of tinkering and gimmickry, with pledges to save the Royal yacht that will do little to win over the millions caught with negative equity and wondering how long they will have a job.

Opinion polls showed consistently stronger public support for Major than for Redwood or Portillo, though of course suggesting that electing Heseltine as leader could save the Tories as many as 52 extra seats.

The reshuffled cabinet attempts to exploit this Heseltine effect, but it is doubtful how much difference voters will detect in the day to day issues which matter most.

Any government still embarrassed by sky-high pay deals to privatised utility

bosses, hell-bent on the privatisation of the railways, and offering nothing to secure the jobs of a newly-insecure middle class will find it hard to win back the votes it has lost.

Their best hope is that Tony Blair will drag Labour's policy so far to the right that disgruntled Tory voters see Labour as offering no real change.

So far Blair's proposals on the economy, health and education seem to be headed down that dangerous path. The fight for socialist policies

After Major's reshuffle Welfare state still the main Tory target

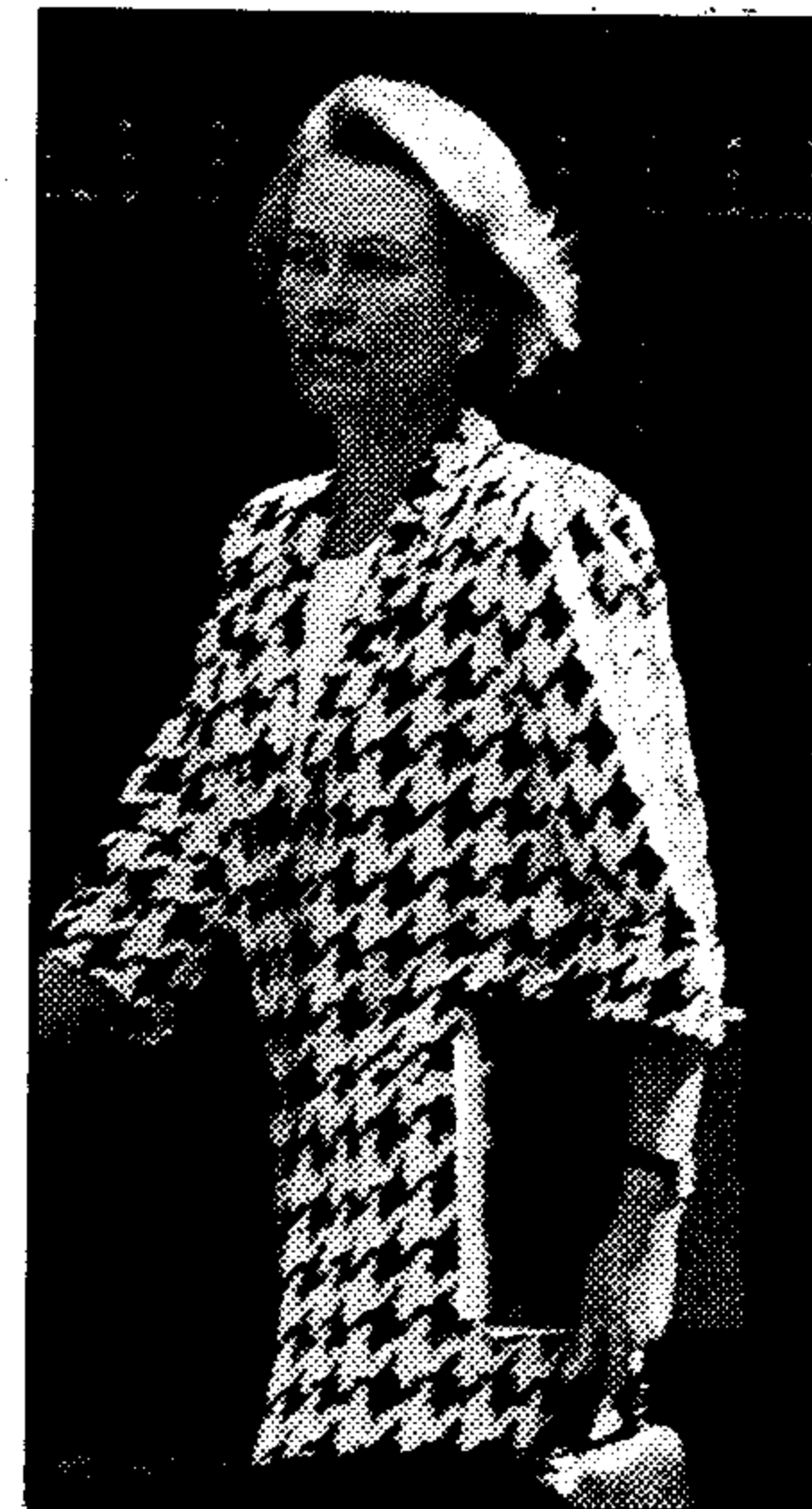
By Harry Sloan

LIKE THE CAST of a tedious soap opera, a few faces may have been swapped around in John Major's cabinet, but the basic plot remains grimly, predictably unchanged.

Virginia Bottomley, (who had expressed concern that she might be given a cabinet job that would make her unpopular!), does a straight swap with philistine Stephen Dorrell, taking over as supreme of the National Lottery at the Ministry of Fun.

Having turned the hunt for NHS treatment into a lottery, she is now to have a go at running the real thing.

The concepts of Bottomley and Fun sit so strangely together that it is hard to see how she could survive. If she follows the methods of her search and destroy mission against London's teaching hospitals, she will soon be embroiled in battles for the closure of the Royal Opera House, with funding



Closing the Opera?

switched to the delivery of smaller-scale local operas 'in the community'.

Of course Tories take the opera much more seriously than the NHS, and tens of millions of lottery cash will doubtless be funnelled into subsidising this and other middle class pursuits.

For his part Dorrell has already declared his intention to adhere rigidly to the closures already rubber-stamped by Bottomley, creating the probability that the Tories will go into the next election threatening to axe key services from over a dozen London hospitals.

The Department Employment has itself been made redundant following the removal of the rabid Michael Portillo: Gillian Shephard will now combine the task of cutting the training of jobless with that of slashing spending in schools and cutting student grants. She is also fronting up the introduction of the cynical nursery voucher scheme.

Outrage

The outrage of Tory minority rule over Scotland is perpetuated with the appointment as Scottish Secretary of Thatcherite Michael Forsyth, so right wing even Scottish Tories can't stand him. Wales is saddled with boy wonder William Haig, the fourth Tory Welsh Secretary to come from an English constituency.

With Kenneth Clarke still in place as Chancellor setting the pace in spending cuts to produce a tax bribe for the next election, and the brutal Michael Howard spearheading new attacks on asylum seekers and endorsing more police racism, the apparent 'leftward' shift of ministers will if anything lead to a rightward shift in policy.

The key battleground will remain the welfare state, as the Tories seek every avenue for cuts that could stuff more cash into the pockets of middle class punters in a bid to buy back lost votes.

Car strike needs support

By Simon Day

As the Mainland Car Deliveries strike enters its second month the 37 sacked workers need support from trade unionists more than ever.

The Oxfordshire dispute began when the car delivery company issued eight compulsory redundancies.

While the other workers gave the legal seven days notice before their supportive action, MCD began to move cars out of the depot to other distribution centres.

On the day the strike began all the workers were sacked.

There is a round-the-clock picket. No more cars have been moved out of the depot since the strike commenced.

The depot at Milton near Didcot is the centre for Rover distribution all over southern England. Cars that would have previously been sent to the depot have now been diverted to the non-unionised plant at Ely in Cambridgeshire.

The TGWU has been less than forthcoming in its support.

While the strikers have followed the letter of the law, the union has not organised any support. The full resources of the union now need to be put behind the strikers.

The Oxford District Council has passed a resolution calling for action to be stepped up. It will be discussed at the TGWU bi-annual delegate conference this coming week. Union members throughout the country should also pass resolutions of support.

It is clear that the decision to sack all the strikers is part of a wider plan to de-unionise car distribution completely. The workers are being used as an example to intimidate others in the industry.

It is important to pressurise the union leadership to organise proper solidarity action - while the Ely plant is not unionised, all the workers who supply it are.

■ Money, letters of support and copies of resolution should be sent to the strike fund, c/o B. Hill, 38 Tyrell's Way, Sutton Courtney, Abingdon OX14 4DF.

ASLEF takes on the Tories

The train drivers' union has voted for industrial action over its pay claim. Socialist Outlook's Simon Day spoke to ASLEF member Mark Thompson about the dispute.

What is the background to the decision?

The main reason for the success of the strike vote is the bubbling resentment over the union leadership's behaviour in recent years. We have had to accept a below-inflation rise every year - a cut in effect. Between 1992 and 1993 there was a 7.2 per cent reduction in driving staff. At our 1994 conference delegates issued a serious reprimand to the leadership, saying repetition would be unacceptable - and called for a "substantial increase in the rate of pay" in the next round. This means, in practice, a rise of around five per cent.

The union has conducted a wide-ranging consultative process since the conference. It came out with a clear message - 80 per cent in favour of taking industrial action for an increase in the basic rate of

pay, an overwhelming majority.

So the policy has been on the table for a year.

But the strike is connected to privatisation?

Of course. There is massive anger about the privatisation programme. The signal workers strike showed how industrial action was an effective obstacle to privatisation - it puts big financial strains on these "small" companies that are trying to profit out of the decimation of the industry.

But it is obvious that the government is pulling all the strings. The activists realise that this is a strike against privatisation and, therefore, a strike against the government. We're taking on the Tories.

So the mood is determined?

Absolutely. The only doubts are directed at the leadership. Some question whether Lew Adams will carry it through. The record so far is not promising. It has been thirteen years since the last real strike. Leaders have done everything in their power to prevent such action.

A series of one day strikes in 1993 over redundancy and compulsory transfers was

stopped after one day with nothing to show for our efforts.

How will the RMT result affect the strike?

Of course the RMT voting is disappointing. We had hoped the action would be together. We recognise that any decent pay rise should be for all BR workers, not just drivers.

There is nevertheless, a strong "go it alone" tradition in ASLEF. Drivers have seen themselves as independent from other rail workers.

This is due in large part to their ability to bring the network to a standstill all on their own. There is support from other grades though - RMT members won't be crossing picket lines. For this, we are grateful.

Since the recruitment criterion to the union was expanded there has been a wave of young recruits with different union experience to the older members.

They will be central to the strike. They are generally more militant. They'll be at the forefront of the action, on picket lines and branch meetings. This is certainly happening in my branch.

What we think

Much ado about nothing?

WAS IT really such a gamble, when John Major resigned as Tory leader, boldly challenging his opponents to 'put up or shut up' in a leadership election?

We may have to wait for some memoirs to confirm the real story, but on the evidence so far, it appears that the entire episode was stitched up well in advance, in a deal between Major and Heseltine.

Hezza, recognising that he could only win the leadership himself at the risk of triggering a throughgoing split in the party, threw the weight of his Europhile camp behind Major, in exchange for a promise of real power in the party and in government.

The deal isolated the Euro-sceptic right wing around John Redwood, leaving him just 89 votes, and giving Major a 2-1 victory.

And the same deal has now installed Heseltine as John Major's Minder, the key driving force of the government, with his own 'granny flat' giving privileged and constant access to Major in 10 Downing Street.

While important sections of the Tory establishment, not least some national newspaper owners and editors are nervous over Major's succession of electoral disasters, the leadership challenge also involved some key political issues. At the centre of the upheaval is the deep anti-European chauvinism at the roots of the Tory Party itself.

It was clear from the outset that the dividing line would not be domestic or social policy, where the Tories are in general united both on principles and to a large extent on tactics, but on Europe.

Under pressure from the Euro-sceptic rebels on the back benches and the hardliners in his own cabinet, Major had allowed government policy on Europe to slide dangerously away from the wishes of British capital.

The Tories are the party of the ruling class, but there is a certain level of political autonomy which leaves room for a conflict of interest.

The policies in John Redwood's campaign platform, which could have opened the door for the even more rabid nationalism of Portillo in the

event of a second round, would have pushed this split even wider.

Most of the CBI and key industrial leaders, along with the banks and finance houses, lean towards the idea of a common European currency and further consolidating the European Union as their best hope of battling through the intensifying competition and division of the world into warring trade blocs.

The humiliating trade concessions wrung out of the Japanese car industry last month by US negotiators underlines how tough this competition is becoming: British capital knows it cannot withstand such pressure without the collective strength of the EU.

Of course the complexity of achieving a single currency has been recognised by other European governments, which is why the deadlines for

The humiliating trade concessions wrung out of the Japanese car industry last month by US negotiators underlines how tough competition is becoming: British capital knows it cannot withstand such pressure without the collective strength of the EU.

it have been repeatedly postponed.

The Euro-sceptic rejection of any notion of a single currency, or even the commitment to a referendum which might scupper a hard-won agreement, would seriously weaken Britain's links with the EU.

It is not least for his dogged commitment to proceed towards a single currency that Tony Blair has begun to win supporters among Britain's industrial and financial leaders.

A Blair government is widely seen by other EU governments - including Chancellor Kohl's Christian Democrats - as the best hope

of making further progress: they have even discussed postponing next year's Inter Governmental Conference in the hopes that a later date would see Labour in office in Britain.

Major's platform, while carefully avoiding an overt commitment to a single currency, firmly rejected the Euro-sceptic line. That is one reason why among those most assiduously canvassing in his support was that doyen of Europhiles, Sir Edward Heath.

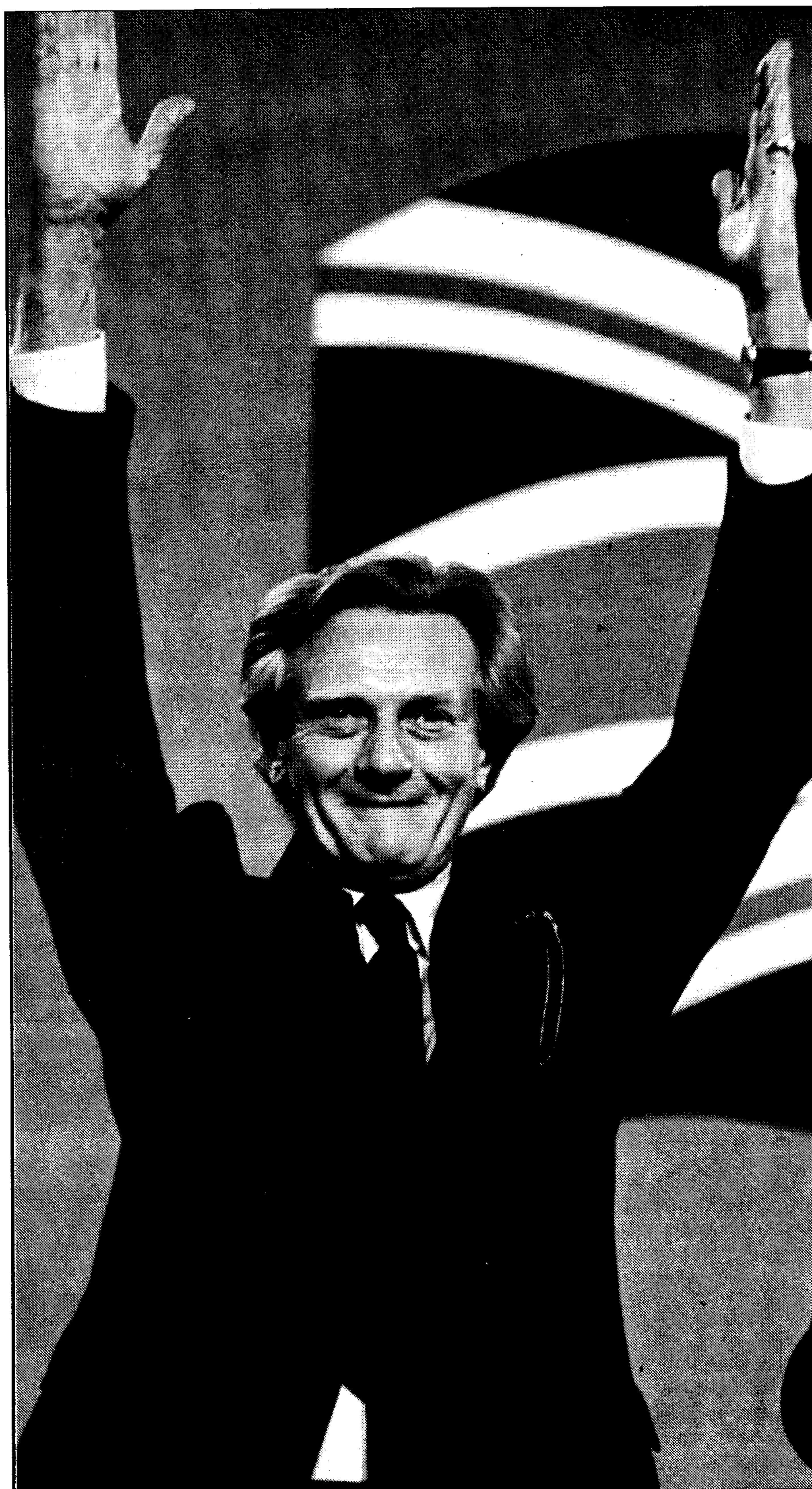
But the other reason why Major was able to cement this block between the (laughably named) 'left' of his party, the Europhiles and the centre, was because on almost every other political question the Tories are basically in agreement.

