

NS/18

# Socialist Outlook

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Russia in chaos: Asian "tiger" economies crash: Latin America under pressure ...

# Who's next for 'free market' treatments?

Reportage of the catastrophic crises which have swept through the economies of Indonesia, Korea, Thailand, Japan and now Russia is eerily reminiscent of the classic headline "Thousands killed - no Britons involved".

Smug journalists view these huge man-made disasters, with their appalling consequences for tens of millions, from the narrow and short-sighted perspective of the British economy and the safety of their stocks and shares.

Labour politicians try to persuade us that there are no dangers or lessons in these disasters for the British working class.

The fact is none of them predicted these tumultuous events in Asia. None predicted the pace of the Russian collapse. And nobody knows yet which economy will be the next to be laid low by the crisis of a sick and exploitative system.

Socialists will view the issue differently. We extend our solidarity with the workers of Indonesia, Korea and with the Russian working class. Their fight, and ours, must be to sweep away the wreckage of this wretched capitalist system, take the power from the bankers, the bosses and their generals, and build a socialist society to meet the needs of the oppressed, not line the pockets of the rich.

# Civil service: vote Socialist Caucus!

**George Thompson, Public Commercial Services SEC candidate (personal capacity)**

JOBCENTRE workers are facing increasing austerity attacks from the New Labour government, with diminishing resistance from union leaders in the newly-merged Public Commercial Services union (PCS).

The rightward shift of the Socialist Party-influenced PCS Section Executive has led to it recommending a

derisory pay offer, supporting the New Deal, and agreeing to the introduction of youth trainees into the Employment Service (ES) on pitiful wages.

Such policies have led to a break-up of ES Left Unity. Now the Socialist Caucus, a principled part of the former bloc, has decided to mount an electoral challenge to the Socialist Party and its allies for the SEC.

Although the split in the left vote risks allowing the Blairite "Moderates" to gain control of the Section Executive (SEC), many members are asking if they could be any worse than the current leaders.

The pay deal accepted by the present SEC was one of the poorest in the Civil Service, and was an embarrassment to other Left Unity PCS Section Executives. The Benefits Agency SEC, controlled by Left Unity, rejected a similar management offer.

The deal did not come close to a set of minimum demands previously promoted by the SEC as the least members should accept. They claimed they supported it because there was no mood amongst members for a fight, but this was not reflected at workplace meetings.

In organisational terms the PCS

has seen a massive membership decline in the ES in recent years. The London region, dominated by Socialist Caucus, has been one of the few areas to retain its strength.

However the 'left led' SEC ran an invisible campaign against the Jobseekers Allowance, and has supported New Deal.

By contrast Socialist Caucus has always argued it was opposed in principle to a scheme which is compulsory to the unemployed and allows the private sector to poach ES jobs.

Another major difference between Socialist Caucus and the SEC has been over National Traineeships (New Labour's replacement to YTS). The SEC has signed an agreement with management to allow 400 National trainees to work in the ES for £75 per week for between six months and two years.

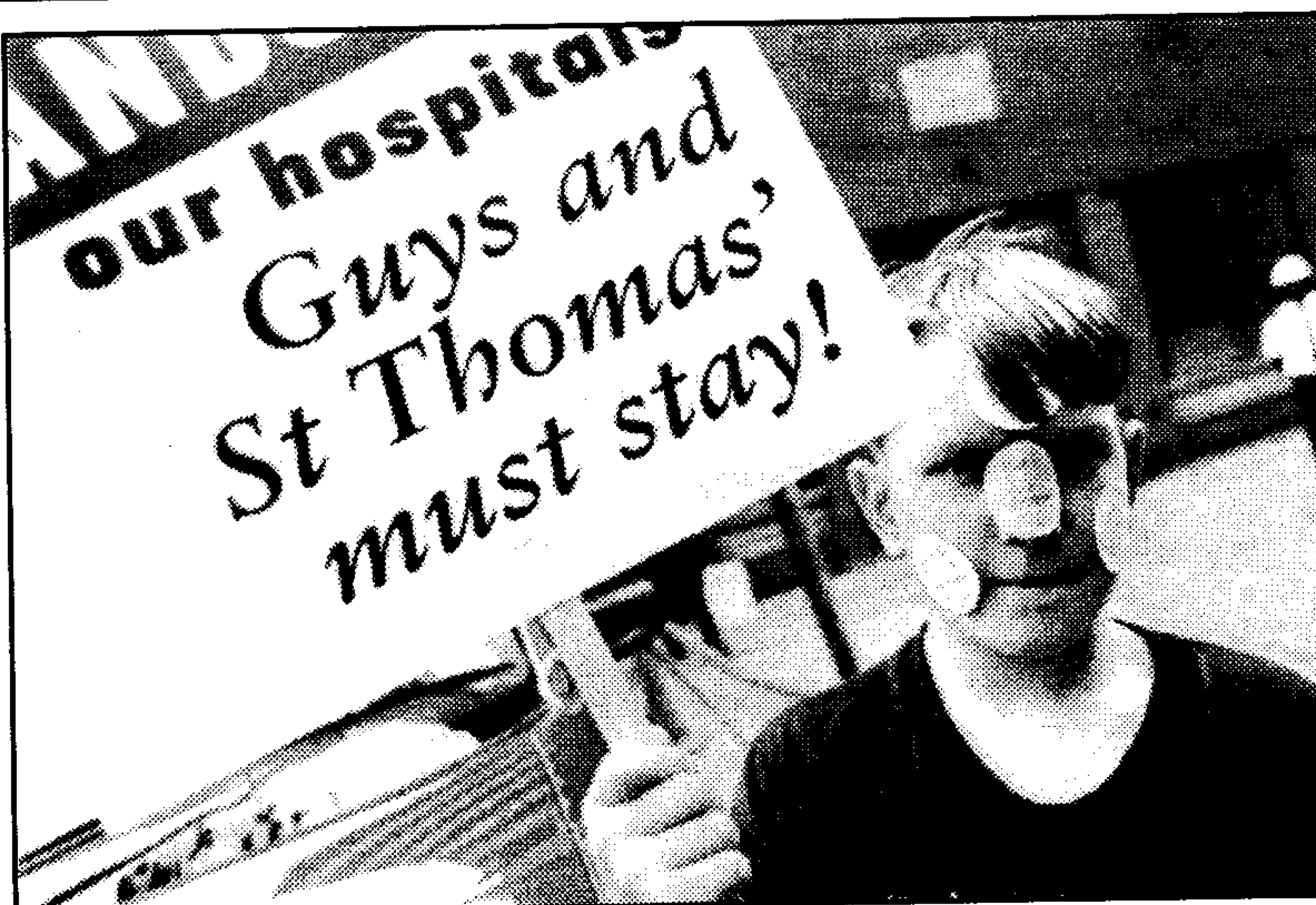
The Socialist Party itself carried a front page article in their newspaper (*Socialist* No. 75) unwittingly abusing their own leaders in the PCS for endorsing a youth 'slave labour scheme'. However later they retracted this article and tried to defend the indefensible.

The positions adopted by Socialist Party supporters and their allies in the ES in relation to New Deal and youth trainees are in contradiction to Left Unity policy, and it beggars belief that they may stand as Left Unity candidates in new elections.

Socialist Caucus has every intention of trying to win the elections and building a real fightback to the government's onslaught. Such a victory would not only benefit the sectional interests of Civil Servants, but the unemployed and the working class as a whole.

Vote Socialist Caucus!

**The positions adopted by Socialist Party supporters and their allies in the ES in relation to New Deal contradict Left Unity policy**



Closure of Guy's Hospital's A&E is the latest example of New Labour's line

## Canterbury tale of hospital closures

**John Lister**

CHAUCERIAN characters will again be walking the streets of central London in the week from September 14, as campaigners from the Kent and Canterbury Hospital dress up to make their case against its closure.

A contingent of protestors, dressed as characters from Geoffrey Chaucer's 14th century *Canterbury Tales* will be picketing the Department of Health in Whitehall and the House of Commons, handing out leaflets and information on the impact of the planned cutbacks.

They have urged other hospital campaigners to join in, though not every threatened hospital has the literary links of the Kent & Canter-

bury.

Meanwhile the pressure is being maintained by campaigners in Oxfordshire - where the Community Health Council has formally opposed cuts in community hospital beds, forcing health ministers to take the final decision, and in Worcestershire, where the fight against closure of Kidderminster Hospital is poised for a new stage.

Campaigners and the Community Health Council in the Wyre Forest district around Kidderminster are taking Worcestershire Health Authority to court later this month, demanding a judicial review of their decision to press ahead with closures that would axe 37% of beds in the county.

In West Hertfordshire, UNISON

and local campaign groups in Watford and in Hemel Hempstead are strongly resisting a plan to axe services and reduce the district to just one general hospital.

And in leafy Northwood in north west London, David Panter, the beleaguered chief executive of Hillingdon Health Authority has been panting hard. He has had to resort to the use of bouncers and bodyguards to protect him against the anger of local campaigners opposing HA plans to axe most in-patient services at Mount Vernon Hospital.

Among the services at risk is Mount Vernon's specialist plastic surgery and burns unit: its closure would leave just one unit - based at the traffic-clogged Chelsea and Westminster hospital on the Fulham Road, with no helicopter access - to cover a population of 5 million people in and around west London.

So strong is the local feeling against the cuts that crowds of up to 2,000 turned out to one of the HA's consultation meetings, with police adopting riot control tactics to contain the pensioners and local residents.

Despite Frank Dobson's recent claim to have halted the run-down of acute hospital beds, these and other cuts are being pushed through by health bosses across the country, driven in part by Gordon Brown's tight-fisted 3-year settlement for the NHS.

With health workers angered by an indefinite limit to their pay, and huge shortages developing of qualified nursing and professional staff, there is every chance that the level of activity will continue to increase.

## Rail engineers' dispute sharpens

**A Shovelhand**

THE RAILWAY maintenance engineers dispute is a struggle for justice against the hodge podge of rip off merchants who have dived into railway and track maintenance since spring 1996.

The dispute in some areas has sharpened markedly. GTRM maintains the West coast mainline from London Euston to North of Carlisle and other areas in the Midlands East and West.

Steve Hedley, a very good rep, has been sacked by them on trumped up charges, despite an inquiry which exonerated him on all four counts brought against him by management.

Steve, who is Irish, was among other things, accused of calling a strike-breaker "a Catholic bastard."! Apparently the complainant believed that he was a Protestant because he has a strong Northern Irish accent.

CCTV showed his clothing to be totally different from a description of him at the picket line incident when a contractor's van went through a picket line at Steve's London depot.

Accusations that Steve crossed a running railway track with no high-visibility safety vest on were contradicted by one manager. This charge is especially nasty as Steve has built a deserved reputa-

tion as a stalwart on health and safety issues, yet our brother remains dismissed despite police withdrawal of any charges.

Steve's and others' victimisations in the private companies are of growing importance not only to the RMT but to

manance of privatised rail companies (not only in maintenance areas) the RMT can only point to the facts and urge working class people to draw their own conclusions and to act on them.

The cowboy firms can no longer be allowed to "brass it out" as they are clearly trying to do. An

article in June 1998 *Labour Research* warns:

"Railtrack, which aims to save £80 million in maintenance costs (i.e. to increase profits from state subsidies) this year, bears prime responsibility for the dangerous and chaotic state of affairs on the rail system. They must be forced to shelve their plans on maintenance and to concede the demands enshrined in the "Blue Book" which the RMT presented in April this year."

There is confusion amongst some right wingers within the RMT about what to do. Jarvis workers have rejected their latest offer. The RMT decision to set up a national hardship fund for the maintenance engineers' dispute around a 25-30 per cent levy on branch management funds has met with open hostility in some quarters.

Negotiations are continuing over the Blue Book at present, with some companies such as Jarvis, Centrac and Amey apparently on the verge of conceding to the RMT proposals.

Please continue sending donations and messages of support to Maintenance Engineers Dispute Hardship Fund '98, Unity House RMT, Euston Road London NW1 2BL.

### Stop Press

**In the infrastructure dispute action was suspended whilst soundings were taken from the members in each of the affected companies. It has now been decided to further suspend action with some of the companies while talks continue.**

**In other companies it has been agreed to restart action in the form of an overtime ban and a ban on voluntary night work. The membership believe that given the nature of the companies. It has to be recognised that this is a serious climbdown by the union, reflecting the real problems which have arisen in maintaining the dispute.**

**The Steve Hedley defence campaign has received a fillip this week with the announcement of the ballot result of his fellow workers at Euston. An overwhelming majority have voted for industrial action. What form that takes will be decided next week - it will almost certainly mean all-out action at Euston. Continued practical support for the campaign for Steve's full reinstatement is called for from all in the London area.**

working class people and organisations everywhere.

Many reps are asking where is the Labour government in all this is? How can those companies - and GTRM is only one of a bad lot - be allowed to continue to be responsible for the railways?

Following ever worsening publicity concerning the perfor-

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# Apologists for US terror

**T**he Blair's knee jerk support for the terrorist Clinton in his numerous raids in Afghanistan and Sudan is contemptible.

Nothing gave him pause for thought: not even the fact that virtually all Western diplomats – and several British engineers – in Sudan have insisted that the factory destroyed in the raid had no military purpose.

While there has been massive opposition to these war crimes throughout the Arab world, active protests in Britain have been sadly muted. Nor should we be complacent that the world cop has finished flexing his muscles in this particular arena.

If either international or domestic politics require it, Clinton will have no qualms about launching further massacres. The left needs to be alert to the possibility that rapid responses will be needed.

Nor should we be complacent about the impact on the Arab and Muslim communities in Britain. As during the Gulf war, a wave of Islamophobia is likely to be whipped up with devastating consequences.

Already the 'respectable' *Guardian* has run stories about Islamic groups operating in Britain, which can have no other effect than to foment racial hatred. When this is put together with both the so called anti-terrorist legislation and the new Asylum Bill, the consequences are horrifying.

The Kurdish Community Centre in Haringey, North London suffered a serious fire bombing the night of the American raids which took three hours to extinguish.

While it seems likely that right-wing Turkish groups were behind the attack they may well have used the US war mongering as a cover.

At the same time Blair was quick to use

## EDITORIAL

the bombing in Omagh as a reason to rush through new legislation which will have drastic effects on civil liberties, without even the semblance of a debate.

Even the Tories did not feel it necessary to introduce such brutal measures – or to keep in step with the laws in the Republic which have for a long time been harsher than those on this side of the Irish Sea.

While Blair claimed that it was necessary to stay in step with Bertie Ahern's parallel moves in the Dail for the sake of the Good Friday agreement, this draconian Act is intended to police dissent here in the same fashion that Clinton seeks to police the globe.

But those who respond by demanding the full implementation of the "peace agreement" miss the point – measures like these are the logical consequence of that Accord. The Orange State cannot be reformed.

**A**s a number of MPs who opposed the Bill have commented, it seemed clear that the outline of the legislation already existed prior to the events in Omagh, Dar es Salaam and Nairobi.

But this is not just the work of some reactionary civil servant, operating outside the control of their political masters.

The drive for stronger "anti-terrorist measures" is an international one, much discussed both in the United States and through the European Union.

Recent strengthening of existing provision has already taken place in Belgium,

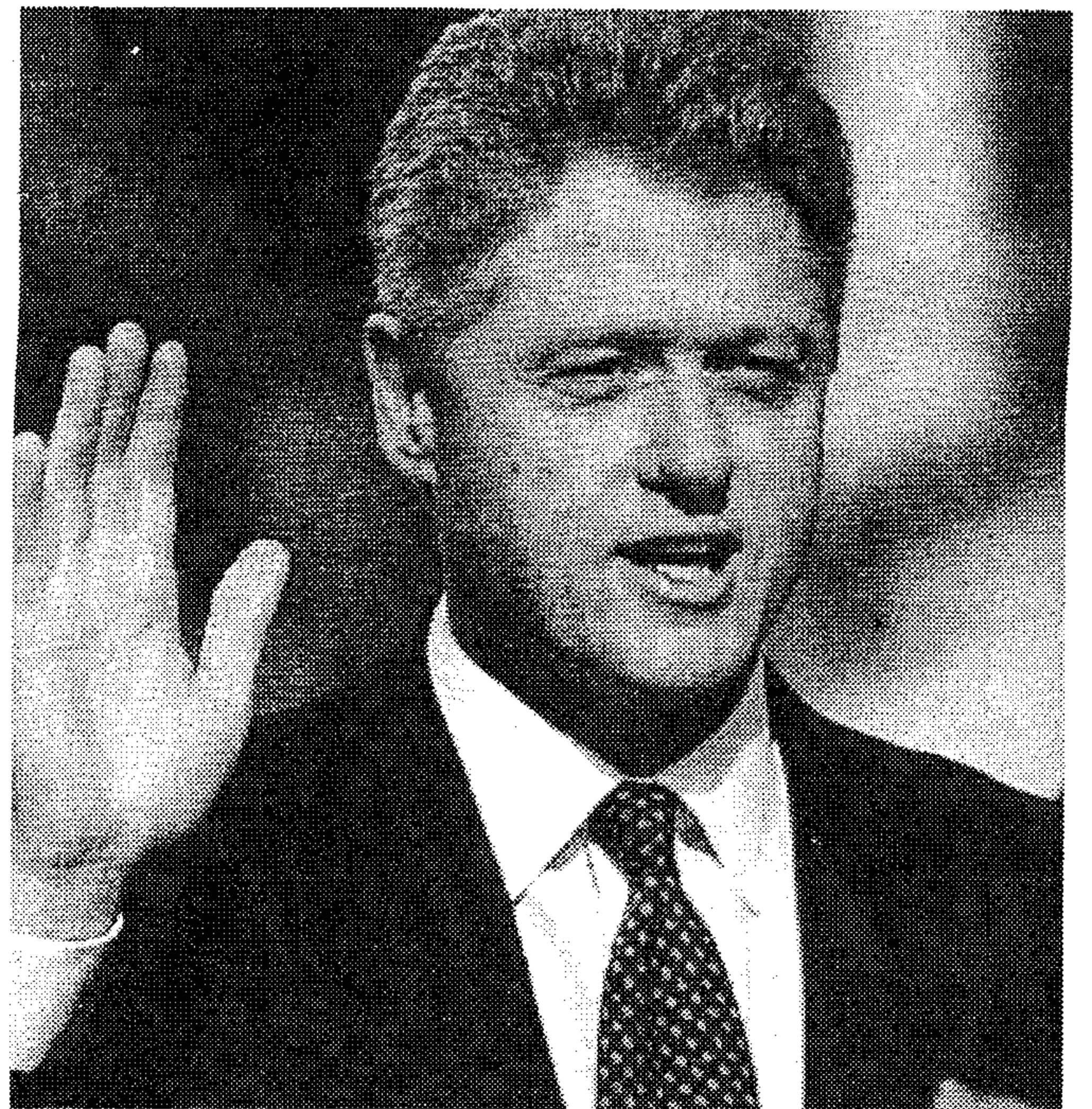
and others will be looking enviously at what Eire and Britain have managed – and straining to follow suit. We see the effects of such legislation today in France, where 138 Muslims are currently on trial under conspiracy laws.

Amnesty International, together with the Committee on the Administration of Justice, British Irish Rights Watch, Liberty and Human Rights Watch, have condemned the legislation. They believe the law will "violate the government's human rights obligations under international law."

The Irish community in Britain, brutally served by the Prevention of Terrorism Act which was hurriedly introduced in the wake of the Birmingham bombings, is undoubtedly right to feel under threat from these measures. Further miscarriages of justice to rival the Guildford Four and the Birmingham Six will inevitably follow, combined with a further tide of anti-Irish racism.

**T**he Black and Muslim communities however are also targets under this iniquitous legislation, which allows people to be arrested in Britain for acts that would be unlawful abroad. But the pleas that this would have resulted in the arrest of Nelson Mandela for example fell on deaf ears in Westminster.

In the six counties the fact that the word of a senior police officer will be used to con-



Bill's not the only one sworn to defend US interests

vict someone of membership of a banned organisation hardly gives confidence to the nationalist community, well used to the sectarianism of the RUC. No one has any illusions that – Good Friday agreement or not – this prop of the Orange establishment remains untouched and unreformed.

Black and Irish people in Britain have bitter experiences of police racism. The Stephen Lawrence inquiry has demonstrated this to a wider audience than before, as have the shameful list of deaths of Irish and Black people in police custody.

This vicious law must not be allowed to go the same way as the PTA, ritually rubber stamped year after year. A massive tide of opposition must be built, not only in the communities which are the most obvious target, but up and down the labour movement.

# Labour whistles in the dark

"NOTHING has collapsed," insisted Welsh Secretary Ron Davies, questioned by Radio 4 over the implications for the Welsh economy of the decisions by Siemens and Fujitsu to close British factories in the aftermath of the Asian economic melt-down.

The Siemens closure axed 1,000 jobs, and Fujitsu 600, in the north east of England. Such high-tech manufacturers do not lightly abandon hundreds of millions invested or pull out of production.

These decisions, arising from a major disruption of the global market for computer technology place a massive question mark over the Tory/Labour strategy of luring "inward investment" of international capital to exploit cheap labour in Wales, Scotland and other areas devastated by the years of Thatcherite rationalisation.

## Naive

Davies went on to burble naively about New Labour's strategy of "partnership" with Japanese, Korean and other corporations, apparently oblivious to the collapse in markets in Asia and the new financial pressures upon these companies.

Any idea of "partnership" has collapsed in Korea, where car workers at Hyundai fought courageously but lost a battle to prevent redundancies, and where new laws have now ended job protection and opened the door to mas-

sive lay-offs.

It has vanished, too, if it ever existed, in Indonesia, where the nose-dive of the currency has been followed by widespread bankruptcy and closures, leaving upwards of 20 million workers unemployed.

Nor is there much prospect of "partnership" in the floundering Russian economy, where the rouble has lost three quarters of its value in just two weeks, leaving workers unpaid or facing hyper-inflation.

The international bankers are taking it in turns to congratulate themselves on escaping relatively unscathed from the wreckage of Boris Yeltsin's plans for capitalist restoration, leaving the rouble in free fall and the country without a government.

The IMF – whose austerity plans have spread poverty and helped trigger the downfall of the Indonesian regime – arrogantly lays down instructions for the Russian government to "stop printing money and put the budget in order", whatever the cost for Russian workers.

Indeed the costs of these economic and social disasters are falling consistently on the working class, poor peasants, the sick the elderly and the poor, while western bankers and investors bide their time before advancing any new loans under stringent condi-

tions or buying up devalued assets at a massive profit.

There will be little "partnership" on offer for the masses of Latin America, widely predicted to be the next domino to fall to the currency speculators, where governments are already slashing public

ous setback.

Some of the more far-sighted analysts – though of course not the cock-eyed optimists of New Labour – are wondering just how many more areas of capitalist expansion can face collapse without it having a severe impact on



Korean workers are fighting back – defying vicious police attacks

spending and imposing even tighter austerity on the working class as they aim to pre-empt the pressure to come.

The stakes are higher: bankers are less optimistic about the implications if Brazil or Mexico with their huge debts were to go under in the same way as Indonesia or Korea. Some US banks could be put in difficulty, and the US economy, currently the mainstay of the optimists, could face a seri-

ous setback.

Not only are markets disappearing, but the attempts of corporations in Japan, Korea and elsewhere to export their way out of the present crisis will drive down prices for a wide range of manufactured goods.

For firms in Europe and America to compete, they would need to slash back their costs of produc-

tion, by waging a new war on jobs, pay and conditions, and by stepping up the pressure for tax cuts and cuts in public spending.

Already British business chiefs have begun to pressurise Gordon Brown to scale down his modest increases in public spending. Manufacturing bosses, in recession even before the summer crises, are looking for further rationalisation.

Whatever else the ruling rich may sacrifice in order to ride out the current world-wide storms, they will not sacrifice their profits.

For the bankers and industrial bosses, the rule of "women and children first" has always meant that they and the whole working class were the first to be thrown overboard at times of crisis.

They hide behind the police and army of each capitalist state, and band together when their interests are threatened.

In response, in Korea and Indonesia, trade unions are beginning to break free of the political straitjacket of "yellow", employer-dominated confederations, and wage a bitter fight to defend jobs and living standards against the "market forces" of capitalism.

Instead of cuddling up to the bosses in the pursuit of an impossible "partnership", the TUC and Labour Party should be freeing the trade unions of the legal shackles that prevent them fighting to defend their members' jobs and wages in this country.

# Not-so-new Labour senses its weakness

*Less voting and more spinning is the motto of "new Labour" for conference delegates*



Neil Murray

In the run-up to Labour Party conference, with the government in office for nearly 18 months, is useful to assess not only what Blair has done in government and the labour movement's response, but more fundamental issues about Blair's politics.

It should be understood that the Labour Party has *never been* a socialist party. Despite being based on the organised working class, Labour's programme has always sought to offer reforms to the working class within the parameters laid down by capitalism. None of these have challenged capitalism, and many have been double-edged. Labour governments have remained capitalist governments.

The post-war nationalisation of many basic industries was welcomed by the working class. However, the purpose was also to rationalise these industries under public ownership and provide raw materials for private industry.

Other reforms, like the introduction of the welfare state, were not simply gifts by a Labour government. More far-sighted sections of the ruling class wanted to avoid the pre-war situation of abject poverty, work camps and unaffordable medicine. The working class was unwilling to accept the return of pre-war conditions. Concessions were also seen as necessary to head off greater post-war radicalisation.

The NHS was established, free at point of use, funded from taxation. But private practice was not abolished. Nor were the drug companies, which make huge profits out of the NHS, nationalised.

The foreign policy of Labour governments continued to be based on support for British imperialism. The first Labour Foreign Minister made clear that he had no intention of changing colonial policy.

This does not mean that this "New" Labour government is no different. While Labour has previously introduced significant reforms in the interests of the working class, Blair is reluctant to introduce any at all.

Such reforms as the referenda for Scotland and Wales, were commitments that could not be avoided, and he has interpreted them in the most pro-unionist fashion.

On the 'industrial' front, Blair has introduced the minimum that he thought he could get away with, without any real pressure from the unions. The commit-

ment to a national minimum wage was fulfilled at an appallingly low level, well below the modest policy of many unions of half male median earnings.

'Fairness At Work' is an atrocious document based on the reactionary US model of union recognition, introduced under pressure to fill the vacuum left by the Tories.

Blair rejects any idea that he should act in the interests of the working class. The promotion of business leaders to the Cabinet and Lords, as Blair surrounds himself with such people to the exclusion of the labour movement, underlines the

election of MPs was its prime purpose. The impetus for this came from the passing of anti-union laws by parliament at the turn of the century.

Despite the fact that at that stage the party was made up of 100% affiliates (unions and socialist organisations, with no individual membership), the unions were explicit that the party should only deal with the 'political' (ie parliamentary) questions, leaving the furthering of the industrial struggle to the unions.

The political programme consisted of reforms within capitalism, just as, for the union lead-

ers, the trade union struggle was for concessions from the bosses without challenging the existing order. Class collaboration, or 'partnership' in Blair jargon, was at the heart of Labour ideology.

Capitalist recessions and crises undercut the basis of reformism and class collaboration. Ramsay Macdonald's cuts in unemployment benefit in 1929 were a response to the crisis of capitalism in the late 20s and 30s, just as Dennis Healey's cuts packages were a response to the recession of the 70s.

British capitalism has to be much more competitive now, and is much less able to grant reforms. The British Labour Party has been a social democratic party throughout its existence, albeit one with different structures from those of many others - primarily the direct union link and input into policy-making.

Many describe Blair as a Tory or a Liberal because of his government's programme and his attitude to the labour movement. This only really holds sway if we believe there was a 'golden age' of socialism in the Labour Party.

Blair's declaration that the split between Labour and the Liberals at the turn of the century was a 'mistake' harks back to the fact that many union leaders had to be forced into the break with the Liberals in the first place.

The most significant factor determining the right wing character of government policies is the low level of class struggle, meaning that there is very little pressure to do differently.

This factor is both the effect and the cause of the right wing politics of the current leadership of the labour movement (the unions and the Labour Party).

Who is to say Blair's (or Brown's) policies would not be different if the level of class struggle were not higher?

It is possible that Blair could pull back under the pressure of the class struggle, or that other members of the leadership could force him out (the Tory Party has always managed to replace its leaders at opportune moments without wider democracy).

However, the changes Blair has brought about reduce the internal party pressure the Labour leadership can be subjected to.

Blair is rootless in terms of ideology. The dominant ideology of the British labour movement, though, has been pragmatism, summed up in Harold Wilson's statement that "socialism is what a Labour government does".

There are limited differences between Blair and his predecessors as a Labour leader.

He admires the US Democratic Party and harbours ambitions to turn the Labour Party into something similar. Yet Labour leaders

have identified with the Democrats for a long time. However, Blair may actually go so far as to carry this through.

Blair and his closest allies would clearly like to see the end of the union link, at least in its traditional form. Whether he will be satisfied with the extent to which the unions have (with their own support) already been stripped of much of their power in the party - or whether he will insist on going further, is a moot point.

If the Labour Party's nature has not fundamentally changed, this does not mean that it is business as usual. The fact that the government's programme is more right wing than that of most previous Labour governments has led to an increasing level of disenchantment among activists and wider layers of the working class.

This provides socialists with the opportunity to explain the real nature of the Labour Party, and why it cannot move beyond reformism at best.

What conclusions should socialists draw about the Labour Party today? Firstly, and most fundamentally, socialists have always wanted to transcend the Labour Party and establish a mass party which sees the class struggle as the motor force for change rather than elections and parliament.

The difference is that this government is demonstrating the Labour Party's real nature to more and more people, creating the opportunity to go beyond small left groups to a much wider recomposition of the labour movement.

This does not mean that socialists should abandon work in the Labour Party, either through its structures or the unions.

On the contrary, the current situation demands that socialists are present raising their criticisms and alternatives to the government's programme.

If that wider recomposition is to take place on the most advantageous ground, socialists have to play a role in leading the opposition to the government, not just in the class struggle and unions, but also within the Party itself.

Blair cannot bear opposition within the party. His supporters are estimated to have spent nearly a quarter of a million pounds financing the 'Members First' slate for the national executive elections against the Grassroots Alliance, despite the fact that even if all 6 left wing candidates got elected they would have very little effect on policy.

The left should take heart from the fact that Blair sees them as such a threat, and step up the political and organisational assault.



Lords, ladies, gentlemen - and John Prescott. The faces are new, but not the political line

point, as do statements about being 'business friendly', 'fairness without favours', and so on.

Blair really does see 'New Labour' as a new party. He became leader on the back of the moves to the right on policy and democratic counter-reforms carried out by Kinnock and Smith. These in turn were facilitated by the defeats inflicted on the working class by the Thatcher government.

Politically unable and unwilling to provide a strategy to fight off Thatcher's attacks, the leaders of the unions and the Labour Party could only think in terms of the need to win a general election.

After each defeat the union and Labour leaders moved further to the right. The catchcry of the union leaders became 'wait for a Labour government', while they supported consecutive Labour leaders in watering down Labour's policy.

Has Blair fundamentally broken from the politics of 'Old Labour', and if so, what are his politics now? Has he changed the party to match his thinking?

From the start, Labour was an explicitly *parliamentary* party: the

# New Labour gets tough – on refugees and asylum seekers

**Sheila Malone**

**ISLINGTON Anti-Deportation Campaign are celebrating!**

After months of legal battling, petitioning, lobbying, pickets, meetings and the support of our local MP Jeremy Corbyn, the Home Office has at last granted Nigerian born Gillian Achu "exceptional leave to remain in Britain.

Now she and her children can begin to live normally again in their community, from where they were suddenly picked up and detained last year.

Gillian has lived in this country for eight years, after fleeing Nigeria. As such she was one of those hoping for an amnesty following the government's recently published white paper on immigration. But what do these new proposals really mean for refugees and asylum seekers in the future?

Headed "Fairer, Faster, Firmer", the white paper announces a "modernising and streamlining" of immigration policy in the interest of greater efficiency and fairness.

Yet it has already been condemned by refugee organisations and others as having little to do with fairness. It will lead instead to greater exclusions, restrictions, intelligence gathering, detention and enforcement.

Looking at the list of new forms of control and policing proposed, we see immigrants and asylum seekers yet again presented as "abusers of the system" and as

criminals rather than as people with legitimate rights

New pre-entry and on-entry restrictions will involve extending visa requirements, increasing the number of Airline Liaison officers abroad (both aimed at developing countries) and strengthening the powers of the 1987 Carriers Liability Act.

The last point has meant that airlines are subject to £2,000 fine if they admit passengers whose travel documents are not in order.

As was said when the Act was first introduced, people fleeing from wars and dictatorships often do not have all their papers in order, if they have them at all.

Increasing these powers will only result in a further denial of asylum to the most distressed, desperate and vulnerable refugees of the world. This is a violation of Britain's obligations under the 1951 UN Convention on refugees.

Asylum seekers who are actually allowed entry into the country will face harsh changes in applications and appeals procedures. After the initial interview with an immigration officer, it is proposed to allow only five days instead of the present month for all applicants to prepare documentation before awaiting a decision on their case.

This is a woefully inadequate time to examine and present often lengthy histories of perse-

cution, and to obtain all the necessary documents, including from the country of origin.

If their application is refused, they will be allowed only one appeal, if this is lost they can then be detained and deported.

The whole process of application and appeal will be "fast-tracked" to last no longer than 6 months.

As to material support available, asylum seekers are to be excluded in future from Social Security benefits and dealt with through the Home Office. In

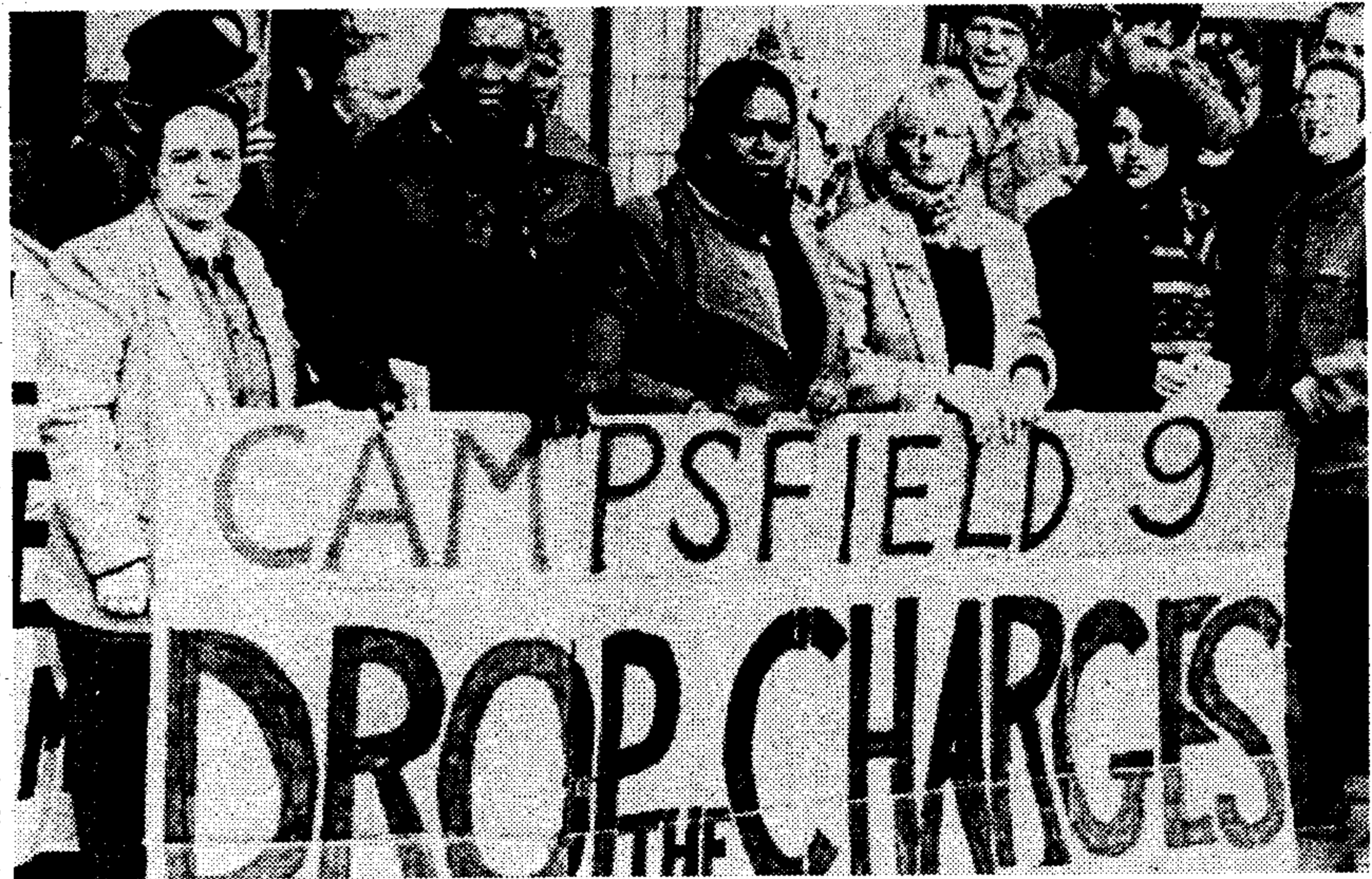
**Whilst asylum seekers will be starved of assistance, no expense will be spared to increase surveillance of refugees**

fact the white paper proposes that they initially be expected to fend for themselves "with the help of relatives, friends and community groups".