Of course the rhetoric appears rather different - just as John Major's early use of 'one nation' rhetoric appeared to offer a contrast in policy from Thatcher's language of overt class war. But the change of style cannot conceal the continuity of policies: Major's government, working in the same framework of marketisation, has been every bit as right wing and reactionary as Thatcher.

It is John Major's government which has stepped up the privatisation programme, brought in the racist Asylum Act, pushed through the draconian Criminal Justice Act, scrapped unemployment and sickness benefits (replacing them with brutal new measures, the Job Seekers Allowance and Incapacity Benefit, designed to cut benefits to 500,000 claimants), brought in the market reforms in the NHS and imposed means-tested charges on community care for the elderly.

In fact the terms of the leadership debate were a little confused: it was the 'right wing' John Redwood who suggested paying the nurses a decent wage, relaxing on hospital closures, and guaranteeing a hostel place for everyone sleeping rough on the streets, while the 'left' wing Heseltine has been battling to privatise the Post Office.

John Redwood flirted rather ineffectually with populism, calling for more law and order, preservation of army regiments and the royal



Guess who really won the leadership contest?

yacht, and made great play of the need to direct new tax cuts towards the Tories' traditional middle class supporters ('families hit by the recession, small businesses and 'prudent pensioners'').

Yet it is Major's new-look government which is now promoting the 'populist' voucher scheme designed to subsidise the private nursery costs of the prosperous middle class, at the expense of the working class families who depend on council run nurseries and playgroups.

Redwood's vague plan to cut public spending across the board by 1.67 percent to finance 'one-off' £5 billion of tax cuts failed to disguise the lack of any serious policies that were not already part of the Major government's agenda.

His bizarre pledge to eliminate the sleaze factor by vetting the sexual and financial indiscretions before appointing ministers must have terrified many of his more aspiring potential supporters.

As London's *Evening Standard* pointed out, "All those think tanks bubbling away, all those fierce, pink-cheeked blue-souled young men in University campuses all over the land excitedly invoking the mantra 'Newt Gingrich'" came to nothing. "When the crunch came, he failed to convince intellectually. He had no ideas."

Cut down

So Major stays on, reinforced by Heseltine. The Euro-sceptics are marginalised. Redwood is cut down, and the disloyal Portillo is dispatched to Defence, where he will be in charge of closing some of the regiments Redwood promised to save in order to make the spending cuts Redwood promised to make.

Nothing has really changed. The policies which have lost the Tories almost all their council seats, and left them trailing at historic lows in the opinion polls, remain intact. The scandals of the pri-

vatised utilities, the sleaze, the fiasco of rail privatisation, the crisis in the housing market, the feel-bad factor, the gut reaction against market values continue undisturbed.

Skulking disgruntled on his back benches, a third of Major's MPs have shown by their votes and abstentions, that they are so hostile to his leadership that they would risk a general election rather than back him.

Major has secured a stay of execution, scraping together a basis to continue to the next election: but his government's electoral decline is due not to its divisions but to mass rejection of its policies.

Short of a miraculous economic recovery, it seems that not even the political ineptitude of Tony Blair can avert a Tory defeat.

Then the crisis would re-emerge centre stage. And that, of course, would reopen the floodgates for a real leadership challenge by the Tory far-right.

EDITORIAL

Labour's NHS retreat Stalled in Tory market

By Harry Sloan

When is a market not a market?

That is the question that remains unanswered from Labour's laborious 36-page policy statement *Renewing the NHS*.

The second paragraph tells the main story: the Party is terrified of proposing any serious changes:

"It is clear that it is neither possible nor desirable to turn the clock back. Nor is there any appetite in the health service for huge upheaval. We do not intend to replace one dogmatic approach with another."

With big changes rejected, it is therefore the *Tories'* dogmatic approach which remains the dominant factor in the new Labour plans.

The central feature of the Thatcherite reforms was the split between the purchasing and provision of care, embodied in the separation of Trusts from health authorities.

Labour has taken the bold step of capitulating to this change. "Labour believes that the planning and delivery of care are distinct responsibilities. They should be kept separate. Health authorities will remain separate from the hospitals they fund. Hospitals will manage their own affairs."

Bureaucratic

As a consequence of this, even while proclaiming that Labour rejects the market, it winds up advocating the retention of almost all of the bureaucratic excesses of the present Tory market system.

The only substantive change will be the scrapping of GP Fundholding, to be replaced by a new arrangement by which GPs in each locality will collectively play a role in the commissioning and planning of hospital services.

Neither the health authorities nor the revamped Trust Boards will be elected or accountable to local people.

Labour will appoint its own nominees to these quangos: the only real change will be that the Trusts will no longer be the formal owners of the assets they control, and that senior managers will no longer be members of Trust Boards, but will be 'accountable' to a supervisory board of non-executive directors representing the community.

The Labour policy carries a fairly radical critique of many aspects of the Tory policies, but is much more evasive about what a Labour government would do instead.

There is no reference anywhere to the global allocation of resources to the NHS, leaving the clear implication that the cash-driven cuts and closures which have already been endorsed would carry on if Margaret Beckett were in charge.

The fiasco of the recent Commons debate on London hospital closures, where Labour categorically refused to promise to halt or reverse the cuts has now been consolidated as policy, even while Labour scores cheap points by denouncing the loss of Guy's Bart's and other prestigious hospitals.

Costings

Similarly, Labour has made political capital out of the burgeoning costs of NHS bureaucracy under the Tory reforms, but its own policies would retain almost all the present functions to draw up the costing of each item of treatment for comparison with other hospitals, and to ensure hospitals run within rigid cash limits.

As in education, Labour would continue the discredited Tory league tables comparing hospital performance.

Compulsory tendering of hospital ancillary services would be ended, but existing contracts with private firms would remain untouched.

None of the growing number of top NHS managers would be laid off; they would be reassigned: the overhead costs would remain at their inflated level.

Nor will Labour break from its long-standing support for the Tory privatisation of community care, with the imposition of means-tested charges. Instead all they promise is a Royal Commission to investigate the problems, which will shelve the issue for years ahead.

The policy says virtually nothing that will enthuse or reassure health workers or health campaigners, and represents a major wasted opportunity to win electoral support on a key area of Tory weakness.

Embarrassment

Blair's timid policy today could prove to be a major embarrassment tomorrow. Tories will have a field day exploiting the bureaucracy and waste that will be rampant under Labour.

Beckett and co. have to be told by health unions, Labour Parties and other bodies that these half-baked policies are a liability, and should be ditched.



Labour flunks test on education policy

By Richard Hatcher

ROY Hattersley was right to call for action to defend the principle of comprehensive schooling. Labour's new policy document *Diversity and Excellence* is an attack on the comprehensive system.

Diversity and Excellence proposes nothing to break the constraints of government-determined curriculum and testing. There is no room for grassroots initiatives to challenge educational policies designed to maintain the status quo.

The document is an ingenious "historic compromise" designed to get Labour off the hook on opted-out grant maintained (GM) schools while not offending the privileged interests represented in them.

Centralised

Labour is preparing to abandon the comprehensive principle, further centralise control in Westminster, weaken local government and wrap it all up in the spurious rhetoric of parental accountability.

Blair's new "foundation" schools will perpetuate division and privilege, for two reasons:

- A school which acquires an image as being 'advantaged' will act as a self-fulfilling prophecy in attracting parents. This image is underpinned by real advantage, in that they, and not the LEA will own their buildings and employ their staff.

- Labour's policy encourages diversity, not just by creating three types of schools – community, aided and foundation – but by encouraging schools, as the Tories have done, to specialise and to select.

Of course the document repeatedly rejects 'selection by 11-plus'. But there are no plans to bring the existing 154 grammar schools back into the comprehensive sector. This would only happen if there were 'a clear demonstration of support from the parents affected by such decisions.'

Minority

Does this mean the parents of the minority of students at the grammar schools – in which case clearly nothing will change? Or does it mean all the parents in a locality, where a vote for abolition could be campaigned for and won?

The document backs other types of selection. By encouraging selection by so-called "aptitude", the policy risks the premature labelling of children – in oversubscribed schools "aptitude" becomes a code word for *ability*.

Existing patterns of educational inequality, especially for working class school students, are reinforced.

The end of extra funding to GM schools is to be wel-

comed – as is the commitment to return GM teachers to the framework of national pay and conditions.

But there is a danger that the jobs of GM school teachers and other staff will be at risk. This is why the staff of foundation schools should be employed by the LEA not the school itself. They need the safety net of an alternative job in another school – an important issue given the huge number of surplus places in GM schools.

The document goes too far in trying to placate the anti-local government lobby. It proposes to delegate even more of the LEA budget than under the Tories – up from 85 to 90 per cent.

It nevertheless admits that some services, like special needs, cannot be met by the remaining ten per cent, and that LEAs will have to find a way of negotiating some kind of claw-back from the schools.

The sensible answer is to allow LEAs to retain enough in the first place.

The advantage to Blair of the 90 per cent figure is that it denies LEAs the capacity for intervention. The important innovations in anti-racist and anti-sexist education funded by LEAs in the 1980s would become near to impossible.

The document makes big claims for involving parents.

There would be more parents on governing bodies, and one elected parents' representative on education committees. LEAs will be encouraged to set up Parents Forums.

This hardly opens up local government to popular involvement. Why not establish statutory Education Forums, involving teachers and other educational interests, with full rights to information, full consultation, with the right to put resolutions to Education Committees?

Accountability

Putting more parents on governing bodies does not necessarily address the key issue of their accountability to the mass of parents. Once elected they can do what they like. Parents are to be given no right of representation of their views.

This document does nothing to break from the Conservative agenda for education.

Once again Labour is dragging along behind the level of popular opposition to the Tories. Many towns and cities across the shire counties have seen big demonstrations opposing cuts in education, reflecting a new, more radical involvement, many of the activities organised by the Fight Against Cuts in Education.

As campaigners prepare to mobilise for the second national FACE demonstration in London on September 30, Labour's leadership remains again on the sidelines, handing the initiative back to the Tories on terrain where important inroads could be made into the middle classes.

Labour is preparing to abandon the comprehensive principle, further centralise control in Westminster, and weaken local government.

Tories step up racist offensive

By Simon Deville

THE RIGHT wing of the Tory Party are now proposing new legislation that aims to further tighten immigration controls.

Particular areas being looked at include cutting benefits of asylum seekers,

and at the same time placing a responsibility on hospitals, schools, benefits agencies and employers to shop people they suspect of being illegal immigrants and to carry out passport checks.

In practice this will mean suspecting all black people and can only serve to increase levels of racism. Already these proposals are being pre-

End collaboration with immigration authorities
Lobby Hackney Council

Wednesday 26th July, 6.30pm
Hackney Town Hall



Part of the June 24 picket of Harmondsworth immigration prison, West London

empted by eager right-wingers.

In Hackney, one of the auditors of the council payroll illegally handed over the names of 600 staff with African-sounding names to the Immigration and Nationality Department (IND).

Although Hackney council has claimed to be opposed to these new measures, nothing has been done about this violation of civil liberties and workers rights.

Furthermore the council has stated that it "is prepared to respond to legitimate requests for information from the IND". In other words the only problem Hackney council has is that the law has not yet been passed.

The council sees no problem with acting as immigration police over its own staff, provided that individuals wait until legislation is passed.

A pregnant woman has been refused hospital treatment until she could provide proof that she had permission to be in the country.

Snoopers

The government's aim is quite clear, to create a society where we all have a legal obligation to act as spies and snoopers within our own communities. People who thought they were becoming teachers, doctors, or council workers will find their job descriptions being changed to

include work as immigration officers.

On top of this there is also a backlash against equal opportunities policies being organised within local government (see SO#85) which can only further encourage witchhunts against black workers and create even greater levels of racism.

So far the Labour leadership has done little to oppose this escalation of state racism. Activists must demand a firm commitment from the Labour leadership to oppose these measures, and trade unionists must start organising now to ensure non-compliance with any new measures that are introduced.

June 24 success Anti-racists show the way forward

HUNDREDS of people across the country mobilised for the day of actions against immigration detentions and deportations on June 24th.

These actions were linked in to protests throughout Europe against the treatment of migrants and the draconian legislation being introduced to enforce "Fortress Europe".

In Britain, the actions marked a small but significant step in the development of an opposition to current and future legislation.

At a time when hundreds more prison places are being built to lock up asylum seekers, and even tighter immigration controls are being proposed, it is even more vital that the black community and the labour movement take up the fight against state racism.

Across the country

● Winson Green prison in Birmingham saw a lively picket of around 250 people, with a significant role played by the Ragbir Singh campaign.

The day of actions coincided with Ragbir's daughter's birthday. Pressure from the campaign forced prison authorities to return Ragbir to Birmingham.

● Around 200 people supported the picket at Harmondsworth detention centre, with a coach organised by the Collin Roach centre being supported by the Joint Commission for the Welfare of Immigrants.

● A march from Gosport Ferry to Haslar Prison was diverted by police away from the planned route through Portsmouth town centre. Police also prevented the demo from going anywhere near the immigration wing of the prison. It appears that police were acting under instructions from a committee established under the Maastricht treaty.

● The picket at Campsfield detention centre near Oxford was supported by a lively delegation of activists from the Ivory Coast, and by the well established Close Down Campsfield Campaign, organised through the local labour movement.

● In Leicester a picket of the Immigration Police's office on June 21 received media attention from Sunrise Radio and local media. Activists from Leicester also mobilised for the Campsfield demo on the 24th.

● In Bristol a picket was organised by the local branch of ARA at Horfield prison.

● In Hull local activists organised a mass leafleting of the town centre.

Free Raghbir Singh!

OVER 250 people joined together outside Winson Green prison on June 24 to demand the release of Walsall Journalist Raghbir Singh.

The next day, he was moved from Birmingham to Rochester prison, to make it even more difficult for his supporters to visit him.

However the Home Office's callous action backfired, triggering increased efforts by campaigners, including his union, the National Union of Journalists.

Their pressure led to a small victory: he has been moved back to Winson Green, though now held in solitary confinement.

Raghbir's supporters believe that he is being held - without charges - and threatened with deportation because the Punjabi language newspaper he edits has carried articles by him critical of the Indian government.

The fight for his release goes on, and campaigners are urging supporters to send letters and faxes to this effect to the Home Secretary, Michael Howard.

Write fax or phone the Governor of Winson Green demanding Raghbir be released from solitary confinement.

French campaigners fight rising tide of detentions

By Bill MacKeith

In June the French Federation of Associations in Solidarity with Immigrant Workers (FASTI) heard reports from the struggle against racist immigration laws throughout Europe.

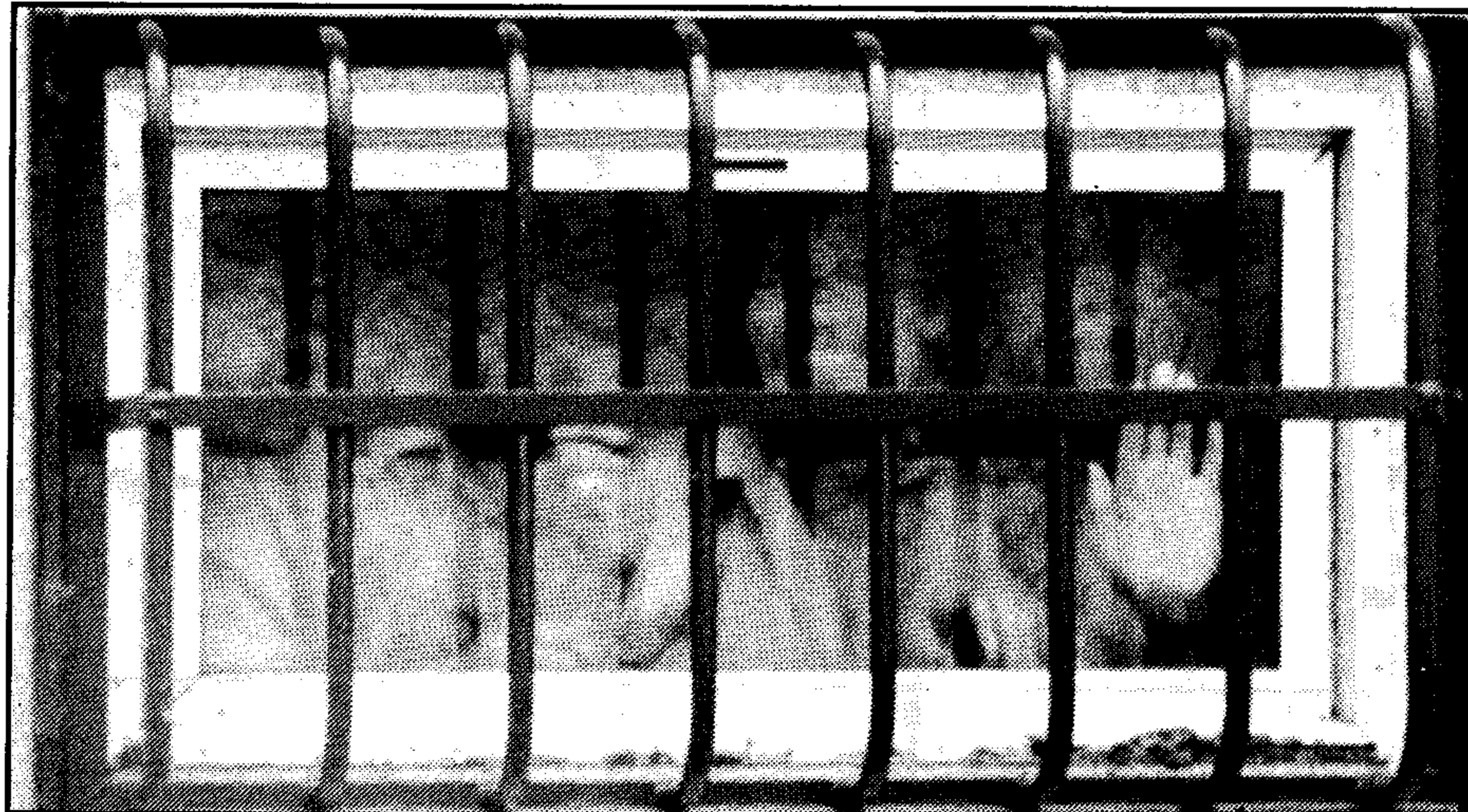
As a representative of the Campaign to Close Campsfield I gave evidence on the detention of refugees and other migrants in Britain.

FASTI has seventy active local associations in France. It works with non-French nationals on the provision of housing, legal advice on residence and citizenship, French language instruction and public campaigning on anti-racist and solidarity issues.

In the past year it has taken part in a national march for jobs and campaigns for the right to medical treatment for non-French nationals, as well as against deportations and detention.

Two hundred people heard evidence from recent detainees and the local associations.

Among the so-called "Pasqua laws" of 1993 was the introduction of "judicial detention" of "deportable" foreigners for up to six



months on the decision of a magistrate - hence the new detention centres.

As in Britain, the official language of forcible detention is full of euphemisms. Detention centres in France are officially "retention centres". People are not deported - a word associated with the deportation of Jews, Gypsies and others by Nazi collaborators - but "distanced", éloigné.

Under Charles Pasqua there has been a systematic attack on people who solidarise with immigrant workers.

Most notable perhaps is the December 27 1994 law no. 94-1136 which states that "any person who while in

France directly or indirectly assists or attempts to assist the irregular entry, movement or stay of a foreigner in France shall be punished by five years in prison and a fine of 200,000 francs".

The new law has been undermined by a national campaign and the petition by over 300 well-known public figures stating that they have broken, or intend to break, the law by assisting foreigners whose situation is deemed "irregular" by the government.

The president of the Orleans association has been tried for public defamation of the police. His offence was to distribute a leaflet that recalls the role of the local police in

Vichy France in imprisoning Jews and others in detention camps from which they were sent on to their deaths in Germany and Poland.

He was acquitted along with the co-charged Kasoum Sidiki Ba at Orleans Correctional Tribunal on June 23. The state prosecutor has appealed.

The French state does not intend to give up its pursuit of what is a part of a more or less Europe-wide governmental policy on this question.

Momentous decisions on immigration matters are made by interior and justice minister at secret meetings free of all public scrutiny and control.

FIGHTING RACISM

Killer Clegg released, but political prisoners languish in jail

Britain's hostages

By David Coen

PARATROOPER Lee Clegg, convicted of the murder of Karen Reilly, was released on parole after serving only four years of the life sentence on the day before the election for the leadership of the Tory Party.

Claiming the release had nothing to do with John Major's desire to boost his chances in the election, government spin doctors said Clegg's case had been through the same legal processes as any other prisoner serving a life sentence.

Mayhew

Northern Ireland Secretary Patrick Mayhew's behaviour tells the real story. He was the one who took the decision about Clegg.

Days before the leadership election he wrote to the *Times* to proclaim how important John Major was to the "Peace Process". Some of those MP's supporting Clegg were in the Redwood camp and Mayhew believed that Clegg's release might win some back for Major.

Of the 35 Republican "lifers" in British jails, 11 have served more than 20 years, many for lesser offences than murder. Time and again appeals for parole have been turned down.

Appeals for transfer to Ireland or for compassionate leave have been refused. Little wonder that Clegg's release led to rioting as people's anger and frustration with the British government boiled over.

No comparison

Major himself attempted to justify Mayhew's decision to release Clegg by claiming

there was no comparison between the case and that of IRA prisoners.

Andrew Duncan, chair of the Tory backbench Northern Ireland Committee said there would be no discussion of the release of IRA prisoners until the IRA de-commissioned its weapons.

The message was clear: Republican prisoners in Ireland and Britain are merely a bargaining chip in the negotiations, hostages to the political needs of the British, in short, political prisoners.

The issue of the prisoners has always been central to the struggle against British rule in Ireland. Labour Northern Ireland Secretary Roy Mason withdrew political status on March 1st 1976 as part of the British effort to criminalise the struggle.

Prisoners in Long Kesh and Armagh Jails began the "dirty protest" which resulted



The Hunger Strikes shook British rule: now republican prisoners are used as hostages

in the 1981 Hunger Strikes led by Bobby Sands, in which ten prisoners died.

A mass protest movement shook British rule in Ireland in a way not seen since the Civil Rights Movement in the late 60's. Though the Thatcher government publicly refused the prisoner's demands, it later conceded privately that they should be treated differently to criminals.

The impetus from that struggle fed through not only

into the rise of Sinn Fein as a political force in the North but also into the growth a significant element within the British Labour Party in favour of withdrawal.

In 1985 the Dublin government, fearing the rise in support for Sinn Fein would combine with the economic crisis, tried to head off the threatened political meltdown by signing the Anglo-Irish Agreement.

Margaret Thatcher, union-

ist to the core, was forced to concede that the war in Ireland was not simply an internal British problem.

Almost a year after the cease-fire, the British are demanding that the IRA "de-commissions" its weapons before they will talk to Sinn Fein about a settlement.

We demand that the British immediately release all political prisoners as an indication of their seriousness about peace.

WORLD OUTLOOK

French socialists join anti-nuke battle

The decision by France's newly-elected conservative President Jacques Chirac to authorise resumption of French nuclear tests at Mururoa Atoll in the South Pacific has brought an outraged reaction from many quarters.

Alongside ecological and peace organisations such as Greenpeace and CND protests have come from many governments in the region, in particular the fifteen members of the Pacific Forum, including Australia and New Zealand.

One voice missing from this chorus of criticism has been that of the British government, which claims the new tests are an internal French matter.

This silence is partly the fruit of Major's wish to build a Franco-British axis to buttress

his manoeuvres in Europe, and partly of the fact that the British defence establishment are themselves contemplating new nuclear tests.

Significant anti-nuclear demonstrations have taken place in French Polynesia and New Caledonia, scene of a long-running anti-colonial conflict.

In France itself opposition, while still small-scale, has begun to develop. There have been two several thousand strong demonstrations in Paris - the second with the political backing of a wide range of organisations, including Greens and the French Communist Party.

The leading opposition party, the Socialists, under their new leader Lionel Jospin, have criticised Chirac's decision to resume the series of

tests suspended in 1992 by Socialist President Mitterrand.

However, they remain supporters of French nuclear weapons. As Jospin explained during the Presidential election campaign last March, "the determination to maintain the nuclear deterrent is not incompatible with a continuation of the moratorium on nuclear tests - which presupposes a simulation programme - as long as the other powers keep their promises about this".

Others pursue a more consistent anti-nuclear line, among them *Socialist Outlook's* sister organisation, the Revolutionary Communist League (LCR). The comments below are taken from an article by Pierre Rousset in the LCR's weekly paper *Rouge*.

"The notion of deterrence has always been used to mask the aggressive purpose of the nuclear arsenal. It has united right and left-wing government parties around defence of France's status as a great power, a permanent member of the UN Security Council and of

the club of "official" nuclear weapons states.

Why maintain and modernise an arsenal which is soon to be destroyed? Our government parties know perfectly well that studies are being conducted to miniaturize nuclear weapons, and propaganda campaigns will be conducted to soften up public opinion to accept their military use.

The fundamental choice is not between real or computer-simulated tests. If we want to live tomorrow without the nuclear threat hanging over our heads we must put a stop now to the infernal spiral unleashed by the 'great powers' and break the behind-the-scenes grip of the civilian and military nuclear lobby.

This decision involves the future of the whole of humanity, but it has been taken by one person - Chirac. Without any democratic debate, he has announced his 'irrevocable' decision.

We are told that the tests involve no risks. Who knows? No independent commission has been able to freely look at the problem.

The three which have been to Mururoa have had neither the necessary time nor freedom to visit the sites



and have been closely supervised by the military.

The resumption of French tests risks setting off a chain reaction. In Washington, Moscow and London the military-industrial lobbies are already pushing for new tests.

The American moratorium may not be continued. The isolation of China, which has never observed the moratorium, is over.

The 'unofficial' members of the nuclear weapons club such as Israel and India and

the 'candidate members' will be encouraged.

This series of tests must be abandoned and the total test ban treaty signed without delay.

It is not a question of undertaking a few more or less symbolic actions against the resumption of French tests.

We have to set a new direction and revive, through struggle, the process of nuclear disarmament currently bogged down in international negotiations."

The CAMPAIGN FOR NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT is holding a rally starting at 1pm on
Sunday 16 July
Trafalgar Square,
London
 to demand:
No more nuclear testing
For a nuclear-free world

Trans-national corporations flex global muscles

By Bala Kumar

The big bad boys on the international stage in the 1970s were western trans-national corporations (TNCs). In the 1980s criticism shifted to the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. Yet the reach and power of trans-national capital has been steadily growing.

By the early 1990s there were well over 35,000 TNCs with 170,000 foreign affiliates. The annual turnover of some of these companies is greater than the national income of several Third World countries combined.

Royal Dutch Shell ranks top of all with assets of US\$100.8 billion and 127,000 workers. An estimated 73 million people are directly employed and many more employed by sub-contractors.

Whereas twenty years ago US owned firms dominated the top twenty list, there are now three Japanese concerns too: Hitachi, Matsushita and Toyota.

Lower down in the rankings there are also Brazilian and South Korean owned companies. This shows how capital even from non-imperialist

countries needs to continually seek new arenas of accumulation.

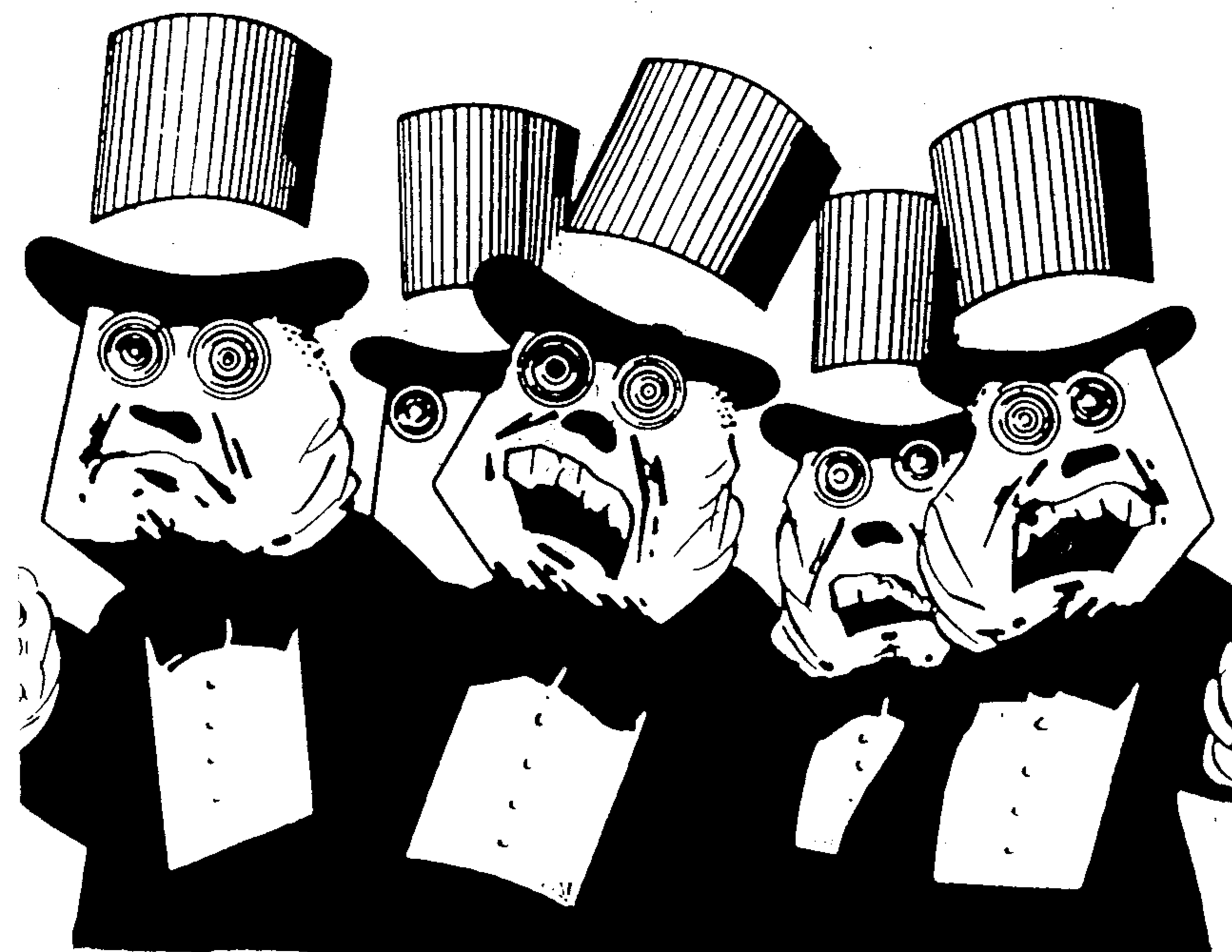
However, five advanced capitalist countries account for 172 of the top 200 firms.