Only if this fails will a basic safety net of centrally designated housing and benefits in kind be offered.

Apart from cruelly miss-assessing the situation and needs of people arriving traumatised and often destitute after fleeing persecution, such systems socially isolate and leave refugees vulnerable to racist discrimination and harassment. The horrific arson attacks on hostels in Germany are an example.

The new proposals on enforce-



*Campsfield immigration prison will stay in business under the new Labour plans*

ment and deportation are based on a view that links immigration and asylum to criminality. Despite recent damning criticism from the United Nations High Commission for Refugees and from the Inspector of Prisons, use of detention will actually increase once a claim has been refused.

Immigration officers will also be given new powers of search, entry and arrest, making them into a sort of special immigration police – without even the limited constraints on them that exist with the Police Complaints Authority.

Particularly unpleasant is that whilst asylum seekers are to be starved of assistance, no expense will be spared in the employment of new technology to increase surveillance and control of refugees and their communities.

The collaboration of benefits agencies, marriage registrars, the National Criminal Intelligence

Service and its new wing the Organised Immigration Crime Section, as well as Europol will all be secured in combatting "immigration related crime".

The Home Office has made a few concessions, such as abolition of the "White List" of countries from which asylum claims will not be accepted, and the right of appeal against refusal of entry to family visitors. People who have been waiting longer than five years for their cases to be heard are also likely to stay, although the government insists there will be no amnesty.

But despite this, and despite the lip-service paid to human rights and improving race relations, its proposals will do just the opposite. New Labour has presented us with a package of measures against immigration and asylum rights even meaner, nastier and more repugnant than the Tories.

## Stop deportation of Abdul Kadir

ABDUL Kadir arrived in Britain in 1982, having fled from Bangladesh. Following wrong advice given to him, he did not apply for asylum until 1994.

In 1993 Abdul suffered a horrific accident at the restaurant he was working in, where he had his right leg amputated. He has suffered from epileptic fits ever since.

His asylum claim has been refused and Abdul is now appealing to Mike O'Brien to allow him to stay on compassionate and practical grounds – there being no chance of Abdul receiving the medical support he needs in Bangladesh.

Abdul and his campaign need all the support they can get. Please write in support of Abdul's case to:

Mike O'Brien, Minister for Immigration and Nationality, The Home Office, 50 Queen Anne's Gate, London SW1H 9AT, and quote HO reference K468921  
**Please send donations to: The Abdul Kadir Campaign, c/o NECFAR, 308 Linthorpe Road, Middlesborough, TS1 3QX Tel 01642 - 211117**

# Socialist Alliances - small steps forward

**Pete Firmin**

Over 100 people attended the conference of Socialist Alliances in England in Rugby on Saturday 5 September, the largest to date. This was an indication that Alliances are spreading to new areas.

Ken Coates, MEP, brought greetings from the Independent Labour Network, which is beginning to set up local groups. This was however not followed by a much-needed discussion on the relationship between different parts of the fragmented Left.

The main discussion was on what national structure the Alliances need. Until now there has been a small liaison group to organise the conferences and produce the occasional national bulletin.

With the spreading of alliances there were moves to expand the democratic structure to one which can take national campaigning initiatives as well as coordinate better.

Unfortunately, the discussion was

marred by two factors. Late circulation of draft proposals from the liaison group meant that many alternative proposals were only available on the day.

The other problem was that the CPGB (*Weekly Worker*) mobilised in large numbers to argue for their proposals for a very tight structure for the 'United Kingdom' (!) reflecting their view that alliances should be about permanent polemical debate.

This deflected from the discussion which needed to be had between those committed to building the alliances as campaigning bodies into debate about the most appropriate structure.

Eventually, the conference voted to adopt the liaison group's proposals of a 15 person committee, with safeguards to prevent domination by any particular tendency, as interim proposals, with a further national meeting in 6 months which can amend them.

The afternoon was devoted to discussion of the key issues of



*Ken Coates*

Europe and low pay. The Europe discussion was introduced by four speakers. John Palmer, European Affairs editor of the *Guardian*, argued the left should support a strengthening of the institutions of the European Union, while Ron Dorman of the Campaign Against Euro-Federalism argued for defence of national sovereignty. MEPs Hugh Kerr and Michael Hindley argued a more coherent line.

The discussion reflected the confusion on the Left about the single currency, which needs to be clarified if there is to be any impact in

next year's Euro-elections and the referendum on the single currency.

The discussion on Low Pay, introduced by UNISON Executive member Jean Thorpe, brought out the problems with the government's proposals on the minimum wage and benefits and the poverty trap.

Despite having adopted proposals which could provide for nationally coordinated campaigning, the conference did not actually agree any campaigns.

As many speakers emphasised, the prime task at the moment is to build up the local alliances through work around relevant issues... but this could be considerably strengthened with some well organised national initiatives.

Overall, the conference was a step forward, but also reflected the problems in turning the socialist alliances into a force which can make a difference.

# Ill-judged tactics of SWP sectarians snatch

The SWP's leadership of the recent strike by Islington UNISON housing needs workers has played into the hands of management. Andrew Berry, activist from Campaign for a Fighting, Democratic UNISON (CFDU) and Islington Branch Committee looks at some of the lessons of the dispute – which sadly the SWP themselves are stubbornly refusing to draw.

ON MAY 15 a decisive 70 per cent of the Housing Needs Section voted in a ballot in favour of strike action against job losses. On the same day, nine Housing Needs workers were told they had been unsuccessful in re-applying for their own jobs after an average of more than 11 years service.

They were under threat of redundancy, despite vacancies in Housing Needs and other comparable jobs.

On May 18, 16 of the Housing Needs workers walked out, illegally under the anti-trade union laws, as the council had not been given seven days notice.

The walkout was understandable, if unwise. The letters sent were highly provocative. So was the way in which they were distributed – one worker was called out of a meeting with a homeless family to be given hers. Management were set on confrontation with the union.

On Monday, rumours were circulating that the council were planning to sack strikers the next day. Four housing needs workers returned to work on Tuesday morning. The UNISON regional official confirmed the rumours to a strikers' meeting late on Tuesday.

The Council sacked the strikers on Wednesday afternoon, by couriered letter to their homes.

There has been a history of unofficial action amongst workers in Housing and Social Services in Islington, and many of the strikers had a written warning on their file from a half-day walkout in July 1996.

In the 1998 local government elections, Labour had only held the leadership of the council by one seat. The Labour Group wanted to show its intransigence with workers to undercut the Liberal Democrats. They were handed a golden opportunity to attack the council workforce.

This is not to excuse the Council's disgusting actions in sacking workers, but to say that experi-

# Defeat from the jaws of victory!



SWP shout a good fight: strong on placards, weak on tactics

enced trade unionists should have been less surprised. Rank and file council workers were well aware of the political situation and the tactical errors of the SWP, and voiced their anger to stewards.

As well as the elected councillors being hostile, the workforce are also hated by senior management, who are seeking to further their own careers by "turning the borough around". The Chief Executive is reported to have said when she started the job that she would sack more people than she has had hot dinners.

Against this background, the decision to continue the unofficial action can only be seen as a pointless adventure. The SWP seemed more interested in adopting a heavy militant posture than in defending union members. More than 3 months later, the SWP has made no self-criticism of its actions.

A Branch meeting took place following the sackings and voted to ballot for all-out indefinite strike action to reinstate those sacked. National UNISON modified the question to "are you prepared to take action in the form of strike action to reinstate the sacked housing needs workers?" Despite this change, the ballot, six weeks later, was lost by nearly 2-1, on a 28 per cent turnout.

The SWP made a massive error of judgement by arguing to continue the unofficial strike, shown by the Council's confidence in

sacking the strikers. Management correctly assessed the weakness of the branch and the divisions within it.

These effects of the SWP's action go well beyond the 12 strikers who are now jobless and unable to claim benefit. The effect of a victory in an industrial dispute is to strengthen workers' confidence, leading to an increased chance of winning further disputes. Conversely, the effect of defeat is demoralisation.

The branch has a healthy industrial action fund, and could have kept members on official strike for a long time. The original dispute – against redundancies of housing needs workers – was winnable, as the 70% support for strike action attests.

There were also a number of other struggles brewing across the Council at this time.

The Housing Benefit Section had voted to be balloted for strike action against privatisation of the service. An ongoing dispute – or better still, a victory – on Housing Needs redundancies would have been a powerful spur to action and a successful strike in housing benefits.

This could have shown the way forward to Building Services which is threatened with 296 redundancies, as many of its contracts have gone to the private sector. Even though UNISON has little input, a victory would have had an important impact.

In the original dispute, a 70 per cent vote for action against redundancies was frittered away because it was necessary to respond immediately to the sackings. We had to make a big retreat.

Our original action was against redundancies while the housing

needs workers were still employed. The method of making people apply for their own jobs was being used throughout the department, and successful resistance to this could have given a lead elsewhere.

### Balloting for action

The next step was to build for a ballot and for effective action. However, the SWP rejected the strike-building options of starting with small actions, such as one-day strikes in the most militant areas, and gradually escalating the action across the workforce if management should prove recalcitrant. They argued immediately for all out indefinite strike action of the whole workforce.

The branch needed to ballot for reinstatement action very quickly after the sackings, while members were still angry.

This proved impossible because the membership records of the branch were in a very poor state. Over 600 members (from the former NUPE branch) were registered at the old UNISON branch office, in a building which has now been demolished.

Not surprisingly, national UNISON refused to run a ballot where 25% of the branch would be disenfranchised, and returned the address list for updating. A single complaint from a member unable to vote would have meant suspension of action until the question was resolved. The courts would find against the union immediately once they saw our address list.

CFDU members in the branch fought hard for a 'yes' vote, despite our concerns. We successfully argued to send out a UNISON letter with the ballot papers, and to organise a rally attended by two National Executive members.

Why did the SWP allow the strike to become split? Those who went back were committed trade unionists in favour of strike action over possible redundancies. Islington Branch Secretary and leading SWP member Rob Murthwaite's answer was that "the housing needs steward [also in the SWP] discussed the return to work and decided it was small and could be ignored."

Yet one sacked housing needs worker in the SWP said that if four had not returned to work she believed the council would not have sacked any of the strikers. The return to work of a quarter of a small group of workers sug-

gests a major problem with a strike.

In short, the SWP refuses to admit any mistakes. They are an extremely sectarian organisation – seeing their own growth as the most important thing. Defence of the working class is secondary. Industrial action is posed as a way to attract members rather than a way to advance the class struggle, putting party before class.

Leading a strike with uncompromising militancy, whatever the outcome, attracts activists – though these are often external observers of the strike. Those involved, who suffer from the SWP's actions, tend to take a more hostile view.

CFDU is not against unofficial strikes – these have happened and been supported in Islington in the past. But the branch has been weakened over the last few years. And many of those remaining who have been through strike action, even the long strike of 1992, are no longer sure where it all leads.

UNISON in Islington is weak partly due to the effects of the merger between NALGO and NUPE, which has been hard going. Our industrial action tactics need to be considered carefully in terms of our chances of winning and moving struggles forward for our members, nor for how they build political parties.

Democracy was a problem. Policy was passed at a small and unrepresentative meeting where 3 or 4 days notice had been given.

Following the sackings, Rob Murthwaite, Branch Secretary and SWP member, was against having branch committee meetings to consider the best way forward. In meetings, he put his own line rather than a collective one, and insisted on speaking after each contribution.

SWP have defended their tactics in Islington UNISON as being totally correct. There will be a re-election of the branch secretary on October 8.

Rob Murthwaite says he will stand on the SWP's record.

CFDU thinks that the SWP tactics have been an unmitigated disaster for the branch. We will challenge him on the platform of building the union and launching a recruitment campaign.

The union needs to prepare to fight the £69.3 million cuts proposed over the next 4 years: this has now been made much harder. Islington UNISON is in a weak but crucial stage. The future priority is to once more make it a real force to be reckoned with in Islington.

**The Council sacked the strikers on Wednesday, sending couriered letters to their homes**

**In the original dispute a 70 per cent vote for action against redundancies was frittered away**

# Toothless TUC offers neither fairness nor organisation

**Greg Tucker**

"ORGANISING for fairness" is this year's slogan for the TUC. But if the last year is anything to go by, the TUC can barely organise its way out of a paper bag.

As a result, it has been treated with little respect or fairness by the government.

## People's March fights for union and welfare rights

LIVERPOOL dockers and the striking Tameside care workers are among the latest to give their support to the March from Birmingham to Blackpool to lobby Labour Party conference, which sets off on September 19.

Other supporters include fire-fighters, rail workers, miners and the Professional Footballers.

An impressive list of unions have backed the march, and seven union general secretaries have also agreed to speak at meetings along the route of the march, which is organised by the United Campaign for the Repeal of the Anti Union Laws and backed by the Welfare State Network.

Trades Councils along the route are laying on hospitality for marchers and organising meetings to focus on the key issues to be demanded from the Labour government.

Rallies will be held in Birmingham (September 19), Wolverhampton (September 19), Crewe (Sept 20), Chester (Sept 21), Wirral (Sept 22), Liverpool (Sept 23), St Helens (Sept 23), Salford (Sept 24), Preston (Sept 25) and Blackpool, where the march will link up with the lobby called by the UCLH branch of UNISON.

The People's March is a focus for all those angry at the miserable failure of New Labour to repeal the Tory anti-union laws, and their continuation of Tory attacks on the NHS and the wider welfare state.

There is still time for union branches or Labour Parties to sponsor a marcher or make a donation to the People's March.

Further details/donations to Alec McFadden/John Howard c/o Salford TUC, 84 Liverpool Rd, Salford. Tel 0161-789-2999. (mobile) 0831 627531.

Central to the Congress are the issues of "Fairness at Work" and the national minimum wage.

On both issues the TUC's desperate attempts to build a consensus with the CBI has disarmed them in negotiations and allowed the government to present pathetic policies as if they were major steps forward.

The "Fairness at Work" White Paper will do little or nothing to aid the fight for recognition, if and when it becomes law. Riddled through and through with escape clauses for ruthless employers, as Tony Blair points out it will still leave Britain the most lightly regulated of all leading economies - that is to say the most unfair.

In the discussions prior to publication John Monks was hopelessly out-manoeuvred by the CBI which stood firm on its central demands. TUC compromise after compromise was rejected, giving the government the green light to back track on pre-election commitments. The end result, with 40 per cent thresholds, opt-outs for small companies and a complex process for recognition will be almost unworkable. Whilst unions can talk of a change in the climate of industrial relations this is clearly a major lost opportunity.

Unfortunately, so scared are they that even this will be snatched away from them, that criticism is muted, virtually all resolutions on the subject welcoming the White Paper, and only adding the barest of suggestions for improvement. A lot of work is needed before the campaign for repeal of all the anti-trade union laws makes any formal headway at Congress.

The national minimum wage fared no better over the year. By refusing to actually organise around its policy the TUC was again wrong footed.

It even managed to interpret its policy of half male median earnings

at a lower rate than generally estimated by using unfavourable assumptions about overtime (they argued for £4 rather than the accepted figure of around £4.50).

Now even the low level of minimum wage put forward by the Low Pay Commission is to be hedged around with qualifications and opt-outs for young workers by the time it gets applied.

Both UNISON and the TGWU have argued for the TUC to now fight for its actual policy - of a standard level for all without exception of at least £4.61 per hour.

Congress is to be feted by the government with a series of Ministers coming to make speeches - Prescott, Blunkett, Brown and Mandelson will speak - along with another well-known friend of the trade union movement, Eddie George boss of the Bank of England. The only positive speaker is likely to be Neville Lawrence.

Despite the inevitable back-slapping it is clear however, that the honeymoon period is beginning to come to an end. Apart from ASLEF, who welcome Prescott's privatisation of London Underground, in most areas of direct interest to each union critical points are beginning to be raised.

**Union bosses still do not know whether to beg to be treated nicely, or campaign to defend members' interests**

UNISON is concerned about the effect of privatisation and the Private Finance Initiative on its members jobs and conditions in the NHS and elsewhere, and wants to see the government make good its public sector pay commitments immediately. Teachers' unions are concerned about the effects of Education Action Zones.

Other resolutions are in similar vein - still not clear on how to deal with the government. Top union bureaucrats still do not know whether to beg to be treated nicely, or campaign to



TUC leader "Maastricht" Monks - keen advocate of European Monetary Union

defend members' interests.