The internationalisation of capital has also paved the way for the internationalisation of production and distribution. So anything up to fifteen countries are involved in the manufacture of the humble Ford Escort.

This diversification is for several reasons. It may be to take advantage of lower wages, unionised workplaces, tax breaks and access to "host" country markets. It also helps break strikes and curb worker-militancy while maintaining smooth production flows - there is always another source in another country.

In the textile and garment sector relocation to new countries may be because the country quota under the Multi-Fibre Agreement has been used up.

This growth in the affiliates of TNCs means that most world trade is taking place between these giant corporations rather than between countries. A conservative estimate is one-third of all world trade. However, most of this takes place between the advanced capitalist countries - the rest of the world is



simply excluded from these investment flows.

While capital hungry and technology poor countries welcome TNCs, it is arguable how far they benefit. Their main attraction is that they are major employers. Profits are siphoned back to their "home" countries, not re-invested in the domestic economy - little or no technology and skills are passed on to local companies and workers.

Where countries have prospered by TNC investment such as South Korea, this has been under strict

regulation of their activities and a strong state.

Some commentators see the relative power of these companies over Third world governments and international institutions such as the United Nations and World Trade Organisation as proof of the "eclipse of the nation state".

It is not so simple. TNCs need a spatial location to situate themselves - the nation state. They value it not for its boundaries but because of its historic function as arbiter between capital and labour. They value in the

"host" state the repressive armoury of the police and army.

They also need the backing of their state to secure market access and privileges and to intervene on their behalf.

From the anti-expropriation United Fruit Company coup in Guatemala in the 1950's to construction contracts in Kuwait after the Gulf war, US trans-nationals have relied on Uncle Sam.

Reports of the death of the nation state have therefore been much exaggerated.

There is only one response to global capital and that is global solidarity between the exploited and the marginalised. When the robber barons show scant concern for borders neither should workers.

It is through that re-discovery of solidarity - regardless of national, ethnic and gender divisions - stretching from the work-place to the community and back again, that we make initiatives against capitalism and for socialism.

European monetary union?

No Cannes do!

By Simon Day

At the European summit in Cannes the great and the not-so-good swapped proposals over iced Evian water for two days without agreeing to a single thing of substance. Plans abound. Realisation is absent.

Europe's capitalist powers cannot decide upon a collective future. The leaders of all the main countries are at odds both with one another and their own populations.

Since the fall of the Berlin wall and the collapse of the regimes in the east, Europe has been the site of the most fierce political contestation in the developed capitalist world.

East, south or across the Atlantic - strategies and schemas abound. None of them look like coming off.

The political bloc created out of the second world war that became known as "Western Europe" is redundant. But there remains no agreement

over what is to replace it.

Its component parts continue to disagree about both its internal functioning and external relations. The sordid self interest has been made visible recently by all the squabbles over "aid".

Zones

Germany, ever keen to coopt the countries of central and eastern Europe, wants to extend its traditional zone of influence.

France, and, to a lesser extent, the European countries of the Mediterranean, are more concerned about the Magreb. Mitterrand even proposed that the EU hold an international conference in Algeria!

The key here is the relationship of the new Europe to the USA.

Now the Americans are looking more to the far east for economic relations a number of proposals are on the table. Spain has declared US-EU relations its priority in its presidency. Three plans have been outlined:

- A Transatlantic Free Trade Area (TAFTA). This would fit in with the US enthusiasm for regional trade pacts. But it would not end the big problems over textiles and agriculture that seven years of battles in the Uruguay round have so far failed to resolve.

Such an arrangement would probably only serve to accentuate the differences between the USA and the European powers.

- A transatlantic "economic space". This is little more than a codification of the already existing plans of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development for global investment.

- A transatlantic charter. This "great leap forward" would be of little value however if it did not cover military policy - something that cannot be dealt with until the 1996 intergovernmental conference.

The political impact of these negotiations on the European working class is profound. Western Europe was always an artificial crea-

tion put together in the aftermath of the second world war in order to stabilise capitalism. It expressed the world dominance of the USA.

Framework

It is important to note that this dominance was not determined by the USA's industrial capacity or efficiency, but by its capacity to set the overall framework of politics and trade. This is less and less the case.

During the Cold War it could use its military might as a means of political intervention into Europe. NATO was its device - a political tool to ensure supremacy. This is what makes the policy discord between the USA and Europe over Bosnia as important as the divisions within Europe itself.

There remain huge obsta-

cles to be overcome for European capital to create adequate military forces and a unified foreign policy.

Britain's favoured position of the USA's most servile vassal makes this even more of a struggle.

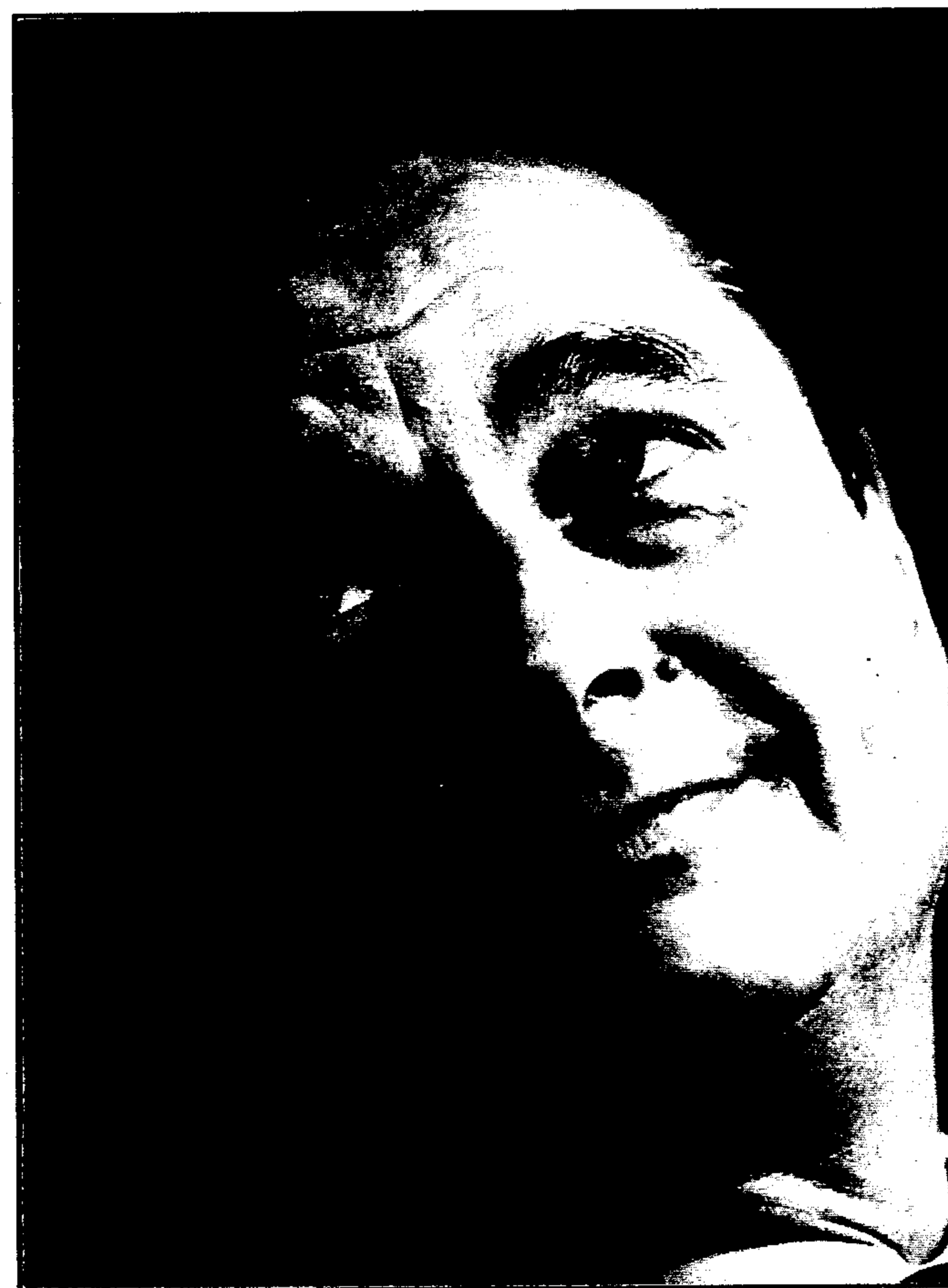
The huge divisions evident in Cannes show how much "globalisation" has been over-

stated.

Monetary union has had to be put back until 1999 - and even this first step Major has called "Eurocrap".

National states remain the fountainhead of both economic policy and political action.

With problems like this, who needs Euro-sceptics?



Are Chirac's eyes on monetary union - or on the Maghreb?

New sections swell Fourth International Congress

Workers of the world unite!

THE RECENT Fourteenth World Congress of the Fourth International, held in Europe, registered some important organisational gains as well as conducting a series of sharp debates.

The discussion ranged over the world political situation in the period of the collapse of Stalinism, the class nature of the countries of Eastern Europe, the class struggle in Latin America, and the way forward for the international itself.

Organisationally and numerically the Fourth International, which has sections and sympathising groups in nearly 50 countries, was bigger than at its previous Congress in 1991.

New sections or sympathising groups were established in Mauritius, Ecuador, Spain, Australia and Puerto Rico. The Sri Lankan NSSP, with an important base in that country, became a section of the Fourth International only after the last Congress, so was effectively a new organisation at this one.

Guests from a number of organisations outside the Fourth International also attended the Congress. The Belgian *Gauche Unies*, the French organisation *Lutte Ouvriere*, Solidarity of the USA, the Australian Democratic Socialist Party, the ZUTIK from Euzkadi, the PADS from Senegal, the Brazilian Workers' Party (PT), and three revolutionary organisations from the Philippines all sent representatives.

Russia

Greetings were also extended to the Congress by Alexander Buzgalin, a leader of the Party of Labour in Russia.

In his opening political address to the Congress, veteran Fourth International leader Ernest Mandel stressed that there is currently a stalemate between the ruling class and the working class internationally, but that this would be for a relatively short period, and that major class battles lie ahead.

There were three strands to the debates on the world political situation. The French economist Maxime Durand introduced a paper on the world economic situation and the globalisation of the world economy.

A paper on the world political situation after the semi-

collapse of Stalinism was presented on behalf of the outgoing International leadership, and there were two introductions on the class nature of the countries of Eastern Europe in the light of the process of capitalist restoration which is being promoted.

Both presenters on this subject – Catherine Samary, from the United Secretariat and Stefan Peikarczyk from the Polish Revolutionary Left Current – argued against a few delegates who insisted that restoration was completed.

They insisted that despite the clear intentions of the various regimes, and with the exception of the former East Germany that capitalism has not yet been restored in any of the countries involved. Peikarczyk argued that in Poland it is not just the near absence of the market which rules out capitalism as the dominant mode of production, but the lack of capital itself.

"The new private sector is incapable of keeping itself alive without huge state support, let alone financing further privatisation itself. The barriers to western investment are increasing all the time and the effects of the 1991/3 recession are still operative. There is little financial infrastructure at a time when the globalisation of the economy has diverted funds elsewhere.

"The only remaining source of capital is the one that has been used up to now: the state.

"Yet no more can be squeezed out of this source without another major attack of the jobs and the living standards of the workers.

"This fact means that the limits of peaceful restoration are being reached. Any qualitative advance in capitalist restoration would involve a new massive onslaught on the working class."

A minority current in the Congress, which included delegates from Britain, France, Poland, Ireland, Greece, Hong Kong, India and the USA presented an alternative platform in most of the debates. The exceptions were on the world economy, on which there was broad agreement in the Congress, and on Latin America, on which the minority did not have a common view.



These delegates argued that the conclusions drawn by the Congress on the effects of the semi-collapse of Stalinism – that it had thrown the working class and its allies massively on to the defensive world wide – were too negative and that although the current situation was defensive this was of a temporary nature.

Some delegates argued that the loss of the Soviet bloc had directly strengthened the role of imperialism whilst others insisted that the fall of Stalinism, itself a wholly counterrevolutionary force, had been a much more contradictory event.

It had also opened up the political situation for genuine

forces of the left.

In fact it has been the longstanding and widespread illusions in the Stalinist bloc which have been the basis of the demoralisation and retreat of the vanguard in some instances.

On the way forward for the Fourth International, the task agreed by the Congress was one of regroupment.

It was argued that the most important function of the Fourth International at this stage was to be a focus of the regroupment of left and revolutionary forces world wide, particularly groupings and fragments emerging from the wreckage of the Stalinist Par-

the Latin America debate.

A speaker from the mass socialist party PADS in Senegal also gave greetings during this session, speaking of the impact of third-world debt on the African continent as well as Latin America, and paying tribute to the work the Fourth International has been able to do on the issue.

On Europe the debate was both on regroupment and on the current state of the workers' movement – both the trade unions and the social democratic parties.

The minority argued that whilst regroupment was the right thing to do when the opportunity arises, the main focus of the sections should be based around workers' movement, particularly the trade unions, and key campaigns around social issues – against cuts and austerity and against the far right and the racists.

A meeting on Bosnia was held during the Congress, which underlined a common view on support for the national rights of the Bosnian people, the defence of a multi-ethnic Bosnia and for the withdrawal of foreign troops and the lifting of the arms embargo.

A statement was adopted fully supporting International Workers Aid to Bosnia and calling for all European sections to become involved in it. IWA has been for the past two years the principal European-wide campaign in which the sections of the Fourth International have been involved.

This campaign, which developed strongly in a number of European countries, continues to strengthen and continues to take aid directly, as an act of international working class solidarity, to the trade unions in the Tuzla region.

The Congress also adopted a resolution on youth work (see box).

An appeal was made for the international youth summer camp, which is being held in France this year and which in one of the major annual international activities of the Fourth International.

A report was given on the Fourth International's residential school in Amsterdam which is holding a series of courses throughout the year and which is its principal focus of educational activity.

Youth fighting for the future

World Congress resolution

THE World Congress discussed our work amongst youth, and the need to develop independent radical youth organisations. These are short extracts from the resolution adopted.

IN THE LAST few years we have seen, at least in Europe, big movements among youth, especially those in school. Young people continue to be a social sector which is quite ready to mobilise.

Obviously the seriousness of the economic crisis and the attacks on social gains profoundly affect youth as a whole. This changes the themes, slogans and forms of these mobilisations.

Prospects

The prospects — of unemployment or insecure employment and a growingly uncertain future — are seen by young people more and more strongly. This creates the possibilities for developing youth struggles



Over 1,000 will gather at the International Youth Camp to be held in France this month

which link the right to study and the right to work.

In this period we have also seen big involvements of youth: in the anti-racist and anti-fascist movements; in the ecological sphere; and a radicalisation of young women, starting from the defence of abortion

laws but also for a sexuality with is simultaneously free and safe.

The two principal limits to these mobilisations are that they have not so far resulted in a significant wave of politicisation, and that real difficulties exist in putting self-organised structures in place.

All this shows the great stakes for building ourselves among young people and the urgent need for the International, and its section, to clearly involve itself in this area in whatever appropriate organisational form. This means strengthening self-organised youth structures amongst

all layers of youth (for example, student unions, youth sections in the trade unions, organisations of immigrant youth, young women, lesbians and gays) to offer global political perspectives to radicalising youth — counteracting the danger of recovery by the far right — and allowing our organisations to gain new militant generations in the medium term.

'Contract'

The links between our sections and the youth organisation can be very different, depending on the specific situation. What is important is that links exist and that they allow us to discuss, find solutions, find solutions and go forward together.

We at least need a regular relationship, and thus a sort of 'contract' where the two parties each have their responsibilities. The thing is to be clear and transparent. Youth are wary of manipulation and manoeuvring behind their backs, and rightly so.

In our parties, a climate of respect must exist in which youth can feel at home.

• 'Liberation! 95', an educational conference sponsored by the radical youth quarterly of the same name, is being held on Sunday 16 July at London's Covent Garden. For details, phone Rod on (01895) 851981.

New Australian organisation recognised by World Congress

"Over ten years of hard Labor"

AUSTRALIA'S Labor Party, in government since 1983, has been implementing austerity policies on working people with the support of the trade union bureaucracy.

K. GOVINDAN spoke with DAVID FAGAN from *Solidarity* on the eve of the recent World Congress of the Fourth International.

Solidarity is the new sympathising group of the International in Australia.

What is the impact of the Labor government's policies on working people?

OUR ATTITUDE to the government is summed up in the popular term "Over Ten Years of Hard Labor"! While the Labor Party's constituency is still the trade union movement and working people generally, its role has been to demoralise and demobilise the working class.

One example is 'enterprise bargaining'. This device makes an individual workplace bargain for itself. Where there are large unionised units



a good deal is possible but in small factories and unorganised sectors, where women predominate, workers lose out.

The other major issue is 'The Accord': a social contract between the leaders of the unions and the government whereby industrial peace is promised in return for wage deals. In real terms the Government has hardly given anything and workers constantly lose out.

Unemployment is 8.9 per cent — that's a reduction! — and inflation is quite low. That's cited as proof that 'The Accord' is working. The politics of 'The Accord' has demobilised the official labor movement so that the main struggles are in the community, especially in the state of Victoria. In New South Wales there has been an upsurge of activity against plans for a new runway which will be in

a working class area, forcing evictions and increasing sound pollution.

There is no real left in the Labor Party. Most socialists left it a long time ago. Its branches are small and ossified.

How has the far left responded?

ONE OF the major debates to be had with the comrades of the Democratic Socialist Party (DSP) is their call for unions to disaffiliate from the Labor Party. This is a dangerous move in the absence of a left wing alternative to Labor. In the real world, where the right is ascendant, it is these forces which will benefit.

A related disagreement we have with the DSP is their call for a vote for a bourgeois party, the Democrats, over the Labor Party.

What the comrades do is pose an organisational solution to a political problem. The problem isn't the link between Labor and the unions but the policies of the Labor Party.

What is the composition of the far left?

SINCE THE dissolution of the social democratic Communist Party of Australia, the two main groups originate in the Trotskyist tradition. The Democratic

Socialist Party (DSP) was affiliated to the Fourth International until 1985, but repudiated its Trotskyist programme. The other is the International Socialist Organization, (ISO) linked to the British SWP, which is now the larger of the two. Both are fairly sectarian organisations, which abhor the united front and intervene in campaigns and struggles solely to build themselves.

The progressive and important part of the DSP and the ISO which we in *Solidarity* are trying to learn from is to be more up-front about our politics and more professional about party-building. Just because we have a correct programme doesn't mean we will attract people to us. We have to fight for our politics and this is what we are beginning to do.

There was a regroupment conference of Trotskyists in Australia in April. What came of it?

WE DECIDED to reassert the politics of the Fourth International in Australia by transforming ourselves from a current into an organisation called *Solidarity*.

We are a small group with members in Victoria and New South Wales but we are committed to building a section of the FI in Australia.

We are leaders and activists in a number of movements, from Central and Latin America solidarity work to the women's movement, and especially the lesbian and gay movement where we have a national profile.

We are beginning to take our responsibilities much more seriously and asked the



World Congress of the Fourth International for recognition as a sympathising group.

This is a good start for us.

• To receive *International Solidarity*, the bi-monthly review of *Solidarity* by air, send a cheque for A\$15 to *Solidarity*, PO Box A105, Sydney South, Australia.

Remembering the fallen

Ernest Mandel opened the conference by remembering fallen comrades.

He mentioned Sarah Lovell, a long time US Trotskyist, who was driven out of the US SWP by the team around Jack Barnes.

He also honoured other veteran Trotskyists Raymond Molinier and Lou Guohua.

Molinier played a talented role in the building of the French Section, until breaking from our politics, though he continued to have friendly relations with the Fourth International.

national.

Lou Guohua was an important Chinese Trotskyist who went on to develop the Marxist movement in Hong Kong. (*Socialist Outlook* recently published an obituary by Wang Fanxhi).

Mandel also spoke of the passing of Edmund Samarakkody, a long time figure on the Sri Lanka left who had a somewhat troubled relationship with the Fourth International over many years.

CENTRE STAGE



Bosnian General Alagic now determined to break the seige of Sarajevo

Left on the wrong side of Bosnia war

The willingness of the Bosnian army to fight – with some apparent success – to break the siege of Sarajevo has not gone unnoticed by the left in Britain. Unfortunately, the conclusions drawn by most of the British left are fundamentally wrong. Here and on the facing page, GEOFF RYAN looks at the newly-formed 'Committee for Peace in the Balkans' and the deepening errors of the SWP.

Lift Bosnia arms embargo

THE WAR in Bosnia has reached a new stage. The Bosnian government has decided to try to relieve Sarajevo before the winter.

Much of their ambiguity towards UN forces has gone.

Instead of trying to play the UN off against Serbian forces they have realised, at long last, that the UN has its own agenda and is not going to be trapped into theirs.

Direct

An important result of this policy shift is that they are calling for the lifting of the arms embargo in a far more direct way, and telling the UN that if the price of lifting the embargo is that the UN would leave then

they should go as soon as possible – and take the embargo with them!

It is impossible to tell if the BH army is capable of breaking the seige of Sarajevo since the balance of heavy weapons remains heavily against them.

Recapture

What is clear is that they feel that despite new supplies of arms from Milosevic to the Bosnian Serb forces they now have the military capability to begin taking back some of the occupied lands.

This will be bolstered further if as expected Croatia launches a campaign before the end of the summer to recover the almost one third of Croatia still occupied by the Serbs.

What is also clear is that

unless there is a dramatic change in the political and military situation far worse horrors await the Bosnian population this winter.

Already there is actual starvation in some of the enclaves, particularly Bihac. Sarajevo itself is little better. There is no electricity and little water. Both the airport and all aid routes are closed.

Nor will this be improved by the UN in any of its guises – UNPROFOR or the so-called rapid reaction force. The Bosnians have already realised that this force is not rapid nor is it going to react in their defence.

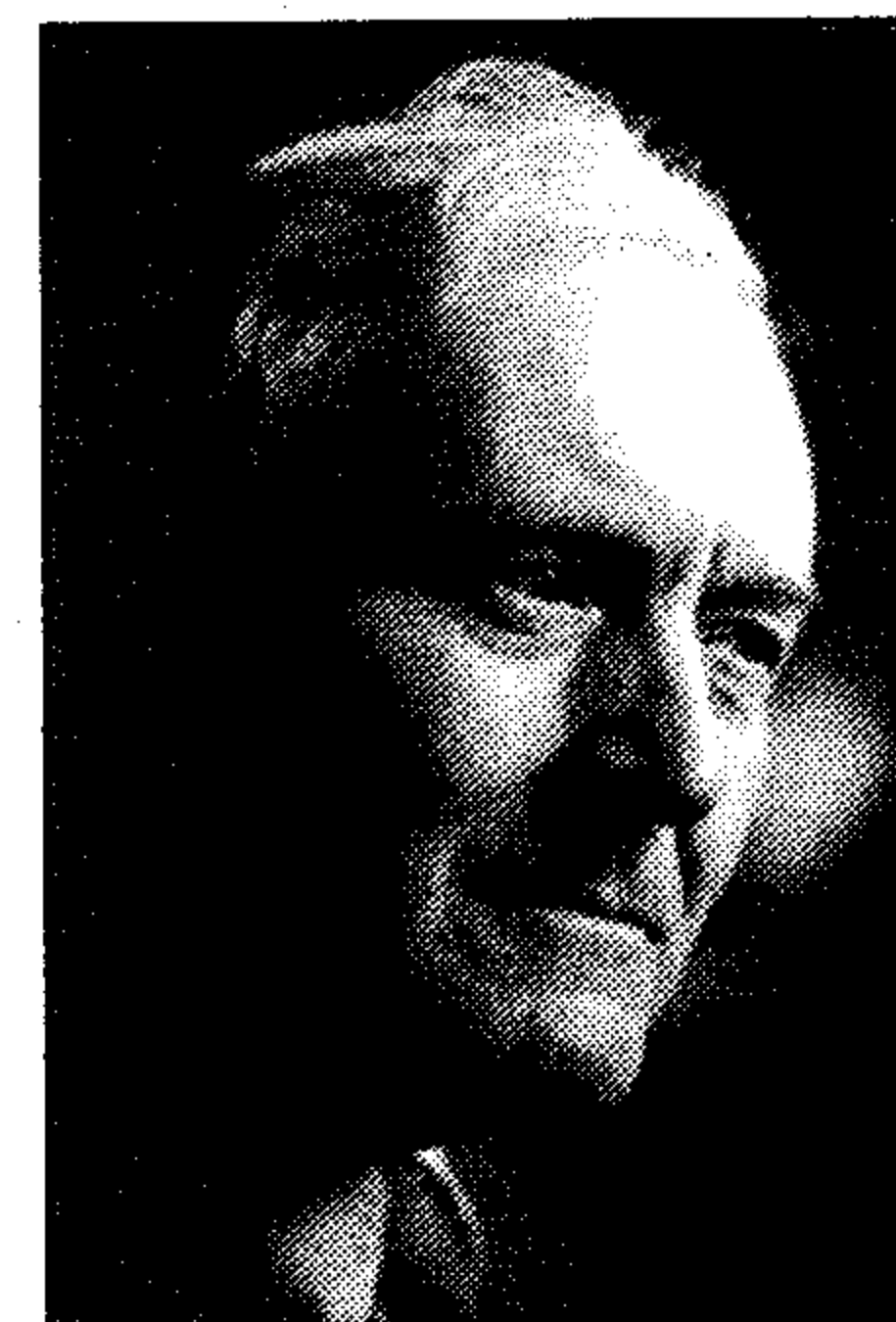
Its purpose is better protection for the UN forces themselves and/or to cover a UN withdrawal – and the sooner the better.

AT THE RECENT meeting of the Committee for Peace in the Balkans Tony Benn and Tam Dalyell argued that the war in Bosnia is simply a civil war between the different nationalities.

We should oppose sending more U.N. troops and should demand maintenance of the arms embargo. The only people who will benefit from lifting the arms embargo are the 'merchants of death'. All we can do is argue in favour of humanitarian aid.

All of this was accompanied by stridently anti-German sentiments, including from Tony Benn. For Benn the war in Bosnia (and previously in Croatia) was the result of a German plot to break-up the former Yugoslavia.

Michael Foot's support for the people of Bosnia was re-



Anti-German: Tony Benn

duced by Benn to a 'Foot/Thatcher axis' - an amalgam of which Stalin himself would be proud.

It is somewhat rich of Benn to attack Michael Foot (whose views are by no means identical to Thatcher's) in such a manner when he is himself in a formal alliance with Alfred

Sherman. [See box opposite].

This analysis was vociferously challenged from the floor by supporters of the Alliance to Defend Bosnia-Herzegovina, *Socialist Outlook*, *Workers Press* and the many Bosnians and Croats present - all of whom were in favour of withdrawing U.N. troops and letting the Bosnians defend themselves.

No civil war

It was pointed out that the war in Bosnia was not a civil war but a war of aggression by Serbia (and at times Croatia) against an independent state. Radovan Karadzic does not speak for all Bosnian Serbs, that is a distortion by the western media. In the cities in particular Serbs, Croats, Bosniacs and other nationalities continue to fight side by side against Karadzic's attempt to carve up Bosnia.

The war in Bosnia is between those committed to a multi-national, multi-ethnic Bosnia and those in favour of ethnically pure states. It is a war between those opposed to racism and those in favour of racially pure states. Socialists have to take sides.

Opposition views were, to say the least, unwelcome. Alice Mahon, chair of the meeting, indignantly protested at the claim that "all those who aid the aggressor are guilty for every dead civilian in Bosnia and Herzegovina" – ignoring the fact that this was the view of the trade unions of Tuzla, made in a statement by them to the meeting.

Graveyard

The only 'Peace' on offer from the Committee for Peace in the Balkans is the peace of the grave.

Indeed, a more appropriate name, as Francis Wheen suggested in the *Guardian* recently, would be the Committee to Hand Bosnia Over to Belgrade.

Socialists have to challenge the fundamentally reactionary views of this committee wherever it tries to raise its head, and particularly in the labour movement.

ANC kicks its Charter into touch

By Charlie van Gelderen

THE FINAL whistle has blown. The Springboks - 14 whites and one black - have defeated the favourites New Zealand.

In the presidential box Nelson Mandela, dressed from head to foot in the once-hated green and yellow Springbok colours, dances a jig. He joins in singing of the Afrikaaner national anthem, Die Stem.

The whole country goes into a euphoric rhapsody not a million miles from the enthusiasm which hailed the first non-racial elections a year ago.

This outbreak of national fervour has come just in time for Mandela's crisis-ridden government. Mandela and the South African ruling class are hoping that the new found national enthusiasm for rugby will do the same for the working class. If you can't give

them bread, give them circus.

The hopes aroused in the masses by the end of apartheid have not been fulfilled. There is growing militancy in the labour movement.

June saw the first nationwide half-day strikes since the elections. They were against the persistent failure of the government to meet the demands of the workers – especially against the proposed Labour Relations Act (LRA). The principal aim of the act is to limit workers' right to strike.

Stability

This is made very clear by Ministry of Labour: "labour disputes can," they say "be avoided or resolved quickly and a climate of stability attractive to foreign investment created."

These restriction on the right to strike – one of the key demands of the Freedom Charter – is just one example

of what has happened to the document once considered central to the programme of the ANC.