Standing behind all this is the spectre of Europe. Over the last year the only policy over which John Monks was prepared to criticise the government was on European Monetary Union - arguing that the government was not enthusiastic enough!

A resolution from the AEEU seeks to further endorse this TUC policy. But a critical resolution from the Community & Youth Workers Union puts this in its proper context.

Demanding an open debate on the whole issue of EMU they point out the effects it would have - increased privatisation, public expenditure cuts, and increased unemployment.

All the old themes of TUC "new unionism" and "partnership" are once again to be pushed to the fore. Under the Tories these were a joke, but under Labour the TUC can still not point to any significant advances brought about by their strategy.

On the contrary, all their

attempts to cosy up to British business have just undermined their arguments. The trade union movement has now to recognise that polite words over tea and biscuits at number ten will not solve our problems.

Only a vigorously organised campaign of mass action will make the government recognise the seriousness of our demands.

The TUC as presently constituted and orientated is completely incapable of leading such a fight.

But for union leaders like UNISON's Bickerstaffe who wish to sound radical at conference time but do nothing that might actually mobilise their members or challenge the government, this is just the type of TUC they want.

Leaders of those unions which have opposed EMU have also been quite happy to defer to John Monks and to leave TUC policy intact.

If a shake-up is to come, it will have to start within the activist layer of the TUC's member unions. The sooner, the better.

# NUT chiefs line up a dirty deal

**Gill Lee**

NEW Labour is trying to force teachers to accept performance related pay, and the NUT Executive is colluding with this.

Proposals include a new pay structure which will limit teachers to automatic increments for the first five years of teaching - currently teachers receive a pay rise each year for the first seven years of teaching.

Subsequent pay rises will depend on 'recognised competencies'. The Executive's proposals do not specify what these competencies are, who will judge them and how.

The suspicion must be that 'competencies' will be code for an enthusiasm to implement government directives and priorities, such as 'competence' in deliver-

ing the literacy hour - not competence in teaching pupils to think critically.

It seems likely that recognition of these competencies will put more power into the hands of head teachers, who will increase their monitoring and supervision of teachers, rewarding favourites while withholding competency payments from militants and those who disagree with them.

The Executive's proposals - aimed at getting teachers to accept an end to the principle that pay is based on experience and extra responsibilities alone - might at first appear attractive to many teachers who have seen their pay fall well below that of other similar non-manual workers.

The Executive's document proposes a 10% pay rise, and a pay

level of £23,000 after four to five years teaching experience, with salary progression to £31,000 for teachers judged to have the necessary 'competencies'.

### Pay limits

Of course a rise of 10% for all teachers would blow apart New Labour's public sector pay limits, and £31,000 for teachers with 'competencies' could only be achieved within Labour's spending limits for a tiny minority of teachers.

Nevertheless for newly qualified Teachers, particularly those working in primary schools where there are few opportunities to receive enhanced pay for extra responsibilities, £23,000 appears very attractive, and £31,000 an impossible dream.

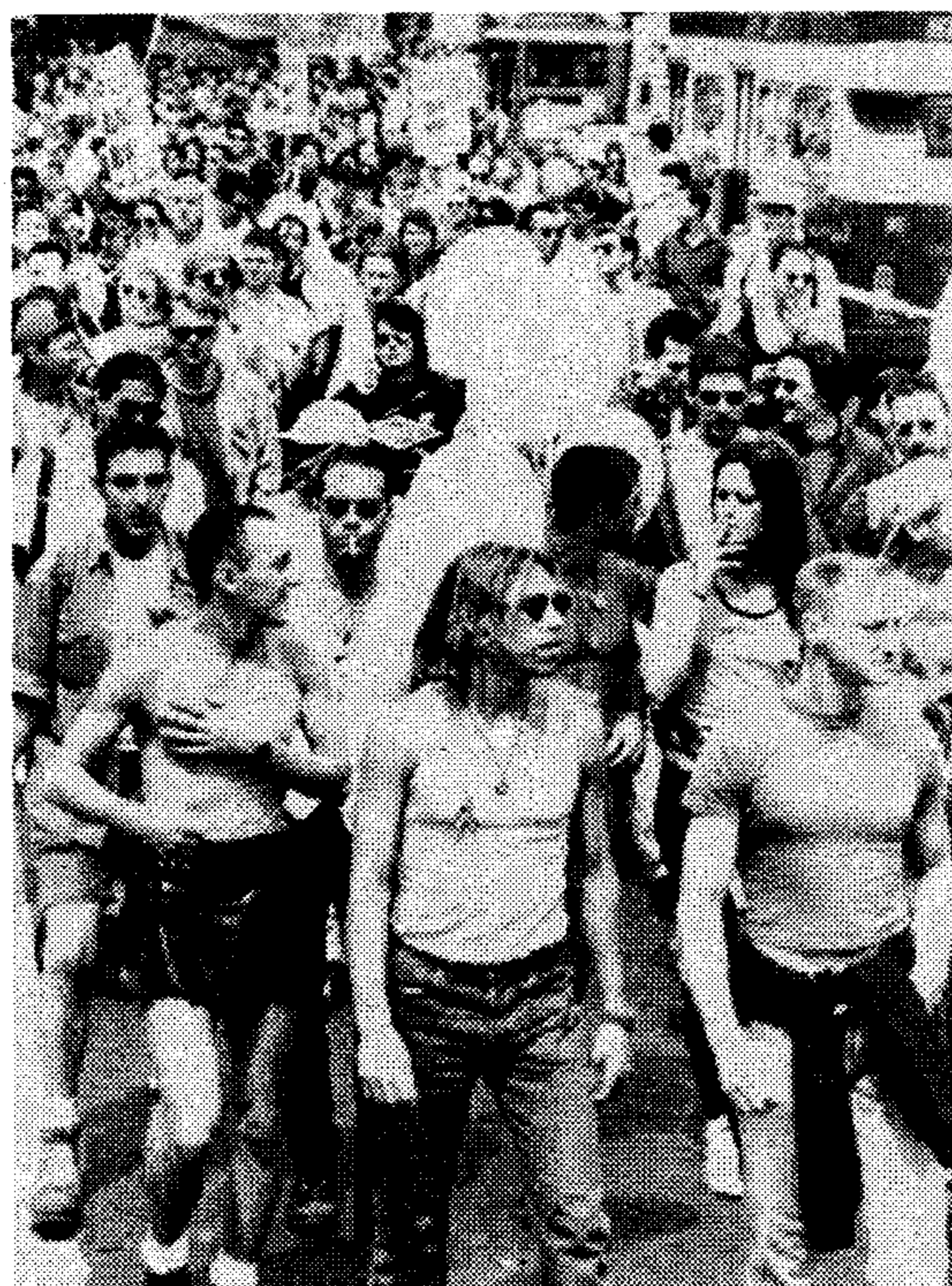
The left must defeat the pro-

posal to introduce pay for 'competencies', acquired 'professional development' or any other device not linked to experience of responsibilities at the Special Salaries Conference.

In addition we must fight for a campaign to win any pay increase at all. Year after year the NUT Executive has called on the government to implement pay increases, but done nothing to force them to do so.

The left has to defeat a pay structure which would increase divisions among teachers, increase managerial control and reward political subservience to New Labour's education policies.

It also has to win the Salaries Conference to a fight that can blow apart Labour's public sector spending freeze in the context of growing economic crisis.



Massing against bigotry: Gay Pride 1994

# No shock in Labour's gay rights climbdown

we have been told by Blairite icon Stephen Twigg MP, lesbians and gay men were betrayed by New Labour. Many readers of *Socialist Outlook* may think this is no surprise - this has happened countless times to virtually every section of the community since May 1 1997.

However it had seemed that on this

issue it was actually in Blair's interests to make these concessions. It was not only that there had been long standing Party policy won by the Labour Campaign for Lesbian and Gay Rights (LCLGR) which has itself been supported by the whole political spectrum of the party, but that some progressive changes on questions of sexual politics - though not anything approaching real equality - fits with Blair's ideological pretensions to moder-

nity.

While Blair is as determined as his predecessors to paint himself as a "family man", he wants to incorporate into that definition the changing patterns in emotional and sexual relations that have taken place in the last decades.

So his concern with single parents is not a moral one - rather he seeks to force them into the workforce - for poverty wages of course.

It is in this context that it seemed that the barrier of the age of consent might fall - and indeed it still might in the new parliamentary session.

In July however under pressure from reactionaries, other issues took precedence. On the one hand there was determination to see the rest of Straw's Bill go through unscathed.

On the other hand there was an unwillingness to challenge homophobic bigotry either in the Com-

mons or the Lords. On this altar so far at least the New Labour Prime Minister has been prepared to sacrifice his 'with-it' image.

The role of the Church of England in defeating these changes was no surprise. Just weeks later, the Archbishop of Canterbury, George Carey, steered the Lambeth Conference to a decision which argued that gay sex was incompatible with the Scriptures.

Carey argued "I see no room in the holy Scriptures for any sexual activity outside holy matrimony of a husband and wife".

This was the first time that homosexuality has been debated by the Lambeth Conference, which meets every ten years. Crucial to the position adopted was political manoeuvring which sought to trade opposition to Third World Debt from western churches with opposition to

homosexuality. Attempts to portray homosexuality as a "white disease" have been a weapon increasingly used by the Republican right in the United States as well.

The fear that independent Evangelical communions are winning the battle for souls against the more traditional Anglican Churches also played an important part in the Lambeth Conference debate. Pat Robertson's Christian Coalition has been at the forefront of the battle against gay marriages in the United States.

Against such determined ideologies, it is not just Blair who has no answer. Those in the lesbian and gay community who believe that a few more of our kind openly in the House of Commons will automatically lead to significant changes have been sadly disappointed.

Whether or not the legal changes go through in the next months, it is vital to return to mass action.

**It is not just Blair who has no answer to ideologues**

## Terry Conway

**THE ACHIEVEMENT** of an equal age of consent for gay men has been probably more central to the lesbian and gay movement in Britain than in any other Western country.

This is surely one of the major reasons why debates such as those around gay marriages have had less impact here than in Continental Europe or North America.

In the dying days of the last Parliamentary session, despite what

# A strategy for a queer planet

**DURING the first week of August Amsterdam made good its claim to be the gay capital of Europe by hosting the Olympic-style international Gay Games (previously held in 1982 and 1986 in San Francisco, 1990 in Vancouver and 1994 in New York). "Given that lesbians and gay men are so visibly emancipated nowadays," asked the Dutch media, "is there any need for a liberation movement?" Peter Drucker reports.**

THE GAY Games are not the only landmark event in recent months. In Mexico City a congress for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender rights was held earlier this year with the support of newly elected PRD mayor Cuauhtemoc Cardenas and of Patria Jimenez, Latin America's first openly lesbian member of parliament.

In France 300,000 people showed up in Paris in 1997 for Europride and 150,000 this year for Gay Pride, above all to demand registered civil unions for lesbian and gay partners. In Brussels "Pink Saturday" has been growing every

year, above all because of big turnouts from Flanders, the Dutch-speaking northern region.

Lesbian/gay/bisexual movements are increasingly internationally coordinated, particularly through ILGA (the International Lesbian and Gay Association) and ILGA Europe. But ILGA's orientation is mainly lobbying the UN, European Union and national parliaments.

Activists who see extraparliamentary mobilisation as crucial, including for parliamentary reforms, are less well organised internationally.

The August '98 Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual Strategy Seminar at the International Institute for Research and Education in Amsterdam was one of the first opportunities ever for activists from the left to meet for a whole weekend to discuss theory and strategy.

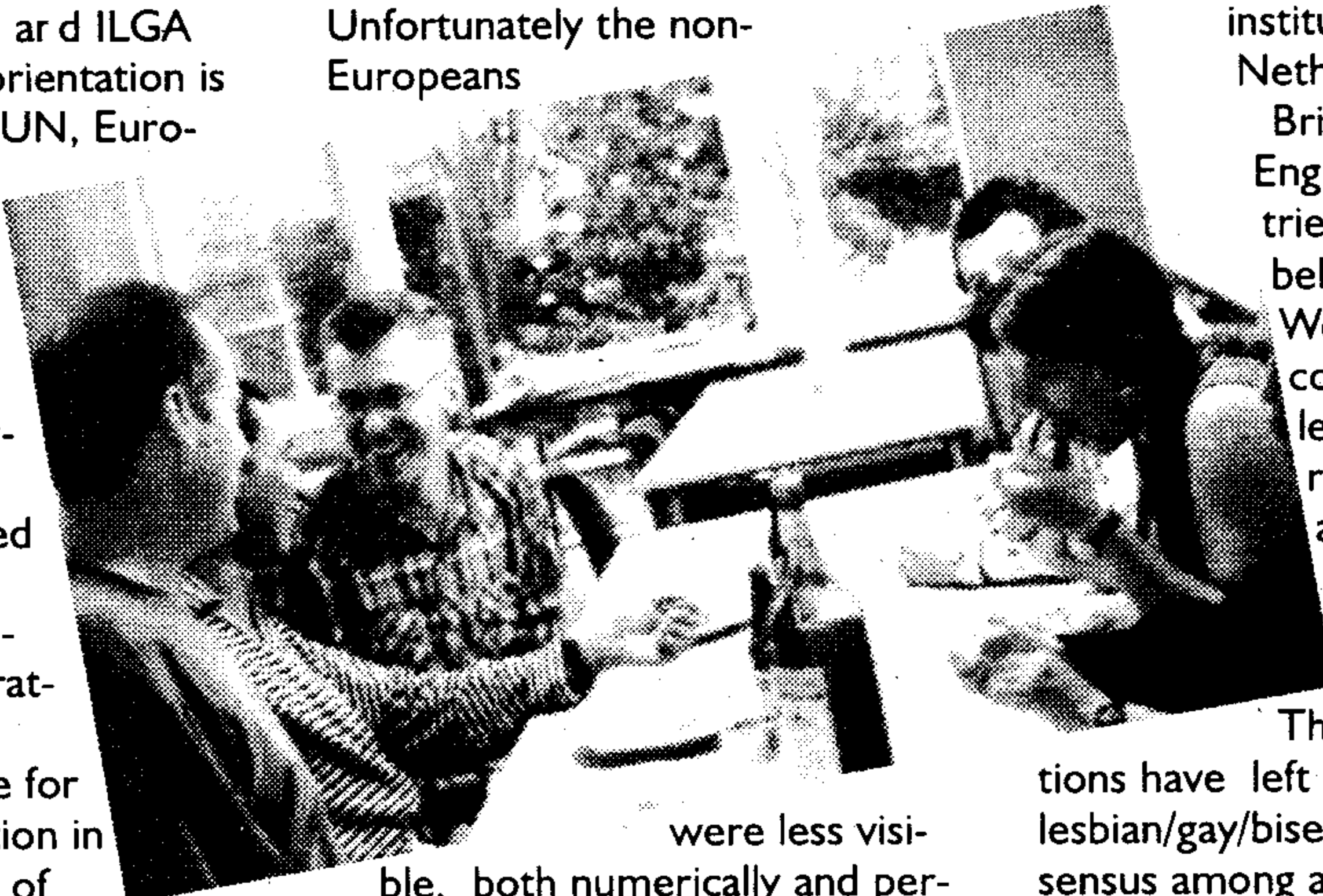
The twenty participants - eight women, twelve men - came from Belgium, Bolivia, Denmark, England, France, Mexico, the Netherlands, Portugal and Sri Lanka. The atmosphere was one of excitement and personal warmth.

Differences of opinion were expressed without difficulty and people found out that disagreements were smaller than they had expected. While most of the participants were members of far left organisations, unaffiliated participants joined on an equal footing in the discussions.

Women may have been a minority but they gave half the reports, participated fully in the discussion and ensured that the lesbian

dimension was not lost from sight.

The strong tradition of feminist discussion in many of the participants' organisations provided an important backdrop for exploring questions of lesbian and gay liberation both in theory and in practice. Unfortunately the non-Europeans



were less visible, both numerically and perhaps because the separate session on Third World themes came last. There was criticism that the discussions focussed too much on the northwestern core of Europe.

**The roots of sexual oppression lie far deeper than many can see**

## Community or integration?

There are nonetheless profound historical differences in practical and theoretical orientation, even among the gay/lesbian/bisexual movements in France, Belgium, the Netherlands and Britain.

France has a tradition of 'republican integration', which makes any form of minority politics suspect. French theorist Jean Nicolas harshly criticised the 'myth of gay identity' in the 1970s; his perspective shows interesting similarities with the post-structuralist-influenced 'queer theory' of the 1990s.

The Dutch tradition of indepen-

dent Protestant, Catholic and social-democratic subcultures led to a different climate for gay organising, although considerable gains by the lesbian/gay/bisexual movement have more recently led

to questioning of gay institutions in the Netherlands.

Britain, like most English-speaking countries, has lagged behind most other Western European countries in terms of lesbian/gay/bisexual rights. So doubts about the need for a movement in Britain get less of an echo.

These varying traditions have left their mark on the lesbian/gay/bisexual left. The consensus among at the seminar was all the more striking.

They agreed that the roots of sexual oppression lie far deeper than many lesbians and gay men themselves see, in the structure of the heterosexual family where children are still raised to take their place in a gender-divided, capitalist labour force. This means that, while lesbian/gay/bisexual communities are not an end in themselves, the preconditions for oppression and thus the need for a separate subculture will continue to exist for the foreseeable future.

Even where conscious discrimination and prejudices are less widespread, as in the Netherlands and Scandinavia, this does not mean that lesbians, gay men and bisexuals can integrate themselves as equals into the broader society. Far-reaching social transformations are necessary in order to overcome the polarisation between heterosexuality and homosexuality.

There were lively discussions on other issues as well. Are we really

for gay marriage? How much room is there for lesbian/gay/bisexual activists in the straight left? How can we make that room bigger? What sort of relationship existed early in this century - before fascism, Stalinism and Cold War witchhunts - between the left and 'sex reform' movements? When and how can or must lesbians and gay men work together? How can transgender people get an equal role in the movement, particularly in Third World countries? Could the unique victories for lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender rights in South Africa be repeated in other Third World countries, even in the midst of neoliberal austerity? Participants plan to publish articles on these and other topics in the year to come.