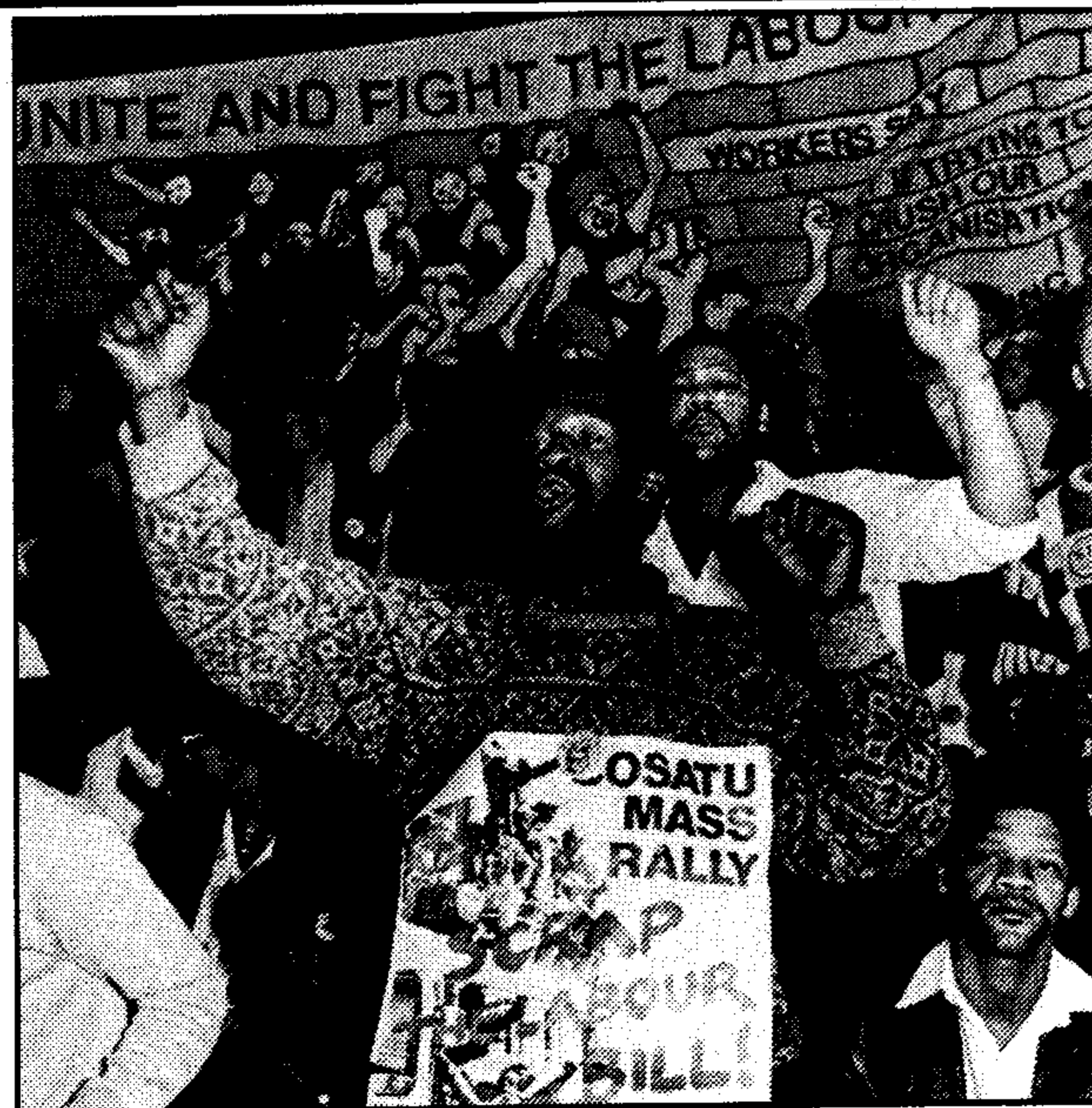
Protected on his left flank by his SACP allies, Mandela has been able to throw it into the wastepaper basket.

This is by no means all. Forgotten are the demands of the Freedom Charter for the nationalisation of key sectors of the economy.

Last October the cabinet announced a six-point plan to transform the public sector. It included the possibility of privatisation of government assets – ranging from surplus cars, other equipment and buildings, to major parastatals.

Of course, national and international capital are enthusiastic about these developments.

They see a chance to revive the previous regime's programme of privatisation of the major parastatals, giving them new opportunities to take over profitable functions of the nationalised sectors, greater for-



COSATU fighting anti-union laws, 1988

ign investment and stock exchange activity. Meanwhile, the economy continues to stagnate.

In the Eastern Cape, the cradle of the liberation movement, with 23 per cent average unemployment, each person in work supports four other people. Life expectancy is 59 years. Infant mortality is 58.2 per 1,000 live births.

Buthelezi is still stirring things up with his spurious demand for self-determination

for Kwazulu-Natal, adding to the regime's difficulties.

The Springbok victory will do nothing to resolve these problems. The people are now demanding the implementation of the Freedom Charter.

The only solution is the active intervention of the working class, and the implementation of the programme of the Workers Charter as demanded in the resolution at the COSATU congress in July 1989.

WORLD OUTLOOK

SWP ignores class line on Bosnia

'When in a hole, stop digging' is a useful maxim in politics. It appears, however, to be one that the leaders of the Socialist Workers Party have never heard of.

They continue to justify their refusal to defend Bosnia - despite (or, more likely, because of) mounting opposition amongst their members to such wrong and fundamentally reactionary analyses. The most recent attempt is by Duncan Blackie in the July/August edition of *Socialist Review*.

In order to defend the SWP's line Blackie has to falsify the real nature of the war in Bosnia. He acknowledges that the division of Bosnia was cynically decided upon by Croatian President Tudjman and Serbian President Milosevic, but implies the war started simply as a result of them stirring up ethnic conflicts within Bosnia.

He fails to mention the invasion of Bosnia by the Serbian army, accompanied by fascist and semi-fascist bands. He fails to mention the invasion (on a lesser scale) by Croatian troops and fascistic gangs.

Blackie argues that the war is not between oppressed and oppressors. The Muslims of Bosnia, he claims, were not an oppressed group before the war started.

That is true - but it is also totally irrelevant. Once Bosnia was invaded the Muslims - and all those opposed to the policies of Milosevic or Tudjman - became oppressed.

Fascist gangs

If having your country militarily invaded, having your cities constantly bombarded, being slowly starved to death, being driven from your home because of your ethnic background, being murdered by fascist gangs, having your cultural symbols destroyed and so on, is not oppression then we eagerly await Duncan Blackie's ex-



Ethnic cleanser Karadzic has found unlikely support from British left

planation of what oppression actually is.

The traditional Marxist position, most clearly expressed by Lenin, is for the right of nations (not oppressed nations, but simply nations) to self-determination. Lenin denounced slogans about 'defence of Belgium' during the First World War precisely because the war was not being waged over Belgium. It was simply an inter-imperialist war aimed at grabbing colonies from rival powers.

Lenin accepted that Belgium had a right to exist, and argued that if it were simply a question of opposing German aggression then Socialists should support Belgium (itself an imperialist power.)

In the case of Bosnia we do not even have the complication of an inter-imperialist war. Nor does Bosnia oppress the equivalent of the Belgian

Congo. Perhaps Duncan Blackie knows more about self-determination and the socialist attitude to wars than Lenin who, unlike Blackie, erroneously considered them to be class questions?

Since even Duncan Blackie is forced to recognise that the Bosnian government still contains Serbs and Croats, it is difficult to see how he can claim such a multi-national government has the same aim as Karadzic, the creation of an ethnically pure state.

How can a multi-national army, in which the Second Command is a Serb, have the same aims as Karadzic's thugs who murder people simply because of their nationality?

We certainly have many differences with the policies of the Bosnian government but Duncan Blackie's characterisation of their aims and

policies is pure fiction.

For a member of such a workerist current as the SWP, Duncan Blackie hardly mentions the working class.

But this is not really surprising. Even the most cursory glance at the policies and activities of the Bosnian workers' movement will totally demolish the SWP's claim that the war in Bosnia is simply between three equally reactionary nationalist parties, all with 'objectively' the same aims.

Duncan Blackie refers to Tuzla as a 'Muslim' town. Is he totally unaware that Serbs and Croats also live in Tuzla? Does he not know that the trade unions of Tuzla are multi-national? Does he not know that the administration of Tuzla is multi-national, with broadly Social-Democratic politics.

Has he ever heard of the Serb Civic Council and the Croat

Lefts join right behind Karadzic

Q.1. Where are anti-racists united with a friend of Jean-Marie Le Pen?

Q.2. Where are anti-racists united with apologists for 'ethnic cleansing'.

Q.3. Where are anti-war activists united with apologists for war criminals?

THE ANSWER to all three questions is The Committee for Peace in the Balkans.

This organisation held its first public meeting on Monday June 26 in the House of Commons. About 120 people turned up to listen to Tony Benn, Tam Dalyell and Alice Mahon.

The Committee for Peace in the Balkans consists of people who have played important roles in opposing imperialist wars in the past.

Morning Star

In addition to Benn and Mahon there are Dennis Skinner and Diane Abbott, leading members of CND, supporters of the *Morning Star*, and the ex-Trotskyists of *Socialist Action*.

Many of these forces have also played an important role in building the Anti-Racist Alliance and the National Assembly Against Racism. It is somewhat surprising, therefore, to find that one of their allies is Alfred Sherman.

In the 1930s Sherman fought in the International Brigades in Spain. But more recently he has worked as a speech-writer for Margaret Thatcher. He was also responsible for inviting French fascist leader Jean-Marie Le Pen to London.

Adviser

However, his most recent employment has been as an adviser to self-proclaimed Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic.

How can Tony Benn justify an alliance with this friend of Le Pen?

How can Diane Abbott justify an alliance with this apologist for racism? How can Bruce Kent justify an alliance with this apologist for a major war criminal?

It is an absolute disgrace that individuals and organisations claiming to be on the left, claiming to be anti-racist, are allied with this apologist for 'ethnic cleansing' and attempted genocide.

needs to make the effort.

And since Duncan Blackie has decided that, whatever their official position might be, the Bosnian government is 'objectively' only interested in creating a purely Muslim state, the SWP can continue to refuse to support Bosnia against aggression, can continue to argue that the Bosnian working class should be denied the arms they demand.

Socialist Outlook has large numbers of faxes from workers' and civic organisations in Bosnia and Croatia.

We would urge all members of the Socialist Workers Party to ask your leadership to ensure that they are published in *Socialist Worker*, so that the real views of the Bosnian and Croatian working class can be heard.

If the SWP are so convinced they are right, why should they refuse to do so?

Popular Council, which bring together hundreds of thousands of Serbs and Croats who want to maintain an independent Bosnia-Herzegovina?

If he ever bothered to read the material produced by the trade unions in Tuzla and Sarajevo, if he ever bothered to read the views of Selim Beslagic, mayor of Tuzla, if he ever bothered to find out the positions of the Autonomous Unions of Croatia or the Serb and Croat Councils he would learn that they are all in favour of a free, independent, multi-national Bosnia.

He would learn that they are all in favour of lifting the arms ban so that the people of Bosnia can defend themselves from aggression.

But since Blackie considers that forces other than Izetbegovic hardly exist then he obviously doesn't think he

Bosnia unions denounce Balkan Committee

We publish here extracts from an appeal has been sent to the British parliament from the Congress of Independent Trade Unions of Bosnia Herzegovina and the Municipal Trade Union Council in Tuzla. *Socialist Outlook* thanks Branka Magas for the translation.

HELP from those who do not know, or do not wish to know, that the sovereign state of Bosnia Herzegovina has suffered aggression from Serb extremists - who have grabbed all the arms from former

Yugoslavia - is not necessary.

The Serbian aggressors, aided by Serb extremists from Bosnia Herzegovina, under the motto "All Serbs in One State" kill all the people who do not belong to the Serb nation, especially Bosniacs and Croats, and are destroying the material, spiritual and cultural heritage which has been created by the people through the centuries.

On those territories where there are Karadzic's Serbs, Catholic churches have been destroyed as well as 800 mosques and many cemeteries. They have been bombarding the civilian population for 4 years now, in the cities and villages, killing adults and children. They cut off energy sup-

plies, gas, water and food.

And you, from the "Committee for Peace in the Balkans" call this a civil war between the sides in the conflict.

There is no civil war here. What we have here is fascist aggression using the most monstrous methods, enacted by the Serbian aggressors. And we are the victims with limited scope to defend ourselves because, of all the [United Nations'] resolutions, the only one that is being upheld in full is the one relating to the arms embargo on the Bosnians.

The Serbian aggressors have sufficient armaments to go on killing us for a further ten years.

We do not look for you to fight for us. Nor do we wish anyone to be killed

to save our lives. We seek: either the lifting of the arms embargo; or that the world community disarm the Serbian aggressors in Bosnia Herzegovina; and to ban traffic of all types from Serbia except for humanitarian aid.

The action of the "Committee for Peace in the Balkans", under the slogan of **No Military Intervention in Bosnia** is an action to aid the aggressor.

You from the Committee are supporting humanitarian aid, but you are not asking the Serb aggressor to stop killing civilians. You would wish to send us humanitarian aid so that we may be able to eat and thereafter to be killed by the aggressors' shells. Such aid we do not need.

Why do you not lead an action to open Sarajevo - where Bosniacs, Croats, Serbs and Jews live together without food, medicine, water, electricity or gas?

On the territories of Bosnia Herzegovina controlled by the legal government, we all live and work together, regardless of nationality, religion, race or party affiliation.

We seek a humane response to our tragedy, and all those who aid the aggressor are guilty for every dead civilian in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Sijercic Fikreta, President, Congress of Independent Unions of Bosnia Herzegovina.

BOSNIA SOLIDARITY

Sri Lanka: "Workers want to march into factories and take them over"

The ethnic war between the Sinhala majority Sri Lankan government and the Tamil Minority Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) resumed on 19 April 1995. The death toll in the first month of fighting has exceeded 500, including many civilians.

SOCIALIST OUTLOOK spoke to a leader of the Nava Sama Samaja Party, Vickramabahu Karunaratne, about the background to the renewal of the twelve year old conflict and current political events in Sri Lanka. The interview took place in London on 14 June 1995.

What is the impact of the IMF/World Bank policies on Sri Lanka?

The peasants in the rural areas are being turned into human dust. They lose their land, ecology, traditions, culture, history and everything. Even the workers who get jobs find them at a low skilled, low pay level.

They have lost their trade union rights. In the Free Trade Zones, women workers drawn from the rural areas exhaust themselves for two to three years trying to save some money and return to their villages in order to marry.

The struggle of the LTTE and the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) are linked to this. These youth come from the same rural petty-bourgeois background. They have been robbed of everything. They have nowhere to turn.

They are fighting for their motherland, dignity and existence. Of course they have different slogans: one says they want Tamil liberation, the other says they want Sinhala liberation.

We have had a number of wars both in the Tamil and Sinhala areas. Two hundred thousand have died. There has been a terrible brutalisation of society. 60,000 have 'disappeared' in the south. These are the fruits of 'development'. Very few have benefitted. This is a system that can't survive.

We are told that poor countries have no alternative to this misery.

The only alternative is a global one. It is an alternative where multi-national companies, the Bretton Woods institutions and banks and financial institutions don't have free rein over the world. In Sri Lanka a revolutionary government would have to take over imports and exports and foreign exchange and the banking system.

Our first task is national liberation and democracy: the tasks which have been left undone

by the bourgeois revolution. This is what permanent revolution is all about.

Secondly, we have to mobilise people on a democratic basis. Real democracy has to be achieved. We have to change the electoral system from regional electorates to social electorates such as work-places, universities, barracks, villages, professions - including housewives.

We must fight for a universal franchise and a plural system. Parties should be able to put their views and fight, but representatives of the social groups should be elected and then from this college of people we could select national leaders.

So from representing property, land, areas, minerals, resources, we move to representation of social relations. That is what we mean by the soviet system. Under such a system the working people will be better represented.

Women's liberation is central to this transformation of society. Women's liberation is not

Fourth International and asked our opinion on what needs to be done. In India the workers parties are powerful, but they don't want to take power because they don't have the right programme.

Why has war restarted?

The Peoples Alliance (PA) government came to power [in the August 1994 elections] giving the impression that it would elaborate proposals for autonomy for the Tamil speaking people.

There was mass pressure for such a package. Even the LTTE was drawn into a peace process. However, after six months of waiting and various discussions with the LTTE, the PA failed to produce any proposals. The LTTE was merely waiting for popular enthusiasm to subside to resume fighting.

What kind of movement is the LTTE?

The LTTE is a national liberation organisation with bourgeois leanings. It is not a demo-

cratic party or one that has real mass support. It has eliminated all opposition to it, including the NSSP, in the Tamil areas.

Our leader and founder, Annamalai, was brutally murdered by them in spite of the fact that he was one of the greatest fighters for the liberation of Tamil speakers.

Whatever our criticisms, it has given respect to Tamil people. The Sri Lankan government and bourgeois parties in the south are prepared to negotiate with the Tamil speaking people because of the strength of the LTTE. It therefore has a dual character. It is opposed to any movement in its areas it does not control. At the same time it is fighting the oppressive Sinhala chauvinist regime.

On the other hand we believe the SLFP to be a bourgeois party; a party that will carry out World Bank dictates when it comes to power. It has become a reformist party without reforms and a populist party without a populist programme!

By joining with them in this coalition the Left parties have made a major blunder far worse than they did in 1964. In 1964 at least certain left reforms were possible. The 1970 popular front government carried out nationalisation of 70 per cent of the economy including expropriation of multi-national companies.