## Only a beginning

Publication plans were only a small part of the prospects for the future discussed at the seminar's end. Perhaps the most important decision was that this seminar will only be the first in a series. The second one will take place in the summer of the year 2000, once more in Amsterdam. It will be longer, a whole week, because the schedule this time was far too tight.

Other topics will come up: among the possibilities are youth, trade-union work, the organisational situation of the movement in several countries, and some controversial aspects of sexuality. The second seminar must be more genuinely international than the first, with more people from outside Europe.

That means that the organisers must spend the next two years raising funds for plane tickets from poor countries. This is why people will have to wait two years for the next seminar - which they will do with great impatience.



# Social services strike back

AS the strike by care workers in Tameside goes into its fifth month, other sections of care workers and social service staff have also been resorting to strike action as they attempt to defend pay, jobs and the quality of services against increasingly desperate and ruthless council bosses.

In Leicester, 300 council care home staff staged a one-day walkout in August as part of a joint UNISON and GMB battle to resist new "flexible" working over seven days. Three more strikes are planned for September, after 81% voted for strike action and 84% for a work-to-rule in a ballot.

In South Tyneside senior care workers are refusing to sign new contracts and balloting over strike action: the council wants to slice £50,000 from the pay bill by cutting sleeping-in allowances.

In Glasgow, 1,500 social work staff in UNISON joined a week-long unofficial walk-out at the beginning of August in protest at management's suspension of three workers who had resisted the transfer of home helps from social work to a new catering and domestic care department. UNISON fears that this is simply a staging post to privatisation.

They eventually returned to work on the orders of Rodney Bickerstaffe after the victimised members were reinstated, and the council had won a court order banning the union and eight named stewards from helping the strikers.

UNISON social service members have also been balloting for strike action in Cornwall and in Sheffield, where there has already been an unofficial 4-day strike over cuts in the children and families service.



Strikers in Leicester: the battles are hotting up

# New wave of cuts slash social services

## John Lister

SOCIAL Services departments across the country are pressing through yet another round of cuts in services to some of the most vulnerable local residents as Labour sticks to Tory levels of spending.

In many cases councils are flouting the law, and ignoring their statutory obligations as they struggle to stick within impossibly low cash limits.

In Birmingham, the High Court has ruled that council officers broke the law by taking council finances into account when deciding whether to award a disabled facilities grant to Taj Mohammed, whose needs fitted the criteria, but whose application coincided with a cash crisis.

Help the Aged has claimed that over 2,000 elderly people have contacted them complaining that

they are being forced to pay for "community care" services in residential or nursing homes by councils which are ignoring the law and government guidelines.

Last year the Appeal Court ruled that Sefton council was obliged to meet the cost of care home fees for clients with savings of less than £8,000, and to contribute to the costs of those with less than £16,000.

But Help the Aged now claims that councils are defying the law by resorting to techniques such as the use of waiting lists, designed to delay any financial contribution and pressure elderly people into using their own money to pay for care. One client in Dorset was told that cash was only available for clients with £1,000 or less.

The chair of the Association of Directors of Social Services more or less admitted that cash-strapped authorities were breaking the law, and allocating support on the basis of cash pressures rather than the assessed needs of clients when he told *Community Care* magazine "After assessments, we have to prioritise."

He went on: "We would like to provide a whole range of community based services. But the fact is that we haven't got enough resources and we are having to provide services for people in the most desperate situations." Meanwhile cuts are still being made. Social service staff in Cambridgeshire are warning that another draconian round of cut-backs including the closure of two children's homes, cuts in day care for older people, unfilled vacancies and cuts in support costs could lead to a crisis.

In the north east, Redcar and Cleveland council agreed a £2m cuts package including the closure of Mount Pleasant home for the elderly, cuts in respite care,

children's homes and increases in charges.

Camden social services face a £4m cut next year, while Worcestershire County Council faces stiff opposition from carers to its plans to slash £5.1 million, including service cuts and increased charges.

Wolverhampton, one of the handful of councils still providing free home help services to elderly and vulnerable clients, seems certain to impose charges next year as it wrestles with a cash shortfall.

Wandsworth's Tory-led council is looking to close a quarter of its children and family services in a bid to keep its council tax bills the lowest in England.

Gordon Brown's announcement of a £3 billion increase in social service spending over the next three years - £1.2 billion short of the "minimum requirement" calculated by the Local Government Association - means that there is no light at the end of the tunnel. Indeed as the NHS abdicates from its previous role in continuing care, ever more frail elderly people are dependent upon council-funded services.

Staff, carers and relatives of the vulnerable people now being short-changed by social services, and all those who believe these services should be provided free of charge and properly funded from taxation, must unite to fight for more.

# Skinflint bosses in panic

PROFIT-hungry bosses in private nursing and residential homes are warning of dire consequences from the implementation of the minimum wage of £3.60 an hour.

A recent survey showed that pay for care assistants in nursing homes (ranging from £2.80 an hour to £4.35) was lower than that in residential homes (£3-£5.20).

Many homes are dependent upon the funding of patients by health authorities or local authorities, with fees subject to a rigorous "benchmark" limit: the long-term squeeze on NHS and local government funding means there is little scope to raise charges for these patients.

The wage bill represents about 50% of the cost of running care homes, so the cash squeeze has been translated directly into rock-bottom wages - to the extent that a £3.60 minimum would cost private and voluntary sector homes an estimated £90m extra each year.

The impact is heaviest upon the small-scale homes, while the larger chains of residential and nursing homes, owned by multinational corporations, are mopping up massive profits.

Spare a thought, then for the care home owners in Hampshire, who have warned that the whole market in care for the elderly is in danger of "sudden collapse", with homes driven to the "very brink of viability".

Don't bother getting out the violins for these hard-pressed Dickensian employers struggling to make a buck at the expense of the frail elderly: let's fight instead for these homes to be nationalised as part of a drive to roll back the privatisation of health and social care.

It's high time public sector and other unions took up this issue, another unsavoury legacy of Thatcherite policy.

## Justice for the Tameside strikers!

200 sacked Care Workers are continuing their fight for reinstatement. Tameside Council and Tameside Care are trying to keep what is happening from the public.

Cutting wages and conditions of a skilled and experienced workforce is part of the process of running down vital services in Tameside. By sacking the care workers, they were also getting rid of those who cared for and would speak up for the elderly residents in their care.

The strikers have shown their support for other sections of workers in struggle. But they, too, need support from the wider workers' movement.

### March and Rally: Bring your banners!

Saturday Sept 12

Depart 1.00pm Astley Rd, Stalybridge (near Stamford Park)

March through Ashton Under Lyne town centre

Rally 2.30pm in Henry Square, Ashton

Set up a Support Group. Send a donation. Send a message of support. Contact the strikers at Tameside UNISON, 29, Booth St, Ashton Under Lyne, Lancs OL6 7LB. 0161-308-2452.

## Council boss baulks at bill to bury dead

THE BODIES of deceased elderly residents of a care home in Northumberland have been described as "waste products" by a caring, sharing council chief executive.

Peter Wilson, boss of Morpeth Council was called to account by the local government ombudsman after the council refused to pay for the funeral of an elderly woman who died at a local residential home with just £450 to her name.

Wilson's line was simple enough:

"Without wishing to appear insensitive, one could argue that from a commercial viewpoint residents of a home are its income producing raw material. Ergo, from a purely commercial view, deceased residents may then be regarded as being the waste produced by their business".

After losing the case, Wilson appeared equally incapable of understanding the popular revulsion at what he had said, and complained that the focus had been on "emotive words" rather than "principles".

## As currencies, companies and markets collapse

# It's a crisis alright – but is it global?

We are told that we live in a fully globalised economy. In a sense we do, but what exactly does it mean? Has the world not been globalised for a long time? How much is new?

If there has been a change, what role does this play in the current world economic and financial crisis? What about the role of nation states within this global economy? Do the increasing size and power of multinational corporations make the nation state almost irrelevant? Here **ALAN THORNETT** suggests some answers to these questions.

### A world facing possible economic and financial meltdown

Only a year ago rosy expectations were held by many. Today few would dispute that capitalism is heading for world recession. Just read the capitalist papers.

Stock markets around the world have collapsed in wild fluctuations after three and half years of unrealistically inflated levels. The East and South East Asian Tiger economies (and aspiring ones) collapsed last year into financial and political turmoil, following devaluation of Thailand's currency.

The implications are enormous. This region had been the most dynamic part of the world capitalist economy by far. Political repercussions so far have included the demise of Suharto in Indonesia at the hands of a mass popular movement – and as we go to press food riots have broken out again.

The trade unions in South Korea have mounted huge battles in defence of jobs. Car workers have been occupying the country's biggest car plant and fighting off riot police with iron bars.

Russia is collapsing into chaos. Its currency has collapsed, its government has collapsed, its banking system is collapsing. It has defaulted on its debts to the western banks – possibly the most serious default in the history of the banking system. The



Russian teachers join a protest march of workers demanding to be paid

Yeltsin plan for the restoration of capitalism is in tatters, and nobody knows what will replace it.

The Russian crisis poses the possibility of competitive devaluations, or debt defaults, or both across the region, especially the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Ukraine and the Balkan states. Inside Russia itself, the possibility of serious civil unrest is posed – described as “Indonesia with knobs on”.

But it does not end there. China is fighting to avoid devaluation as its currency is drawn into the turmoil – which could take the situation to a new international level.

Latin America, with its currencies also massively overvalued and stock markets plunging, faces widely predicted “meltdown” via its own series of competitive devaluations.

Venezuela seems particularly vulnerable. Like Russia, Venezuela is rocked by the drop in oil prices triggered by the drop in oil consumption in SE Asia.

The Latin American crisis is expected to engulf Brazil, the region's biggest economy – its stock market plunged last week after panic dumping of anything which looked like a risky asset.

The economies of the USA and Britain (and the EU), whilst partly sheltered with comparatively strong growth, are nevertheless slowing down and have seen huge losses on their stock exchanges.

The Dow Jones lost 284 points in one day last week, and \$33 billion was wiped off leading UK shares. They will be lucky to escape the storm as it spreads

across the international economy.

Increasingly it is accepted that the global economy could be facing its sharpest downturn since the 1930s. It is an explosive situation. It is the most globalised crisis the world has seen.

Anthony Browne argued in *The Observer* on August 22:

“Economists are drawing parallels with the depression of the 30s and the aftermath of the oil crisis of the 70s. ‘This is the world's first genuinely global crisis’ says Alison Cottrell, chief international economist at Paine Webber. ‘In the 30s, where was Asia? At other times, the problems have just been bouncing between the US and Europe. But this is genuinely global. In absolute terms it is worse than the 30s because far more people are involved. We have been ignoring it because Europe and America aren't really affected yet’.

“The figures are huge, and the span truly global: in Indonesia alone, economic progress has been put back a generation and unemployment is heading towards 20 million, more than in all of Europe. In Japan 130 million people face the end of the economic miracle... China is fighting off pressures to devalue, as its billion people face the prospect of deflation. Millions more in Russia face a total collapse, whilst tens of millions in South Africa have seen post-Apartheid optimism turn sour.”

A Latin American crisis, with all its likely consequences, should be added to this scenario.

### The roots of the “Asian” crisis

The Southeast Asian crisis broke in mid-1997 – the most significant event in world politics since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1990. The term “Asian crisis” is not really accurate. This is a crisis of the global capitalist system, which started in this region and is spreading world-wide.

It came as a shock to those who had assumed that Asian Pacific capitalism would continue as the engine of the world economy well into the 21st century. It is more than just a financial crisis: it has structural and economic roots.

The origin of the rise of the Tiger economies is clear. They benefited from massive direct investment following the 1985 Plaza Accord. Under this the USA forced the Japanese government to sharply raise the value of the yen against the dollar to alleviate the huge US trade deficit with Japan. The value of the yen rose against the US dollar by over 40% as a result.

This did not do much for the US trade deficit, but, by making production in Japan far more expensive, it did do wonders for East and South East Asia, whose currencies were tied to the dollar. \$15 billion of Japanese direct investment had flowed into the region by the end of the decade.

In the early 1990s further massive inflows of investment from western banks followed, as the advantages of dictatorial regimes and high levels of exploitation, as well as currency advantage, became clear.

The result was massive overcapacity in the manufacturing and building sectors. An enormous building boom created the infamous property speculation “bub-

ble”, which was soon ready to burst.

Last year the value of the yen was again at the centre of developments – this time because of its devaluation. The crisis of the Japanese economy itself now forced down the value of the yen, and capital flowed out of the Tiger economies even faster than it had flowed in. There was also pressure from China and the devaluation of its currency a year earlier.

The result was massive speculative attacks on the East and SE Asian currencies, forcing a major round of competitive devaluations on an enormous scale: Indonesia 89%, South Korea 75%, Malaysia 73%, Thailand 71%, Philippines 57% and Hong Kong 47%.

Stock markets collapsed by similar percentages. According to the Institute of International Finance, the net private capital flows in and out of Indonesia, Malaysia, South Korea, Thailand and the Philippines swung from \$92.8 billion inward investment in 1996 to \$12 billion outflow in 1997 – at the onset of the crisis!

The result was a series of bank collapses and debt defaults across the region.

The onset of crisis saw the rapid intervention of the IMF into the region. It had two objectives. First, to ensure that debt repayments continued to western



Not much left for Yeltsin's fans to celebrate

banks via austerity programmes (which in practice made the debt crisis worse). And, secondly, to pursue the US neoliberal agenda of deregulation, flexibility, and free-market reform so that newly competitive US capital could achieve a greater penetration in the region.

In the IMF's view, the Tiger economies have always been far too protectionist. “Structural adjustment” was the order of the day. Rates of exploitation had to be raised and deregulation introduced into economies like South Korea and Japan itself, where the “job for life” concept still existed

**Inside Russia itself, the possibility of serious civil unrest is posed – described as “Indonesia with knobs on”.**

to a great extent.

These neoliberal reforms sought to recreate the international economy in the image of the US, so that the free market-minimal state road would have an unparalleled competitive advantage.

## The global framework of the crisis

There are global dynamics behind this crisis which shape its progress.

The first is the long recessionary wave which has dominated the world economy since the mid 1970s, despite fluctuations within it.

The second is the existence of economic and political power blocks on a world scale – the EU, the USA/NAFTA and Japan and the Asia Pacific region – which are in competition with each other, and which increasingly polarise international economic relations.

Within this framework there has been conflict between the Japanese model of state regulation and intervention – so successful for Japan since World War 2 and one of the features of the rise of the East and South East Asian economies – and the American free-market, deregulated, neoliberal model which has now essentially won out.

Asia is under assault from it, and the EU is already implementing it. US policy today is to complete the neoliberalisation of the world through its principal agencies, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB).

This would concentrate wealth into fewer and fewer hands and lead to a further loss of democratic control, greater levels of exploitation, more unemployment and job insecurity and social marginalisation.

The gap between rich and poor will increase as will the disparity between North and South, as exemplified by the debt crisis. The people of the Eastern block face third world conditions.

This has given the United States in an advantage in the current crisis, but not immunity. In fact this American "success" is at the root of the current crisis through driving the Japanese economy (the second largest in the world) into stagnation and now slump.

## So when did "globalisation" take place?

Of course there have been many "globalisations" of the world economy over the past five or six hundred years. The internationalisation of world economic activity goes back a long time.

In the Middle Ages there was extensive trading between states and city states and across continents.

In Europe during the fourteenth century British-produced

wool and cloth was exported to Holland, Belgium and elsewhere. Italian trading and banking houses occupied a key position in the internationalisation of business activity at that time. By the end of the fourteenth century it is estimated that there were as many as 150 Italian banks already operating multinationally.

The conquistadors conquered and colonised South America, and Britain expanded its empire around the globe.

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries colonial trading companies such as the Dutch and British East India Companies traded globally. Fifteen million people were transported from Africa to America as slaves. The industrial revolution developed the precursor to the modern-day multi-national corporations.

Initially North and South America presented the most favourable investment opportunities, but were soon followed by Africa and Australia.

Multinationals were well established by the First World War. International business activity grew vigorously in the 1920s as multi-national Corporations matured. The international gold standard existed between 1879 and 1914 – a globalisation of the international monetary system in some ways more complete than today.

The world reshaped after World War Two, with the emergence of a much stronger USA, and the Bretton Woods agreement on currencies.

Since then, factors such as the collapse of the USSR and the rapid advance of new technology have become a part of the current phase of globalisation.

## Do we now live in a "globalised" world?

"Globalisation", in its radical sense, has become a fashionable catchphrase and is often used without any real content. There are a wide range of views on what it means.

So to say we live in a globalised world does not take us very far.

It is widely argued, for example, that in today's global economy national economic management, and politics at the national level, are increasingly irrelevant. The world economy is dominated, the argument goes, by uncontrollable market forces, and huge transnational corporations, that owe allegiance to no nation state but simply locate wherever the global market dictates.

'Reclaim the Streets' for example tend to rage against the world market, the international neoliberal offensive rather than national governments. They tend to see multi-national corporations – along with the international agencies of capital, the IMF, the WB, and the Multilateral Agreement on Investment – as principally responsible for the problems of the world.

In this view, the role of national governments is relegated, as is the role of imperialism, which as



Indonesia: the overthrow of Suharto has not resolved the crisis: 20 million are now unemployed

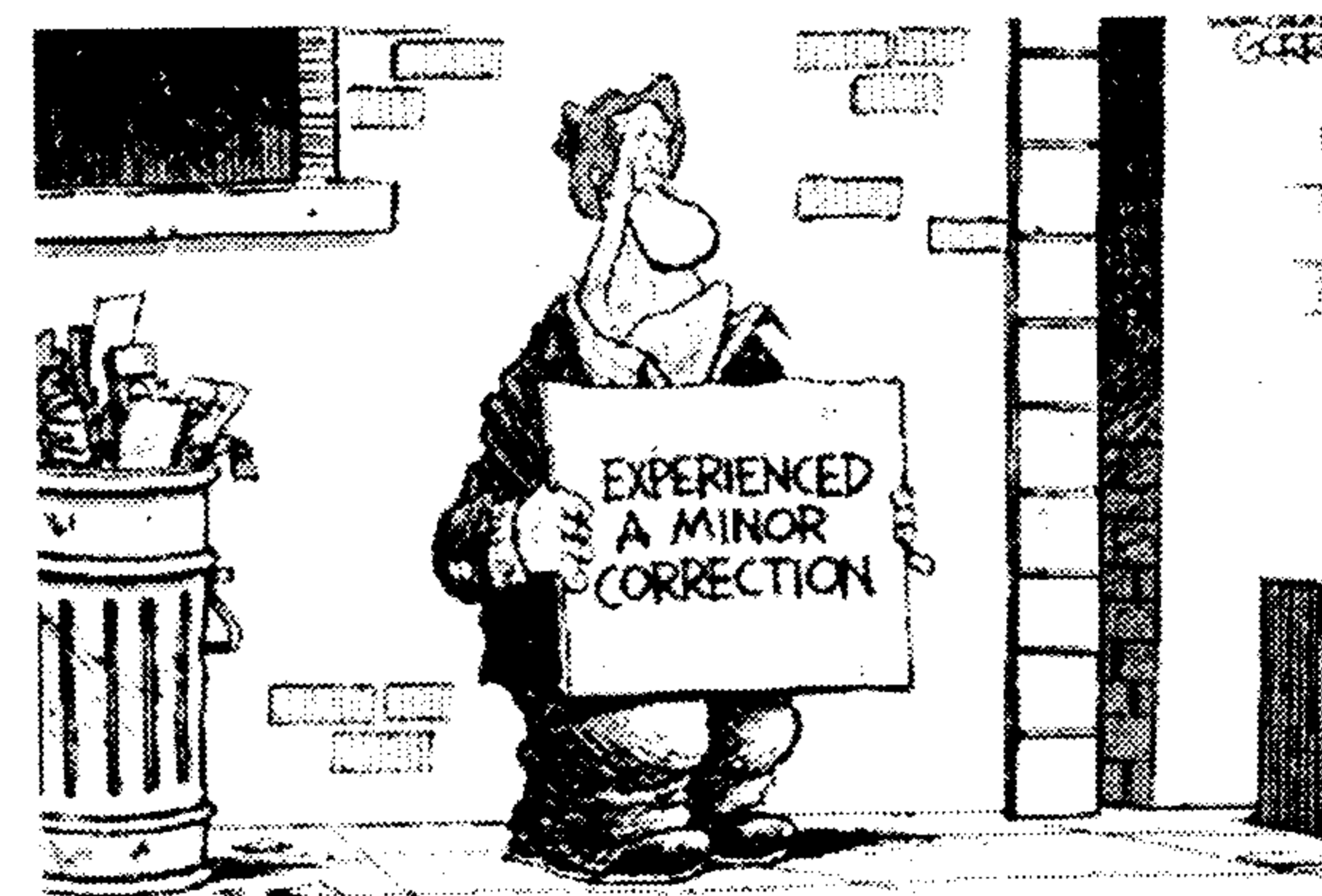
such hardly comes into the analysis. It adds up to a one sided view of the world.

These ideas were prevalent in the discussions around the counter summits opposing the EU in Amsterdam and Cardiff. They have become a cover for another set of ideas, advanced in Amsterdam and Cardiff by people like Colin Hines.

These people advise capitalist states to withdraw from the

easier to relocate production facilities than in the past – although such relocations have always taken place.

The closure of Siemens Tyne-side microchip plant a year after it opened is a case in point – a direct result of the current Asian crisis. The cost of producing chips in SE Asia, given the collapse of both the currencies and wage rates (and massive rises in unemployment), has fallen dramatically.



The power of the MNCs has increased in relation to the nation state. In the last few weeks we have had the biggest merger in history of BT and Amoco with joint capital of \$60 billion (with a loss of 20,000 jobs).

MNCs now scour the planet for the cheapest locations, production facilities, labour costs and most favourable political conditions.

There has been a huge deregulation of markets, particularly the removal of restrictions on the movement of capital. The Post-war Bretton Woods arrangements, linking the dollar to the price of gold and designed to moderate the rapid escalation of crisis, were ended in 1971.

Since then there have been floating exchange rates (exemplified by the break-up of the ERM). Massive pressure has been put on third world countries to deregulate capital movements.

There have been major changes in the world economy in the last 25 years. It is more global.

The current world crisis shows this clearly enough. The crisis embraces more of the world economy, far quicker.

The collapse of the USSR and Yeltsin's rush for capitalism, along with that in China, means those economies, whilst not yet capitalist, have been far more integrated into this crisis. They have a different relationship to the world capitalist economy than at any time since the Russian and Chinese revolutions.

Far larger sums of money move around the world at even greater speed, and this is increasing all the time. New technology is an important element in the current globalisation, introducing the cyber dollar and the ability to move vast sums of money instantaneously.

Multi-national corporations (MNCs) have increased dramatically in size and influence. It is

now scour the planet for the cheapest locations, production facilities, labour costs and most favourable political conditions.

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## The international agencies of capital

There are three principal international agencies of (western) capital: the IMF, the World Bank (WB), which were both set up at Bretton Woods in 1947, and the World Trade Organisation (WTO). The latter was set up in 1994 as a result of the 1986 "Uruguay Round" of negotiations under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT).

The arrival of the WTO, and the results of the Uruguay Round, have had a fundamental effect on the organisation of world trade. At the end of the eight year

Uruguay process it represented 128 countries including most of the East European block countries.

Along with GATT the WTO has become a powerful device for restructuring the world market to the benefit of the leading powers, particularly the USA.

Their purpose is to restructure the world along the lines of the American model, and to bring into that model non-aligned countries including former eastern block countries as they struggle create market economies. They seek to re-establish a world market which was disrupted by the Russian and Chinese revolutions.

All this represents a big development over the comparatively weak organisations set up at the time of Bretton Woods, and extends the global control particularly of the United States.

## Conclusion

There have been big changes, even greater than in previous periods. But is this a qualitative change or change within the same overall framework?

Globalisation in its radical sense would imply a new economic structure, and not just greater international trade and investment within an existing set of economic relations.

Multi-national corporations are getting bigger, but genuinely transnational companies are relatively rare. Most companies are nationally based and trade multi-nationally on the strength of a major national location of production and sales.

Those who argue there has been a radical globalisation have failed to specify what structural changes have taken place to make this particular globalisation qualitatively different to any other.

Increasing dominance of the US model, the fall of the Berlin wall, the greater impact of China on the world market or the more rapid flows of capital are not by themselves evidence of a completely new phenomenon.

The new developments of globalisation have not made the nation state irrelevant. Far from it. But they have changed the international framework in which the nation state operates.

Socialists would ignore that at their peril. The need is to internationalise the struggle, but not by counterposing it to the struggle at national level. We have to be involved in both.

## SOCIALIST DEMOCRACY Statement on Omagh

THE MEMBERS of Socialist Democracy would like to express their sympathy and sorrow to the victims and relatives of the Omagh explosion. There are some harsh realities that must be faced if we are to prevent further tragedies.

The atrocity at Omagh shows the bankruptcy of a republican platform based on militarism. This kind of slaughter is what fatally weakened the movement and led to the political collapse that fuelled the peace process. The 'Real IRA' will never have at its disposal the kind of force that would defeat Britain. These sort of tragedies can only make the political process they oppose much stronger.

Militarism has nothing to offer Irish workers. At its best it is simply ineffective while demobilising the self-activity of working people that can bring real change. At its worst it discredits and demoralises the entire opposition.

But these is more to be said about the events at Omagh that sympathy for the victims or criticism of those who carried out the bombing. What it shows is that the peace process will not be enough. Because it does not actually offer a democratic solution it will time and again, as so often before in Irish history, produce desperate acts from those marginalised and left without hope.

Adams

Gerry Adams will be called on to do more. His movement will be asked to retreat further and settle for even less than the minor changes on offer. The British and Free state forces will now move to further restrict democratic rights and use all the forces of the state to silence dissent. Those supporting the current settlement will be asked to meet their responsibilities by supporting further



police powers.

We call on all socialists and democrats to oppose this. Britain could make a giant step towards peace tomorrow by leaving Ireland. Giving her and her allies more power is not the road to peace and is not in the interests of working people.

## There is always an alternative

Liam Mac Uaid reviews "The real Irish peace process" (Craig/McAnulty/Flanagan) published by Socialist Democracy.

The Omagh bomb has virtually silenced all those voices critical of the new imperialist settlement in Ireland, particularly those for whom leaving bombs in shopping centres was, until recently, a perfectly justifiable tactic.

However there are still small pockets of dissent and "The real Irish peace process" is its most articulate expression, offering a choice other than blowing people up and embracing Blair, Trimble and Clinton as the heroes of Irish politics.

This book is important for many reasons. It is an account of a 30 year struggle against imperialism which has ended with the major protagonists of that struggle making their peace with imperialism. It is an attempt to understand and explain that history from a Marxist point of view and it concludes by trying to see what possibilities for resistance to imperialism in Ireland are still available.



Adams: drawn to right by ideological weakness

It is also a group of socialists, formerly known as Peoples Democracy, examining their own history and trying to learn from it.

The first big question the authors seek to answer is why Britain has spent around £25 billion to defend the democratic rights of 900,000 loyalists.

Churlishly disregarding the innate nobility of Britain's rulers they seek clues in economics and

politics. Britain is still a big player in the world's financial markets, large chunks of the Irish economy are owned by British or other imperialist powers, and a defeat for Britain in Ireland, such as a forced withdrawal, would be a major threat to Britain's own political stability.

The authors maintain that Britain remains in Ireland because it still does have imperial interests there, a view which is no longer even mentioned in polite society in Britain or Ireland.

The evolution of ideas is also discussed in well deserved detail. The talks between John Hume and Gerry Adams resulted in what the authors judge to be a big ideological success for Hume. Those who doubt this need only listen to both men speak.

There is often now no perceptible difference in what they say. This is not surprising.

Without a commitment to armed struggle Republicanism is very reliant on ideas from other sources and, in a period of retreat, these will as often be drawn from the right as from the left.

As well as reviewing history, the authors offer an alternative of their own.

They summarise it as "the creation of a mass political movement in the whole of the country capable of removing partition and British rule by destroying both reactionary states on the island."

They are confident that it is possible, not just because we saw the embryo of one in the late 1960s and early 70s, but also because the peace process offering dreams of change and the return to Stormont at the same time.

History hasn't finished yet!

## Rubber stamp for more repression

Paul Hubert looks at the provisions of the Criminal Justice (Terrorism and Conspiracy) Act, rushed through both Houses of Parliament and given the Royal Assent in just two days.

IT IS CLEAR that the new Act will be used to police the Irish, Black and Muslim communities at least, and beyond this any form of political dissidence. Miscarriages of justice, similar to those already suffered under the PTA will inevitably follow.

As a result of this hastily debated law there will be a shift of the burden of proof. Suspected people will have to show that they are innocent - if they don't, that will be used as evidence of guilt and may be sufficient to convict.

The most notorious innovation is that a police officer "of or above the rank of superintendent" can say in court that "in his opinion" the accused belongs or belonged at a particular time to a "specified" organisation. The court can treat this as evidence, although they cannot convict without other evidence, except in a case in Scotland.

The right to silence is further weakened for people charged with belonging to "specified" illegal organisations. A court or jury can draw inferences from the failure of a suspect to mention a "material" fact which "he could reasonably be expected to mention", provided "he was permitted to consult a solicitor" before questioning.

Currently there are four specified organisations, including the Real IRA. Any other can be added if the Home Secretary thinks it is "concerned in terrorism connected with the affairs of Northern Ireland, or in promoting or encouraging it", and "has not established or is not maintaining a complete and unequivocal ceasefire".

Courts will be able to order the confiscation of property of people convicted of belonging to specified organisations if "it has been used ... in connection with the activities of the specified organisation, or ...

may be so used unless forfeited". Anyone else who claims to have an interest in the property will have to argue it before the court.

For good measure the act makes it a crime to agree to commit offences anywhere in the world outside the United Kingdom. An act or omission as part of a conspiracy could include sending or receiving a message by any means. The government stressed the intention to catch 'terrorist' conspiracies. However, if it so chooses, agreement to block a road or railway line in an act of passive resistance could equally be caught.

In addition to amending Prevention of Terrorism legislation, the Act makes a large number of amendments to other laws. It may be that the consequences of some of these changes are also serious attacks on democratic rights and the conduct of trials.

Jack Straw, writing in *The Guardian*, on the day of the Commons debate said that "we are not rushing into any of this". Tony Blair said in Parliament "In the circumstances, we must be prepared for a carefully moderated, sensible and well-targeted response".

Many voices were raised in Parliament against the way it was asked to pass this law. The first four speakers against the business motion in the Commons to establish the procedure were a scrupulous Tory, one of the Old Labour Right, a firebrand of Unionism and

the standard bearer of the Labour Left (Richard Shepherd, Gwyneth Dunwoody, Ian Paisley and Tony Benn!)

Some of these complaints were reactionary - Ian Paisley was unhappy that "Anybody can be lifted under the terms of the Bill". Anyway despite the qualms of many MPs and much adverse comment in the media, Blair's control of the Labour Party ensured that there was no contest.

A massive campaign is needed to highlight what this will mean in practice and to defend those arrested as a result of its sweep.

We cannot allow the supposed concession of an annual debate to meet the same fate as the PTA - that of an annual rubber stamping of repression.

Many voices were raised against the way the law was passed

**OUT NOW!**

**The Real Irish Peace Process** available (£6 plus 70p p&p) from Socialist Outlook, PO Box 1109 London N4 2UU

**Missiles strike Sudan, Pakistan, Afghanistan**

**Roland Rance**

**T**HE TERRORIST in the White House and his allies have – not for the first time – wreaked carnage on the peoples of the Third World and on Muslim people.

The destruction of the Shifa pharmaceuticals factory in Sudan will lead to untold further deaths, as it produced 50% of Sudan's paracetamol and antibiotics, and was Africa's major producer of veterinary drugs. Even the statements by several Western diplomats have challenged the US assertion that it was producing chemical weapons.

In Afghanistan, the target was allegedly bases of militias close to Saudi millionaire businessman Osama bin Laden, new Public Enemy Number One of the US government.

Like many before him – Saddam Hussein, Muammar Gaddafi, Fidel Castro, Salvador Allende and countless others – bin Laden has now become the focus of a concerted US military and propaganda campaign, in the course of which innocent bystanders and the truth will both be slaughtered.

Why is this happening?

The overwhelming reason is the relation between US domestic and foreign policy; the need to define and assert US interests against both other states and the US working class.

'Enemies', whether states or organisations, are those who threaten the ability of imperialism to exploit the world. In the words of Gore Vidal, "A constant stream of 'enemies' is the only justification for a half-century of military procurement; \$5.5 trillion thus far".

This role was filled for a long period by the USSR and its allies, which represented not only a credible military threat, but also the possibility, however deformed, of a different social and economic system.

With the demise of the Soviet bloc and the US victory in the cold war, there has been a search for the new enemy. A long procession of adventures – Grenada, Somalia, Iran, the Gulf War – has finally led to the ideal figure of fear and hate – the Islamic fundamentalist terrorist.

**A**lthough the bloodiest terrorist attack on the US has been by the domestic ultra-right in Oklahoma, the "enemy within" is not suitable for this purpose.

Islam, however, suits it admirably. The Muslim world is littered with reactionary and repressive governments, many of them installed and supported by the United States.

Popular struggles against these regimes are increasingly turning to Islam as an alternative system of government due to the failure of bourgeois nationalism and the lack of a credible socialist alternative.

During the cold war, the US and the repressive regimes built up many Islamist movements as a counter to secular left wing or nationalist movements. In Afghanistan, in particular, the Mujahadin groups were armed and trained by the US, and supported from Pakistan and

**Cynical slaughter as US fabricates a new "enemy"**

Saudi Arabia, as a proxy in its campaign against the Soviet-backed Karmal and Najibullah regimes.

Osama bin Laden, who had inherited a fortune from his father's construction business in Saudi Arabia, was one of the thousands of recruits from across the Muslim world who flocked to this cause.

**G**uerrillas who received their training in Afghanistan are now prominent in many Islamist struggles. As well as forming the core of the Afghan Taliban, they are fighting in Algeria, Chechnya, Palestine, the Philippines, Egypt, Turkey, Kashmir and elsewhere.