We predicted this government would soon adopt the programme of the UNP once in government. This is exactly what has happened. Many of our former critics now accept that we were justified in not joining the Peoples Alliance.

Of course in areas where we didn't stand our own candidates in the August Parliamentary election, we called on the masses to vote for the PA and to give preference to left candidates on the PA slate.

In the November Presidential election we gave critical support.

While explaining to the people the weaknesses of their programme it was important to recognise that the mass movement to topple the UNP would be very valuable, and to encourage it. The people who have lost faith in the government are fighting. Workers want to march into factories and take them over.

They want the right to form trade unions and change the running of their work-place. This struggle is continuing. In the student movement there is increased activity. In the rural areas, the peasantry is fighting against austerity measures of the International Monetary Fund. The final stroke was the resumption of the war.

A polarisation is occurring within the PA. Before long certain sections may break away from the PA. We expect a left current to emerge from the PA. At its base people are already breaking away and joining us. Some of the SLFP backbenchers could be part of this new current. The combination of this break-off, with the NSSP and the JVP and some sections of the Tamil liberation movement which stand for democracy and autonomy, could form a new political alternative. This could happen within the next few years.

What is the strength of the left in the PA and what debates are they having?

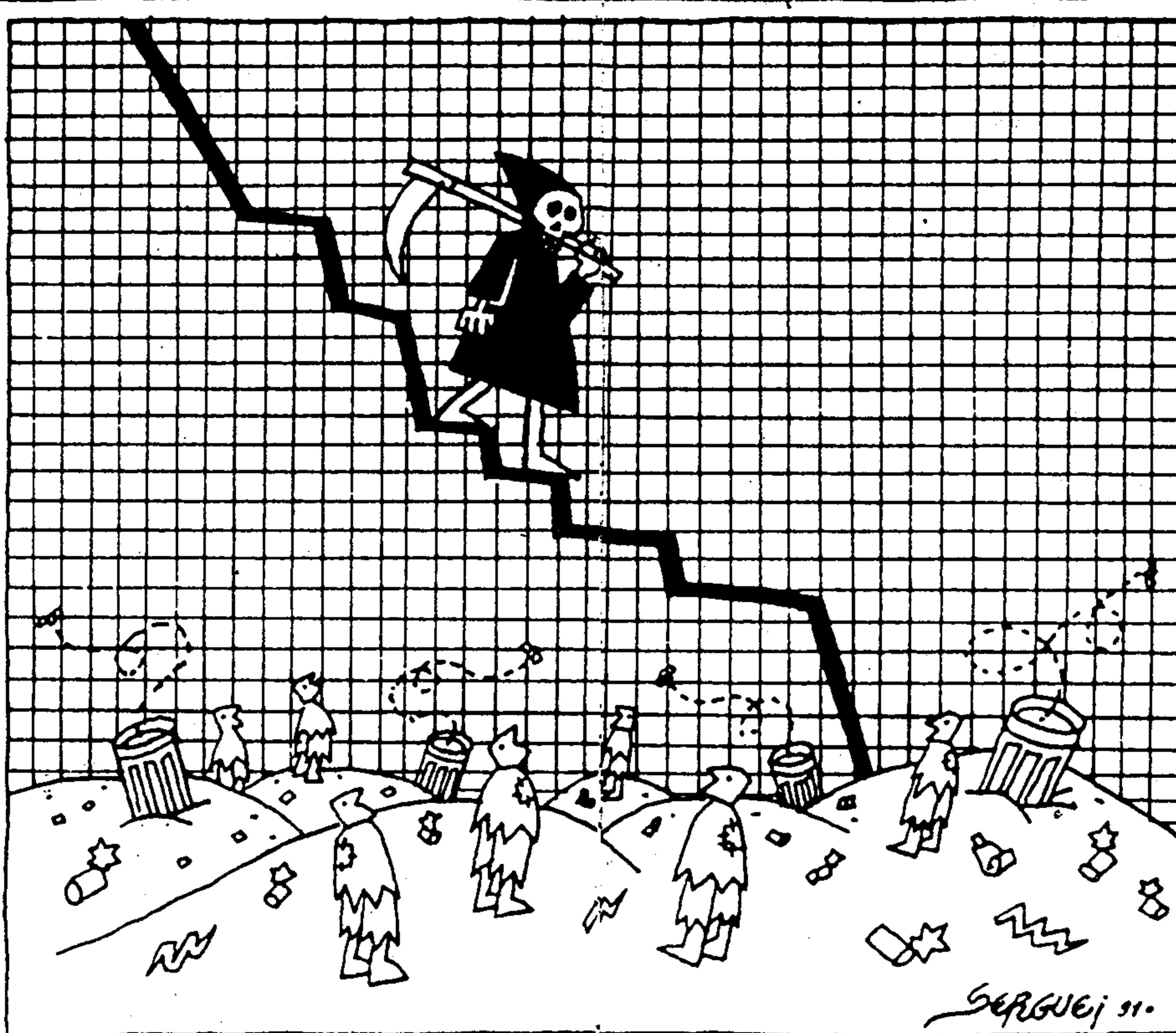
The Left, including the Lanka Sama Samaja Party and the Communist Party, is very weak. Presently the PA programme is very conservative. There is no talk of socialism any more.

The Left is weakened by divisions. And the PA leaders have not achieved what they expected. Those running the PA were with the UNP till the last moment, and crossed over to the PA because they realised the UNP was no longer the instrument to defend the rights of the bourgeoisie. They have done a beautiful take-over job.

The Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (Peoples Liberation Front) has been regrouping. What do you make of its current trajectory?

The JVP has now shed its racist section. It has sought our assistance in fighting the Janatha Mithuro "Friends of the People" fundamentalists. We have formed a common front to fight racism and the growing threat of fascist organisations.

There are various struggles taking place against the IMF/World Bank diktats, among workers and in the student movement. The Nava Sama Samaja Party is trying to unite them and form a left alternative to this government.



a matter for women alone. Women are the real producers and the majority of day to day affairs should be in their hands. Women's liberation is therefore tied up with socialist revolution. Similarly, socialism is not possible unless the environmental crisis is resolved.

Likewise the national question. This is not an issue which can be solved overnight. It hinges on the plurality and diversity of humanity. A national identity represents a cultural, linguistic history. Thus even in socialist societies the issue of self-determination is raised - you can't have homogeneity.

Finally there must be extensive agrarian reforms so that the tiller is entitled to the land, the fisherfolk to the boat, and so on.

We cannot carry out the tasks I have outlined in isolation. We have to look at the international arena. For us here all our energy and resources should be diverted towards extending the revolution to India. The Indian sub-continent is fermenting. This is demonstrated by the fact that a Left government has come to power in Nepal.

They are groping for answers. They have contacted the

SLFP.

Most certainly. We were always willing to fight against the repressive UNP. On many occasions we led joint struggles along with the SLFP.

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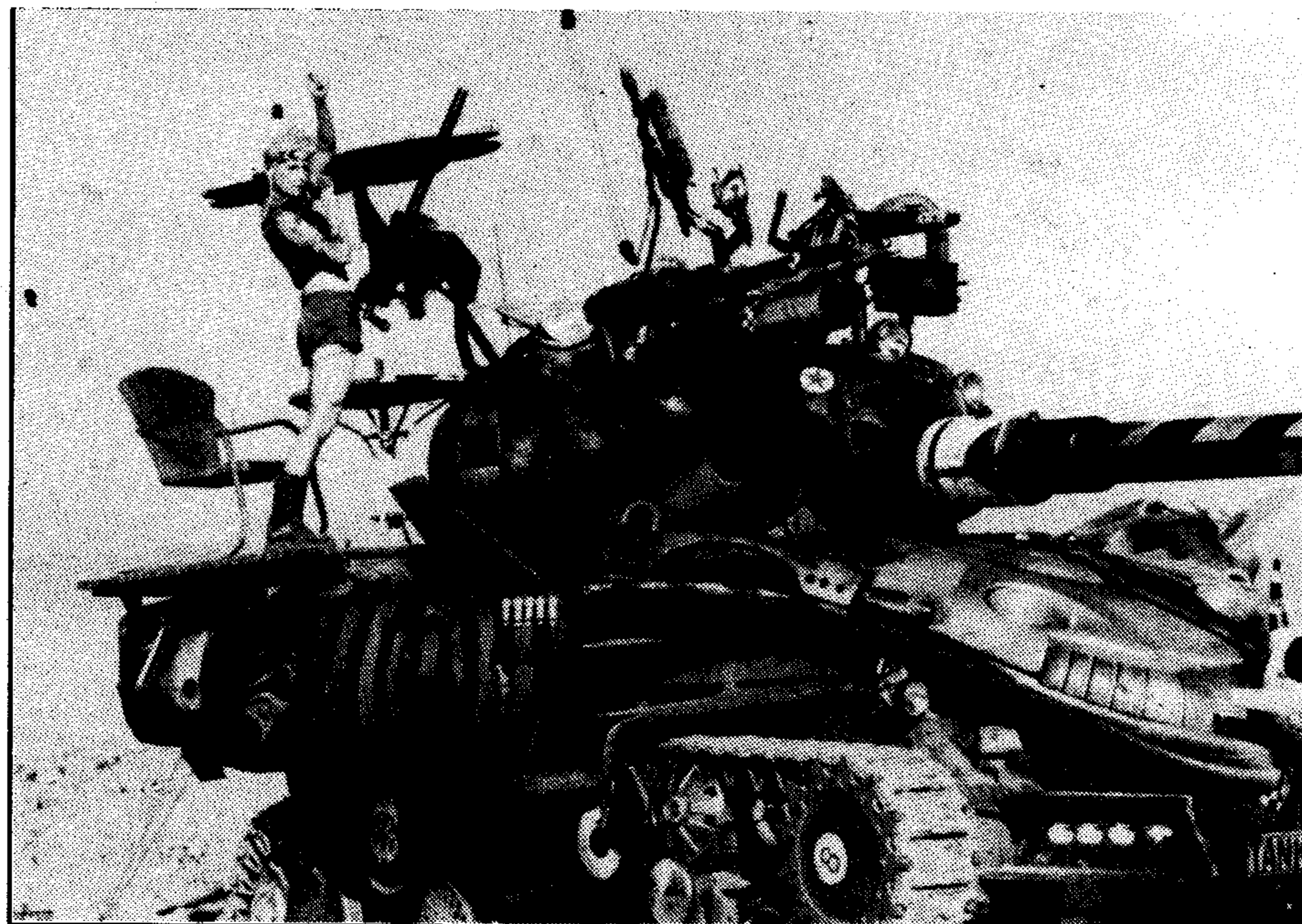
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WORLD OUTLOOK

International Institute For Research And Education World Bank/IMF: ENOUGH!

Susan George, Michel Chossudovsky and others analyse the autocracy that is strangling the third world, and present voices from the growing global movement challenging the new world disorder. This special double issue of the IIRE's Notebooks for Study and Research, is available from the IIRE, Postbus 53290, 1007 RG, Amsterdam, Netherlands. Send a £3.50 cheque payable to Pierre Rousset.

Available in French or Dutch for US\$10 from CADTM, Plantijnstraat 29, 1090 Brussel, Belgium.



Anything but sweet: Lori Petty plays squeaky version of Tank Girl

Tanking through Hollywood

By Kathryn Marshall

Don't tell anyone, but in my dark and solitary moments I sometimes think how great it would be to blast through life insulting everyone, invariably male, who got in my way.

It wouldn't be too bad to feel you could sleep with anyone (or any living creature, come to that) so long as they took your fancy without even the merest twinge of a sexual hang-up.

In Hewlett and Martin's cartoon this woman has such a fantastic time of it — saving the world and verbally abusing and physically obliterating power-hungry scum is all in a day's work for her.

She is free from all the constraints that trap us and, although it's not exactly practical to be her, we can all have our moments of fantasy, can't we?

How was such a trail-blazer going to fit into a Hollywood box when the whole point about her is that she didn't fit into any boxes? Hollywood's answer is to

change her.

The film opens with an animated sequence of the original cartoons with a loud and proud song "Girls U Want". Then it cuts to actress Lori Petty, Hollywood's Tank Girl.

It is hard as a mere human being to pack the kind of energy into your character that a cartoonist can convey with deft touches with a pen or speech bubble with "POW!" written in it. Petty does very well on the energy scale.

As *Sight and Sound* mentions, Tank Girl would never have had Petty's

plucked eyebrows, but the point is that she would have done what she damn well liked.

However, the person who gave our heroine a cutesy, squeaky drawl has a lot of explaining to do.

After two hours of listening to this voice most closely resembling the candy-floss Frenchie, Grease's Beauty School Drop-Out, you really want the 'real' Tank Girl to step up and deal with her.

In the film she is also given a daughter. Are your 'Women must-be-good-mothers' alarm bells ringing

yet?

Mind you, she does give lessons to the effect that 'arse-lick' is a worse term of abuse than 'bum-wipe'. But what with a child in tow and the yucky voice, the whole thing does seem too cosy and sweet.

All this cuteness alters her image. She loses her defining quality as a completely independent woman who can make it alone. The director gives her a physical coyness absent from the cartoons—and even has her escape from the lecherous clutches of a guard by means of a kiss. Sacrilege!

She is also placed inside a community who band together against the evil boss of 'Water and Power'. Tank Girl has a very positive role in it, but essentially she is just one amongst many — her sharp edge is blunted.

This film clearly has a pretty progressive plot-line. The idea that those in power are squeezing everything from us and that we have to fight back is central. This has got to be good.

But Hollywood runs scared of showing us a woman free to be totally independent and assertive. Perhaps this a fantasy too far.

Digging up Engels again

'Reason in Revolt: Marxist Philosophy and Modern Science' by Alan Woods and Ted Grant, Wellred Publications, 1995

Reviewed by Jonathan Joseph

The Marxist philosopher Walter Benjamin has a story about a chess playing puppet. A Grandmaster player is hidden inside. This expert puppet he likens to the Stalinist version of Marx's theory of history. It wins out every time.

In this view history be-

comes an inevitable process, with a pre-ordained destiny - the communist nirvana. Society and science make steady progress through a number of predetermined phases. The puppet history is flawlessly directed.

Under Stalin this simple view of history was ruthlessly used to justify the brutal industrialisation of soviet society. Reformist socialism rests on a similar premise - the gradual cumulative changes in capitalist society growing into socialism.

Unfortunately some of these ideas have also crept into Marxism. In this book they are preminent.

Much of this is down to a misreading of the German idealist philosopher Hegel. According to Grant and Woods, Hegel came up with the basic laws and Marxists

just need to invert them - "real philosophy died with Hegel" they say.

This is presumably why there is no mention of Heidegger, Husserl or Wittgenstein, never mind Marxist philosophies like Althusser's, critical theory or all the current work being done by the critical realist school.

This gives the book a "timeless" air. It is as if all the work done by twentieth century Marxists has never happened.

But the problem is bigger than the authors' belief that all the problems of philosophy were solved a century ago. They have the wrong understanding of Marxism.

We cannot just "invert" Hegel's idealism. It remains idealist whatever way up it stands.

We have to extract ele-

ments that are useful and dump the rest, taking out the rational kernel from the mystic shell. This is what Marx did in Capital.

Nevertheless 'Reason in Revolt' is more serious than most efforts. It contains genuinely interesting material. The critique of reactionary genetic theories, like that in Richard Dawkins' 'The Selfish Gene', is particularly good.

Modern science

For those interested in keeping a check on modern scientific developments and theories, the book is also of value. It is a pity the leaders of *Socialist Appeal* chose not to pay contemporary Marxism the same regard.

However, despite its scope, the book does no more than take sides with

some theories rather than others. It has nothing particularly novel to say. It is an account rather than an argument.

For the authors, Engels is the be all and end all. His 'Dialectics of Nature' is held up as definitional.

There is a big problem here. Engels' book was based on a careful study of the most advanced scientific knowledge of the day to prove its theories. This was its strength.