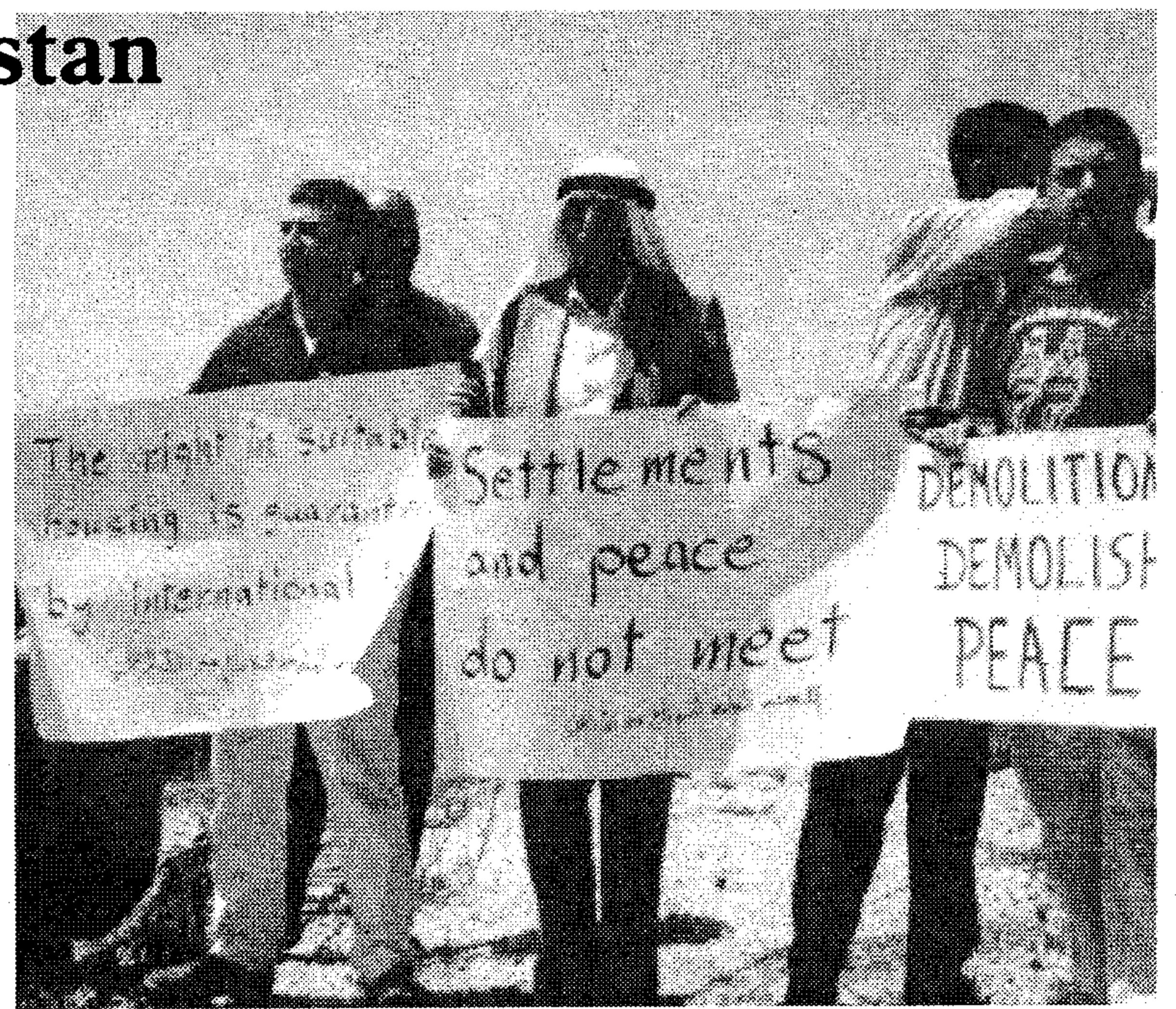
Several of these "Afghanis" fought in Bosnia, though their

role was not as influential as in other areas, and there have been recent reports of bin Laden supporters being arrested in Albania.

These conflicts also demonstrate why the Islamic movements are able to attract popular support. As bin Laden said in a recent interview on CNN:

"With a simple look at the U.S. behaviour, we find that it judges the behaviour of the poor Palestinian children whose country was occupied: if they throw stones against the Israeli occupation, it says they are terrorists whereas when the Israeli pilots bombed the United Nations building in Qana, Lebanon while was full of children and women, the US stopped any plan to condemn Israel.

"At the time that they condemn any Muslim who calls for his rights, they receive the highest



*Palestinians cheated and repressed by US-backed Israel in "Peace" process have been among those drawn towards fundamentalist Islam*

top official of the Irish Republican Army at the White House as a political leader (Gerry Adams), while woe, all woe is the Muslims if they cry out for their rights. Wherever we look, we find the U.S. as the leader of terrorism and crime in the world".

In Bosnia, in Kosova, in Kashmir, the US can be seen to condone, if not actually promote, genocide against Muslims. Meanwhile, Israel is permitted to expand its settlements and flout even the minimal concessions of the grossly unfair Oslo agreement, while Arafat builds up his repressive Palestinian regime with Israeli and western support. There is no shortage of situations where western hypocrisy can be exposed.

Having originally fostered bin Laden, the US has now turned him into a hero. Many Muslims who, like ourselves, rejected with

horror the bombs which killed hundreds of African civilians in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam will now see him as a victim of this US hypocrisy.

But, although Islamic "fundamentalism" is a useful focus for US foreign policy aims, and although it can, in particular circumstances, overthrow rotten regimes such as in Afghanistan, and potentially Egypt and Algeria, it can certainly not defeat US imperialism.

Nor can it provide any lasting solution for the Arab and Muslim working class.

This can only come through the development of a socialist opposition, which will mobilise mass support in a political struggle against imperialism and its local allies and link up with the struggles of the working class in the metropolitan heartlands.

**Indict the terrorist in the White House!**

**Terry Conway**

**I**N THE WAKE of the criminal bombings of Sudan and Afghanistan by war lord Clinton, it seems rather trivial to return to the question of the President's sex life.

This is of course what Clinton gambled when he timed the bombings to coincide with Lewinsky's second interrogation by investigator Kenneth Starr - about which the press have been strangely silent ever since.

Clearly the potential impeachment of the President of the United States – the most powerful man on earth - is a subject worthy of discussion and comment. Now it appears, that despite the support of Newt Gingrich (bought with the lives of those killed by the American raids), Clinton's address to the nation in which he confessed his misdemeanours was not sufficient. A leading member of the Democratic Party demanded a further apology.

Increasingly as the deadline for Starr's report draws nearer, deeper fissures appear within the American ruling class as to whether the President can – or should – be saved. These divisions are not only between Republicans and Democrats, but within Clinton's own Party.

The discussion as to whether he should be impeached or censured straddles both parties.

But should socialists be in favour

of Clinton's impeachment? For us this is not a question of his crimes as an individual – among which the slaughter in Afghanistan and Sudan take their place alongside other massacres – but on what the dynamic would be.

Our verdict is not that Clinton is a bad apple in an otherwise healthy orchard. His rooting out would not lead in and of itself to a lessening of the crimes against either the American people or the peoples of the world. Anyone who doubts this need only remember back to previous scandals such as Watergate. We have no confidence in the Supreme Court to hand out justice for our class.

Much of the debate in the press hinges on the assumption – which we certainly do not share – that there is a fundamental difference between the Republicans and the Democrats.

So we are accurately informed that the driving force for Clinton's impeachment is coming from the Republicans – and their extreme right wing at that. The implication is therefore that he should be defended against this attack whatever his crimes.

Even prominent feminists have rushed to Clinton's defence,

putting defence of the Democratic Party and its representative in the White House before the interests of women. While this comes as no surprise given the fact that the National Organisation of Women (NOW) has long been tied to the coat tails of the Democrats, it is none the less scandalous.

Clinton is not only accused of 'inappropriate relations' with Monica Lewinsky but of sexual harassment of Paula Jones. Sexual harassment is never defensible – and clearly the relationship of power in this instance is very clear. Our verdict has nothing to do with our view of the individual making the accusation.

In relation to the situation with Lewinsky, the statement to the nation talks about an 'inappropriate' relationship, but dodged the question of what was inappropriate about it.

The critics from the Republican, Christian fundamentalist right have focused on the question of extramarital sex. Clearly this is not the issue for socialists, though we don't condone deceit in personal relationships including in marriage.



**Our verdict is not that Clinton is not just a bad apple in an otherwise healthy orchard**

Our concern focuses again primarily on the question of real consent and the abuse of power. While consenting sexual relationships between younger and older people do exist, and similarly relationships between employers and employees are not always exploitative, it seems pretty clear that Lewinsky was used.

She herself seems to have drawn this conclusion from the President's address when he apologised to everyone else except her.

So it is not only our verdict on Afghanistan and Khartoum which is different from that of main stream opinion, but on the issues behind the domestic crisis. Of course the hearings in front of

the Grand Jury are not only about sex – issues of corruption and financial probity in campaigning are also under scrutiny.

Dumping an individual who is no longer the best instrument for the ruling class, especially when the debate about their actual crimes at home and abroad has been so obscured, will advance nothing. That is why we call for Clinton's indictment – and that of the whole establishment behind him – on the basis of war crimes.

# Kosova: US gives Milosevic green light for repression

Geoff Ryan

**O**n 17 July the United States Senate passed two resolutions which declared that 'Slobodan Milosevic, President of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia has committed war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide' and expressed support for the 'same right of self-determination for Kosova that the international community has recognised for the other former constituent territorial units of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, some of which have become independent'. (House Concurrent Resolution 304 and Senate Concurrent Resolution 105).

By late August American envoy Christopher Hill was negotiating a deal with this same Milosevic to which would leave Kosova far short of achieving this.

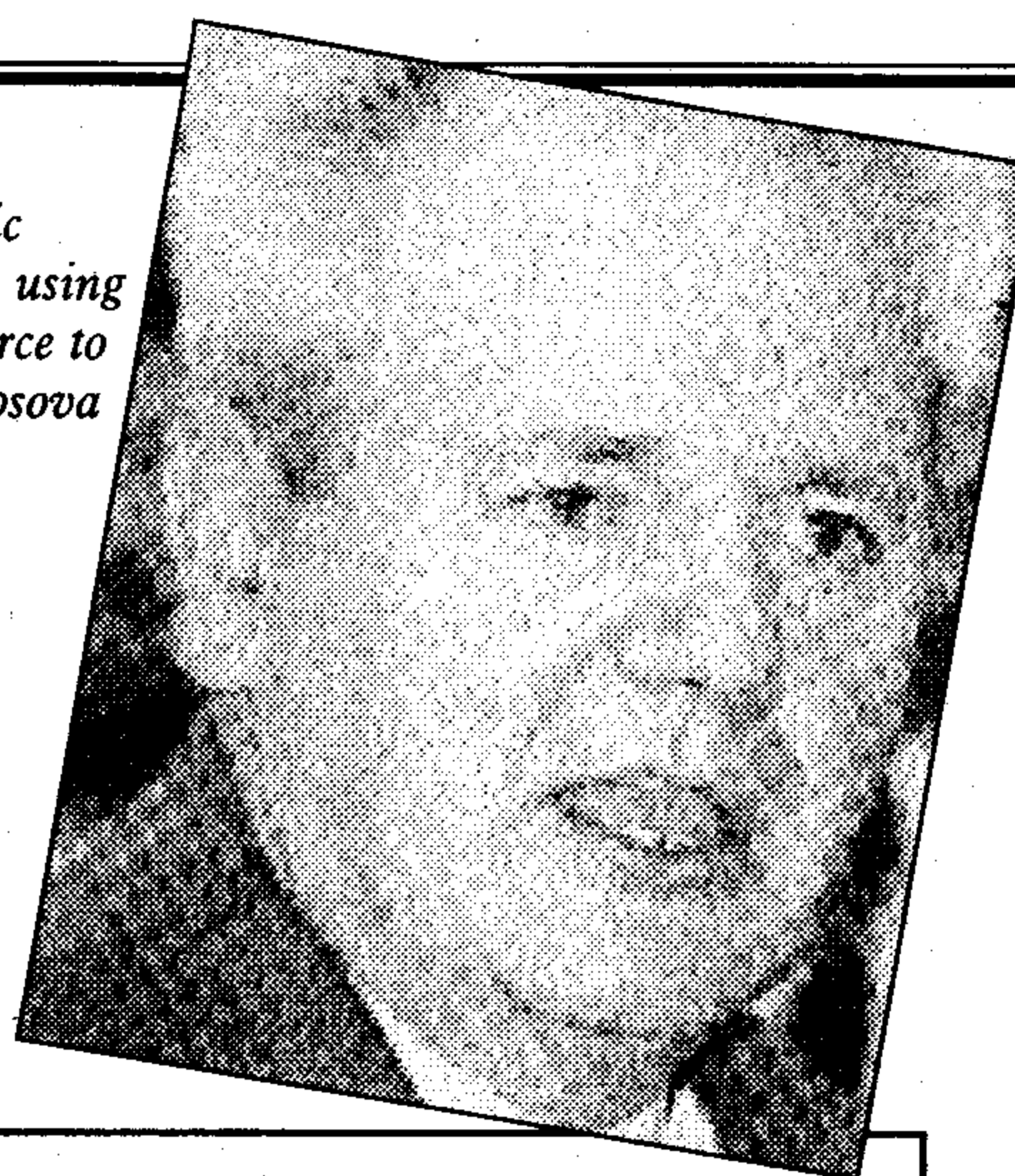
At most it would give Kosova a form of the rights it enjoyed before 1989, when Milosevic forced the Kosova Parliament to agree to the repeal of Kosovar autonomy. Yet implicit in Kosova's status in 1989 was the right to secession – a position totally rejected in the Hill proposals.

The contradiction between these two positions is only apparent: the former represents the fine words about democracy and freedom US imperialism occasionally feels itself compelled to utter; the second is its real position. In the meantime the Albanian people of Kosova suffer.

The US condemnation of Milosevic was backed by most of its



Milosevic (right) is using heavy force to crush Kosova struggle



NATO allies. These words encouraged the KLA to believe that they could rely on western support to defeat the Serbian police and army. They rather foolishly believed that NATO would offer them air-support, if not ground troops, to drive Serbian forces out.

They were also aided by a temporary hesitancy in Belgrade: perhaps Milosevic too wasn't certain to what extent the US would allow him to continue repression. As a result the KLA was able to massively increase its control of large parts of Kosova.

US special envoy Richard Holbrooke called for the inclusion of the KLA in any talks with Milosevic and insisted that there could be no solution without the KLA.

Yet within a matter of weeks US policy had undergone a noticeable change. The military successes of the KLA led to condemnation of both sides by US officials, and the KLA was put under pressure to restrain its demands. In particular it was made clear there would be no western support for Kosovar independence. This was just the green light Milosevic needed.

**O**nce he was sure he faced no more than verbal condemnation, his troops rapidly regained most of the liberated territory. The KLA was massively out-gunned. Old Kalashnikovs and other light weapons smuggled

over the Albanian border were no match for Serbian heavy weapons.

The KLA was forced to retreat to the mountains. Christopher Hill was then free to negotiate with Milosevic without the inclusion of the KLA.

The United States' attempts to impose a solution in Kosova take place against a background of continued repression of Albanians. In the first week of September alone over 300 Albanian activists have been arrested and are awaiting trial. Large numbers of Albanian villages continue to be shelled and, after being looted, burned down.

The villages of Kodrali, Drenoc, Zhabel, Krelan, Gergoc, Ratkoc, Vrajake, Ciflak, Denje, Sapnic

and Patequan were all destroyed in a single day (September 4). Attacks have also been made on several towns, particularly Prizren. While KLA units have occasionally fought back against Serbian attacks, in most cases the villages destroyed were not defended.

Those fleeing the fighting have also not been spared. Serbian troops fire on refugees as they cross into Albania, while in Kosova refugees have swelled the population of villages and small towns.

About 10,000 refugees have moved to Guncat, a village which normally has about 1,500 residents. Food and other basic necessities are scarce.

On 3 September Serb forces in Mitrovica banned Albanians from selling over 40 kinds of basic commodities – including flour, sugar, oil, meat, detergents and other hygiene articles.

Ironically Workers Aid for Kosova recently managed to deliver 2 tons of food, donated by the miners' union of Tuzla, to Mitrovica after a five day journey to cover the few hundred kilometres from Tuzla.

**F**or the US and its allies this continuing repression is distinctly secondary to ensuring 'stability' in the region. The Albanian nation is divided between four states: Yugoslavia (with Albanian populations in both Montenegro and Serbia, including Kosova); Greece; Albania and Macedonia (where one third of the population is Albanian). Approximately 40 per cent of Albanians live outside Albania.

A victory for the KLA in Kosova would open up the issue of reunification of the Albanian nation – even though KLA spokesperson Adem Demaci has recently denounced the position of unity with Albania as a product of the KLA's 'teen-age years'.

Demaci's comments illustrate one of the biggest problems in Kosova. Most Kosova political leaders – the KLA as much as self-styled President Rugova – continue to hope, despite the clearest evidence to the contrary, that the west will intervene in support of Kosovar independence.

Much KLA criticism of Hill's proposed deal focuses on the nature of the proposed delegation – from which they are excluded – for talks with Milosevic.

They insist that they are 'Europeans' and look towards 'Europe', in the naive belief that EU politicians will support independence for Kosova.

It is this political weakness, much more than the military defeats the KLA has recently suffered, that holds back the Kosova struggle.

Despite this, socialists cannot stand on the sidelines. We support the right of Kosova to independence and the right of the Kosovar people to determine their relations with other states, including the right to unification with Albania if they so choose.

We need to ensure this debate is taken into the labour movement and support won for the right of Kosova to self-determination and rejection of any attempts by imperialism to impose a solution on the people of Kosova.

## Timebomb of Italy's new immigration laws

By a special correspondent in Italy

RECENT dramatic disturbances in the new "temporary holding centres" in Sicily are some of the first effects of the recently passed Italian immigration law.

The law, passed by the Romano Prodi government in March '98, is the first ever attempt by an Italian government to deal with the overall situation of non-EU foreigners coming to Italy for any reason whatsoever (work, study, tourism or humanitarian reasons).

Up till now this issue has been covered by a series of piecemeal, sometimes contradictory, legislative decrees.

The new law has both positive and negative aspects. Amongst the positive ones is the introduction of a "permanent" residence card, which can be obtained by an immi-

grant worker and his/her family after five years' legal residence in the country, and can be withdrawn only for serious offences.

There is also the right for the family of an immigrant worker to be united with the working father or mother in Italy, the guaranteeing of the rights of immigrant minors regardless of their parents' situation, and the right for workers to obtain a permit to enter the country to look for work, although the full implications of this latter clause are not yet entirely clear.

The negative aspects of the law, apart from the failure to give immigrants the vote in local elections – a clause that was blocked on constitutional grounds by the right wing in the Italian parliament – include the setting up of the already infamous "temporary holding centres".

The law states that foreigners without regular documents can either be expelled instantly or held in these locked, guarded detention centres for up to thirty days (20 days plus the granting of an extension) before being repatriated.

During the summer, over 1000 newly arrived foreigners, mainly Tunisians, Moroccans, Albanians and Kurds, were imprisoned in centres in the south of Italy and Milan, amidst scenes of extreme violence and rioting, with injuries, arrests and three mass escapes (between 50 and 100 people a time).