Now it is a weakness. As the science loses its credibility, so too do some of Engels' claims about nature. Scientific knowledge often progresses by means of ruptures and revolutions which radically challenge previously held theories - the changes have discredited a number of Engels' positions.

This does not invalidate the whole work - but it does suggest that Marxism is more of a living, breathing, developing theory than the authors describe.

In keeping with Engels, Woods and Grant argue that philosophy is the "Queen of the sciences". Perhaps we should give it a less majestic role, but no less important, that of an 'underlabourer' for the sciences. Its job becomes to explain science's method, rather than to make substantive proposals.

Marxist philosophy is therefore implicit in its scientific method not some grand schema.

This means that there are some major questions remain for Marxist philosophy. It is not as cut and dry as this book might suggest.

REVIEWS

WHAT WE FIGHT FOR

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

Socialist Outlook exists to build a new type of working class leadership, based on class struggle and revolutionary socialism.

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

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

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

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

We reject reformism, not because we are against reforms, but because we know that full employment, decent living standards, a clean environment, peace and democracy, can never be achieved under capitalism.

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

We are a marxist current, based not on the brutish totalitarian parodies of state marxism, nor on the tame, toothless version of 'marxism' beloved by arm-chair academics, but the revolutionary tradition of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky.

Our socialist alternative is not based on parliamentary elections or illusions of peaceful legislative change.

We fight to mobilise and unleash the power of the working class to topple the

corrupt and reactionary rule of capital and establish its own class rule.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Contact us now, get organised, and get active!

No proper basis for new left journal

By Neil Murray

"Why are there so many left papers?" is one of the questions socialists get asked most often. Of course it would be a "good thing" if there were one paper that all revolutionaries organised around (and, by implication, one organisation), but the world is not that simple.

Important differences of analysis, programme, strategy and - flowing from them - tactics, mean that simply throwing different views into the same melting pot would lead to friction and a flying apart again pretty quickly.

While it would be sectarian to elevate minor differences into an obstacle to such co-operation, it would be equally unprincipled (and counter productive) to pretend serious ones do not exist.

Unification won't be brought about by wishful thinking but by argument and a testing out of ideas in practice.

But that is not the end of the story. While *Socialist Outlook* supporters do not currently see any other left tendency with which we could seriously produce a joint paper without compromising important aspects of our politics, we do see the need for a paper of the left of the labour movement, supported by activists from the unions and Labour Party, some of whom support particular tendencies, most of whom do not.

The necessity of this in the face of the bosses' and Tory onslaught, the refusal of almost all union leaders to fight back, and Blair's determination to move the Labour Party further and further away from one that represents working class interests, is glaring.

Broad agreement exists on these limited issues across much of the union and Labour Party left, which worked closer together during the fight over Clause IV than they have done for a long time.

Gulf

However, there is a large gulf between recognising the necessity of such a publication and realising it. Such a paper would not only need to be lively, campaigning and attractive to the uncommitted in ways that *Socialist Campaign Group News* and *Tribune* are not: it would also need to be under the democratic control of those who supported it and sold it.

There would need to be a democratic structure to which organisations like union broads lefts and local Campaign Groups could affiliate and send delegates, which would determine the broad



Genuine steps to unification on the left need much more than wishful thinking

outlines of policy and elect an editorial board which will be accountable to it.

Such an organisation does not currently exist, but needs to be built around the Socialist Campaign Group Supporters Network or the Socialist Policies for a Labour Government organisation set up at the June 17 post-Clause IV conference. Such an organisation is necessary in itself, and the question of a publication must be at the heart of building it.

There is however, currently an alternative option on the market. At its recent AGM, *Labour Briefing* voted to relaunch itself in the autumn, together with the publishers of the one-off *New Left*.

This project is neither a joint publication of left tendencies (and *Socialist Outlook* has serious differences with both those involved so far), nor that of the broad labour movement left, but a mish-mash of the two.

Accountability

While they want it to "reflect" the Socialist Campaign Group Supporters Network, they have no intention of handing the publication over to its accountable structures, but instead are inviting it to put one representative onto the EB.

This would mean that while some EB members are accountable to the broader

movement most are simply there as representing their own narrow tendency.

Apart from the unworkably large EB elected at the *Labour Briefing* AGM, there are no regular structures to which the publication is accountable. Indeed there could not be such a structure under these proposals because it would mean creating an additional organisation separate from the SCGSN.

It is for these reasons that *Socialist Outlook* supporters decided at a meeting on July 3 that they will not be taking up the offer to participate in the revamped *Briefing* but will continue to argue for a publication of the left of the labour movement.

Join the 300 Club monthly draw, get a free subscription to *Socialist Outlook* and a regular newsletter

For just £5 a month you too can get a chance to win £50! You can have as many chances as you want, with a far better chance than in the National Lottery!

This month's lucky winners are Steve Hall (Manchester), Stuart (Birmingham), and Carl (Birmingham)

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 Please pay to the Co-operative Bank PLC, 78-80 Cornhill, London EC3V 3NJ, sort code 08-02-28, for the account of Socialist Outlook Supporters' Fund, account number 70186297, the sum of £ in figures (£ in words) on the day of (month) 1995 and thereafter every month until countermanded by me in writing.
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HOME NEWS

CONTACT US NOW!

YES - I want to become a *Socialist Outlook* supporter.

Please tell me more about *Socialist Outlook*.

Name
 Address

Post code Phone

Send to *Socialist Outlook*, PO Box 1109, London N4.

Socialist Outlook Summer School in Aberystwyth, August 23 to 28, on the Welsh coast

THE POLITICS OF REVOLUTION

THIS YEAR'S school will be our second at Aberystwyth, with tremendous views overlooking Cardigan Bay. The town is a popular traditional resort, with a beach and promenade, a funicular railway and hilltop panorama, 45 pubs, shops and entertainment.

This year the school is a day longer, offering six days of discussion, debate, entertainment and relaxation.

Participants enjoy individual en-suite rooms, a free swimming pool and sports facilities, a bar, and exclusive use of a large all-day lounge. A creche for up to 15 children is available.

The school is open

COURSES AND SESSIONS INCLUDE:

Art and revolution; anarchism and the Spanish revolution; the origins of the revolutionary programme; Marx and Lenin on the State; Bolshevik party and youth; Stalin; Prokult, revolutionary press; permanent revolution; Post-war marxism; party, class and social movements; developments in popular culture; ecology; socialism after the fall of the wall; women and the revolutionary party; the popular 'introduction to Marxism' series; Women in Latin America; Bolshevik history; intensive course on the State; women revolutionaries; Revolutions - Germany, Russia, Vietnam and China; the Fourth International; fighting racism in World War Two; Gramsci; the National Question; and more!

to Socialist Outlook and Liberation! supporters, and those sympathetic to our ideas. The all-in fee for the school has been pegged at just £110 (waged) and £45 (unwaged) for the full six days.

We advise all comrades to come

for the whole school, and that is the cheapest way to stay: but for any who can only negotiate shorter holidays a sliding scale of charges will apply: Four nights £85/£42, three nights £70/£35, two nights £50/£25, single night



Constitution Hill gives breathtaking view of the Three Bays

£25/£15.

A deposit of just £35 (waged) or £15 (unwaged) secures your place. Make cheques payable to 'Socialist Outlook Summer School', and send to PO Box 1109, London N4 2UU. The first fifty bookings go into a mystery draw for a very special prize.

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What's HAPPENING

JULY

Fri 14

ASLEF rail strike

Sat 15

SMTUC conference with Tony Benn MP: 'New' Labour and the Unions 10.30am-5pm South Camden Community School, NW1 (Kings Cross and Euston tube) tickets £5/£3 from SMTUC 3 Blades House SE11 5TW.

Sun 16

LIBERATION '95 dayschool Covent Garden, London.

Tues 18

ASLEF rail strike

Fri 22 - Fri 29

INTERNATIONAL Youth Camp in southern France. Send £35 deposit to 'Liberation Publishing Association', PO Box 1109, N4 2UU.

Thurs 27

ASLEF rail strike

AUGUST

Tues 8

ASLEF rail strike

Weds 23 - Mon 28

SOCIALIST Outlook Summer School Aberystwyth. Send your £35 (waged), £15 (unwaged) deposit now to 'Socialist Outlook Summer School', PO Box 1109, London N4 2UU.

Fri 25

ASLEF rail strike

SEPTEMBER

Sat 9

ASLEF rail strike

IRELAND and the trade unions conference called by Manchester TUC.

Tues 12

ASLEF rail strike

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Socialist Outlook draws together the finest analysis of the trades unions and Labour Party with unequalled international coverage from Fourth International supporters in fifty countries worldwide. Your subscription also includes Liberation!, our youth quarterly, and the occasional review, theory+practice.

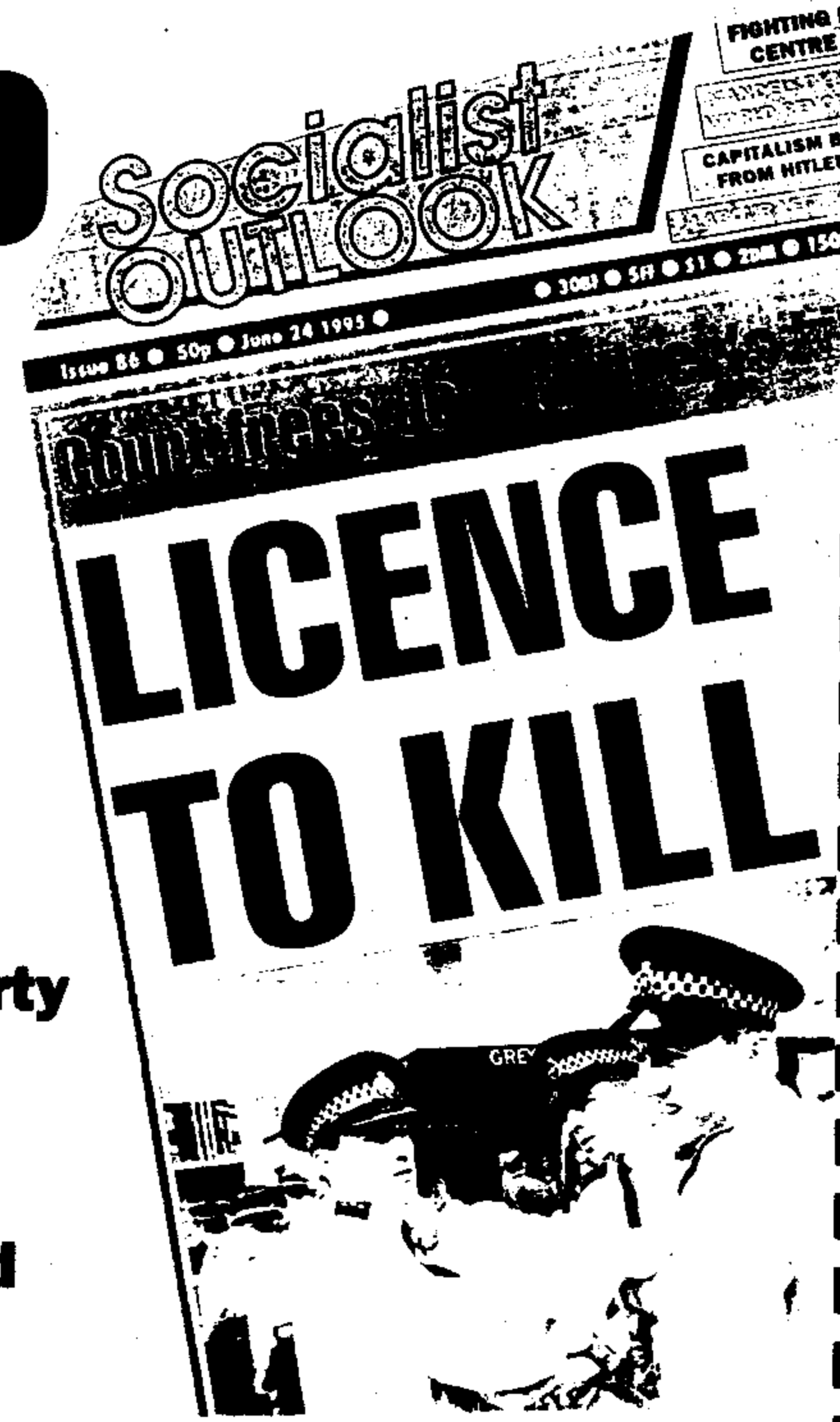
Send your cheque for £17 (one year) £9 (six months) to 'Socialist Outlook Fund', PO Box 1109, London N4 2UU. Libraries: £50 airmail worldwide. Surface: £22. Airmail: £38 far east, £30 rest of the world.

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SOCIALIST OUTLOOK

Howard uses racist Condon

Sir Paul Condon, Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police sparked off a storm of protest when he claimed that black people were responsible for 80% of muggings in London.

He called on a number of black "leaders" to support a conference later this month to discuss the "problem" of crime in the black community.

As with previous statements from Condon on "noble cause corruption", this was a thinly veiled signal to police to step up their repression, intimidation, harassment and fitting-up of black people.

Meanwhile the mounting list of horrendous racist attacks on black people and communities is met with apathy and inaction from Condon's Met and other police forces.

Many of the black people from whom Condon aimed to gain consent for a hard-line policy have been quite rightly enraged by his overt racism, which Condon tries to justify as merely being 'honest' about crime statistics.

Home Secretary Michael Howard has given his full support for Condon's actions, which, while they may be fairly



representative of the police's attitude to black communities can only serve to further racism within the police and within society.

Howard's hard line, linked with yet more attacks on asylum seekers, reinforce fears that a desperate Tory government will shamelessly play the 'race card' in the hope of winning reactionary votes at the next election.

In the early 1980s such racist comments from senior police officers were

commonplace. It was only in the aftermath of the riots in Brixton, Toxteth and across the country that the police were forced to review their public statements.

The Scarman enquiry attempted to whitewash the role of the police by both blaming the riots on "cultural practices" in the African-Caribbean community, and on the "prejudices" of a few low ranking police officers.

The Scarman Report was largely a cosmetic exercise, aimed at hiding the overall strategy of a police force that sees black communities and to a lesser extent white working class communities as a "problem" to be dealt with through repression. It also avoided addressing the question of the massive levels of poverty faced by the most oppressed sections of the working class.

What did result from the

there was also to be "community policing", and senior officers were to take far more notice of public relations aimed at black communities.

At the same time the state made a conscious effort to create a Black middle class, albeit a tiny minority of the black community.

Condon and Howard are now attempting to shift the balance away from public relations and towards greater repression. Whilst all their moves must be opposed, it is not enough to simply defend the status quo.

You don't need to be a sociologist to understand why poor people steal. If we are serious about fighting muggings and other crimes,

Black people and the Labour movement must develop their own agenda that both opposes police repression, and that offers a way out for whole communities that are currently condemned to poverty and deprivation.

Some of the statistics Condon fails to mention include the following:

- Black people are more likely to be stopped and searched by police
- African-Caribbeans in particular are much less likely to be cautioned or otherwise diverted from the courts, and more likely to be arrested.
- African-Caribbeans are more likely to face serious charges than white people for the same offence.
- African-Caribbeans are more likely to be charged for "victimless" crimes (e.g. driving offences)
- Black people are more likely to be remanded in custody
- Black people are less likely to have social enquiry reports ordered than whites.
- Black people are more likely to receive custodial sentences.
- Black people are less likely to receive probation orders.

No justice for battered women

EMMA HUMPHREYS has finally been released from prison after the appeal court ruled that she had been wrongly convicted of murdering rather than manslaughter of her violent husband.

She had served ten years in jail: Private Lee Clegg, on a life sen-

tence for murdering an Irish teenager, served just three years.

If women had not taken up her case, she would still be in prison.

Emma's case is likely to prove a landmark for future trials of women who hit back. But with dozens still serving long sentences, and violent men routinely pleading 'provocation' in their own defence, justice is still a long way off