The opening of the detention centres is part of the law's attempt to regulate the flow of immigrants entering the country. But one of the biggest shortcomings of the new law is its failure to grant any kind of "amnesty" for

foreigners without regular documents who were already in the country before the passing of the law on March 27.

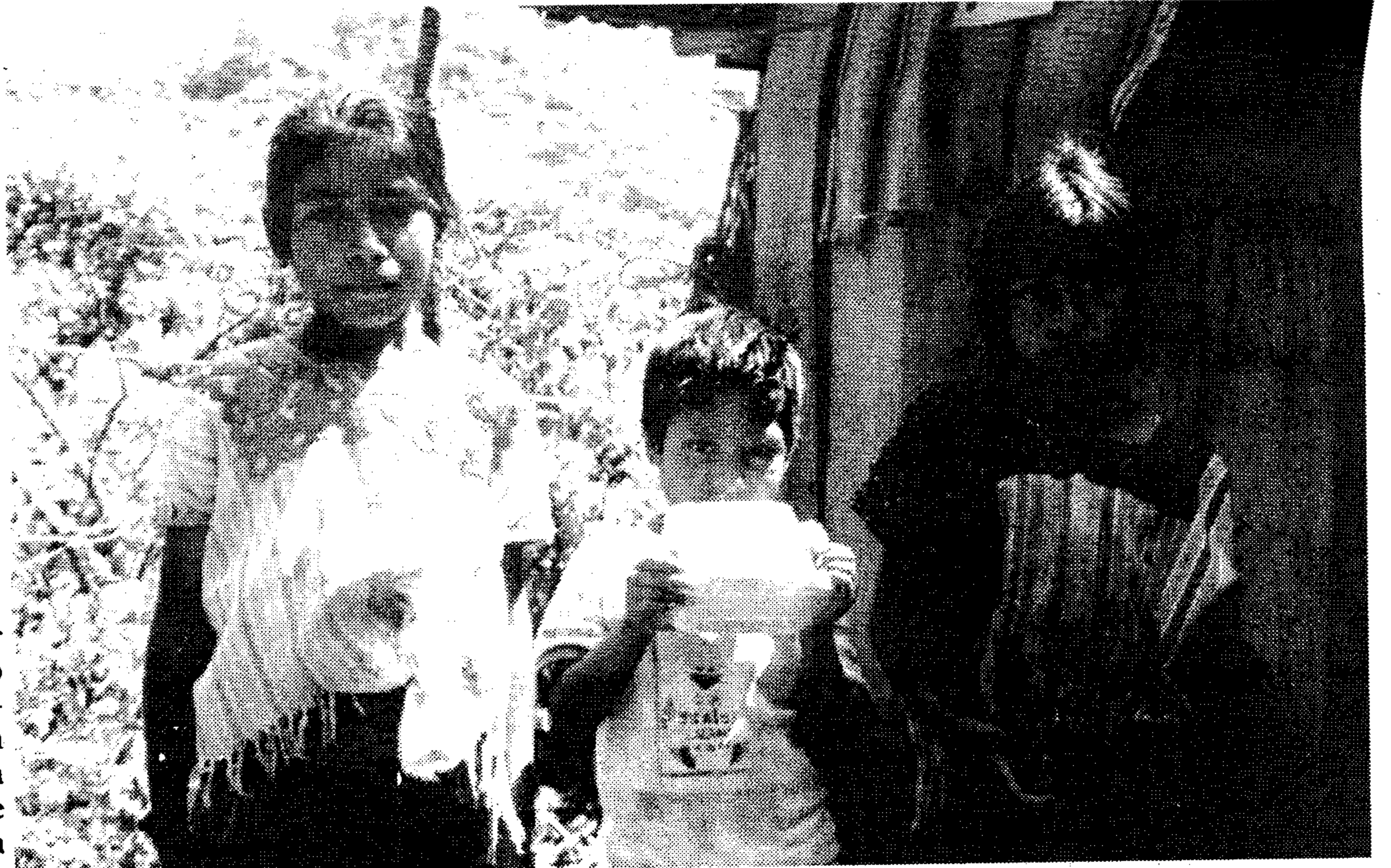
In fact, although the newly approved "entry flow control" mechanism (agreed on July 31 by the Cabinet) allows any "irregular foreigners" who were already in Italy before the 27th of March to become "regularised", under certain conditions, this decision has not as yet actually been implemented.

And so, the new law, whilst making some definite improvements for regularised immigrants in Italy, has in many ways failed to resolve one of the most pressing and controversial questions of all: that of illegal immigration.

The explosive situation in the new detention centres is the living example of this failure.

# Behind the lines in Chiapas

*Finding a use for advertising posters: families eking out a living in improvised shacks in Polho*



**Gill Lee**

"ARMY!" came the shout. A line of women, dressed in the traditional red and white blouses of Chenalho region, stood up across the side road stretching their rope barrier. Above them a sign read "Welcome to Polho, a new autonomous, rebel municipality. Liberty, Justice, Democracy. Zapata Lives! The fight continues!"

Below in the valley the sun glinted off the new tin roofs of refugee shacks, home to those displaced by the Mexican army's "low intensity" war against the Indian peoples of Chiapas.

The army jeep sped by on the main road and the women sat back down and resumed their chatting and needlework. One dangled a crying baby and smiled at me encouragingly, "He'll be back soon with your papers". Sure enough, within a couple of minutes my passport was returned and I was escorted down the dirt track into Polho.

My guide was Fernando. He came from Colonia Miguel Utrilla Los Chorros, only a few kilometres away. "We've been here less than a year," he told me. "It was after the massacre at Acteal".

"The PRIistas' in 'Paz y Justicia' were boasting about what they had done there, about how much they had been paid to do it. They burned us out. Our animals, furniture, everything that could be moved was stolen, and then they set fire to our houses.

"Acteal was on December 22 1997 and they burned us out on December 25. Seventy eight families had their houses burned, so we came here. Two hundred and fifty people in all."

## Driven out

In the last two years, despite the signing of the San Andres Accord by the Zapatistas and the Mexican government, at least seventeen thousand people have been forced from their homes by the army and the paramilitary groups which operate in Chiapas. The paramilitaries are controlled by the PRI, which has ruled Mexico's for over sixty years.

The PRI's plan for tackling the Zapatista insurgency is simple: create paramilitary groups, use them to terrorise and displace the population, and so destroy the bases of support for the EZLN.

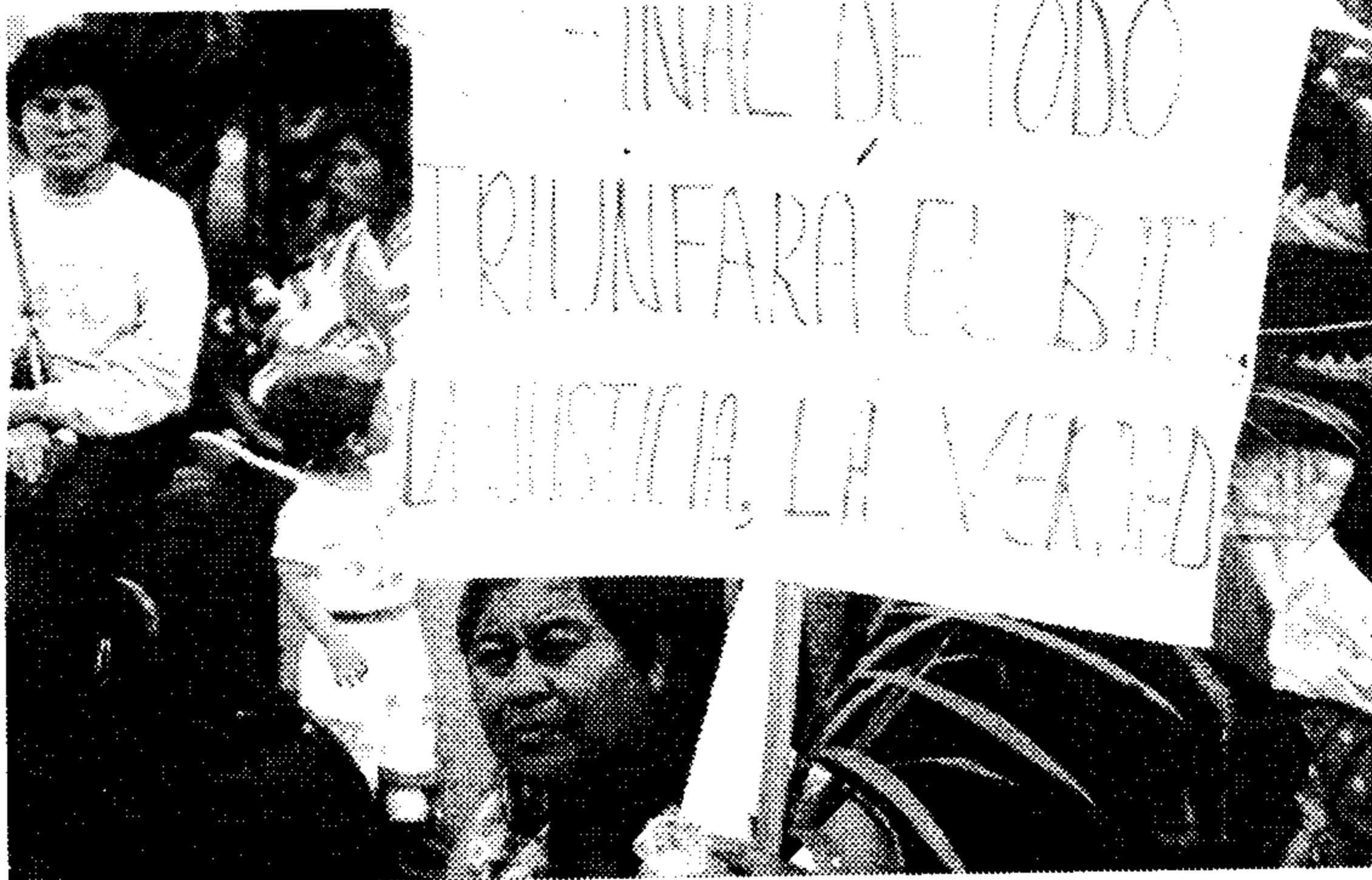
Five days before Acteal the Governor of Chiapas gave more than half a million dollars to Paz y Justicia to "support and encourage agricultural production".

The similarity of this strategy to that pursued in El Salvador and Guatemala is no coincidence: governments and army are being advised by the same U.S. counterinsurgency 'experts'.

In 1998 Mexico sent more soldiers for training in the United States than any other country. In 1980 115 Mexican soldiers went, while from 1996 and 1998 3,200 Mexican soldiers have been trained there as 'rapid reaction troops'. Many of those leading the war against the people of Chiapas received their training in the U.S. Juan Lopez Ortiz trained there in 1959

and was in charge of the war against the EZLN in Ocosingo in Jan 94 when Zapatista prisoners were publicly executed in the market square.<sup>5</sup> Between 30,000 and 40,000 soldiers are now concentrated in Chiapas, a state with just over 2 million inhabitants.<sup>6</sup>

The Subcommittee for the Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities recently passed the first United Nations resolution against Mexico's breaches of human rights. This resolution demanded that the Mexican government



*Thousands joined a church-led demonstration through San Cristobal*

bring to justice those who carried out the killings of civilians in the autonomous areas.

The government responded by denouncing the Subcommittee for being made up of 'experts' rather than politicians and therefore as unrepresentative of international opinion.<sup>7</sup> Meanwhile the numbers murdered by paramilitaries grow. Human rights groups state more than 500 Indians were killed between 1995 and 1997.<sup>8</sup>

In November last year Gilberto Lopez y Rivas, deputy president of Cocopa<sup>9</sup> and member of the PRD<sup>10</sup> presented to the Mexican Senate the names of the main leaders of Paz y Justicia. None have yet been charged.

The state deals differently with those thought to be leaders of the autonomous Zapatista municipalities, declared illegal in April 98. Since then, through raids on the Zapatista communities and arrests and jailing those thought to be in positions of leadership, the number of political prisoners in Chiapas has doubled, from 49 to 95.<sup>11</sup>

## Language

Miguel Angel de los Santos, defence lawyer for many accused Zapatistas, has denounced this. "In many cases the only proof offered for serious crimes such as kidnapping, assault or even murder has been the statements made by members of the PRI in these communities. ...They have also ignored the requirement to presume innocence and the right under the constitution for indigenous accused persons to have translation from Spanish into their own language."

When Chol speaking Indian Adolfo Lopez Vazquez was charged with homicide, the judge justified the fact that there was no translation saying: "My origins are also Chol and I speak Spanish well".

Adolfo was convicted on the basis of a three page statement in Spanish which he could not possibly have dictated.<sup>12</sup>

The wives of the political prisoners of the Cerro Hueco have organised protests against the framing of their husbands. On August 9, 70 women accompanied by their children began a 'strike of the machetes' in front of the town hall in Tuxtla Gutierrez. Each carried a wooden machete bearing the name of a man detained in Cerro Hueco and so unable to work in the fields.

"Our husbands are prisoners because they want a democratic change in the country, because they demand that our autonomy is respected. They are in prison because they have been named as representatives of our communities"<sup>13</sup>

In Polho too, many women are without men. "They are dead, or in prison, or with the EZLN" explained Fernando, "It's very hard for them

"They have absolutely nothing and since arriving here no one has received a peso from the Mexican government". Around us canvas shelters made from hoarding adverts flapped in the breeze. "Marlborough Man" sheltered one family while "Things go better with Coke" - or did they? - for another.

The Red Cross had laid temporary water pipes from the river and occasionally delivered planks and the canvas from which to make shelters.

Three men were clearing a patch of ground. It had taken them a week working with pick axes to level the site but they were worried about what they were going to use to build their 'house' now that the site was prepared.

"The last delivery of planks, tin and canvas was two to three months ago. There is nothing here to use unless the Red Cross delivers materials. Our tent is full of holes so we need something more permanent."

Many of the children suffer from gastrointestinal disorders, and when it rains the whole camp turns to mud with paths becoming treacherous. The streams in which people wash clothes and bodies becomes red with earth.

We passed the clinic, "Autonomous Clinic, Emiliano Zapata". Like the school it was built of breeze blocks and was painted with an impressive mural.

"People decided it was important that we built our own school, clinic and meeting space," explained Fernando. "There's also a court for the young people to play football or basketball."

The wall of the meeting space was decorated with symbols of the forest: deer, birds, trees and flowers. The school bore two murals; one with the familiar ski-masked figures of the Zapatistas while the

other showed masked women, the beribboned hats of San Juan Chamula and coffins.

On many walls bright stalks of maize - the staple food of Southern Mexico, and the material from which Mayan beliefs say the first people were made - stretched towards the sky.

I had to leave. The Mexican government deported more than 200 foreigners in the last year for alleged political activities, and in January told the International Red Cross to leave Chiapas.

## Questioning

On the way to Polho the collective taxi in which I had been travelling was stopped by the army, and the Mexicans inside ignored while an officer ordered me to a small, hot office. All my details were recorded and I was interrogated as to my travel plans in the region.

My story - that I was travelling to Pantelho (the last town on the road that runs through Polho) because I was interested in its traditional weaving - had fallen on sceptical ears.

It now seemed sensible that I should get to Pantelho that afternoon in case there was another checkpoint there. Heading up again to the main road, the barrier of women was again on its feet as yet another army truck thundered past.

On the main road to Pantelho army jeeps passed every five minutes. Acteal was a kilometre passed Polho. Next to the sign reading 'Autonomous municipality "Las Abejas"' were sand-bagged army posts and a military base.

"Dentist" read a sign over one heavily armoured post, while inside a soldier in full gear, hard hat and machine gun gave a new frisson to the thought of a dental visit. Signs reading "Social work" and "Doctors available" seemed a poor window-dressing for the campaign of repression being waged against the people of Chiapas by the Mexican army and government.

(1) 45 Tzotzil Indians, mainly women and children, supporters of the autonomous group 'Las abejas' - the bees - were killed and dismembered by paramilitaries in an attack on Acteal planned and supported by the army and the PRI (Institutional Revolutionary Party, the ruling party in Mexico).

(2) *La Jornada*, 12/8/98

(3) As revealed in documents uncovered by *El Proceso* 3/1/98

(4) *La Jornada* 17/12/97

(5) *La Jornada* 16/8/98 with data reprinted from *The Washington Post*

(6) *International Viewpoint*, February 98

(7) "En realidad esta es una comision integrada por un grupo de expertos, que no tienen responsabilidad politica", Antonio de Icaza, permanent representative of Mexico at the U.N. quoted in *Cuarto Poder*, 21/8/98

(8) *La Jornada* 31 Dec 97.

(9) Comision de Concordia Y Pacificacion

(10) Partido Revolucionario Democratico, liberal bourgeois breakaway from PRI, founded by Cauhtemoc Cardenas. Have defended Zapatistas.

(11) Information given by *La Voz de Cerro Hueco*, voice of the prisoners of Cerro Hueco prison.

(12) *La Jornada* 21/8/98

(13) quoted in *Tiempo*, No. 80.

**Many of those leading the war against the people of Chiapas were trained in the USA**

# Key lesson of 1848 for today

## The strategy of permanent revolution

The second of two articles by John Lister examining the lessons drawn by Marxists from the revolutions of 1848, in particular the theory of "permanent revolution".

**M**ARX and Engels went in to the revolutionary movements of 1848 convinced that the principal task was to complete the bourgeois ("democratic") revolution — establishing national unity in Germany, and working for democratic forms of rule to replace the old feudal and repressive aristocratic regimes.

The experience of the struggles in Germany, France and elsewhere in Europe rapidly proved to them that this was not sufficient as a line for the embryonic working class of that time.

The bourgeoisie would always prove an inconsistent and inadequate ally and a treacherous leadership in any struggle against the old regime, because of their fear of the potential strength of the working class.

Marx and Engels had correctly underlined what was to be the driving fear of the bourgeoisie when they argued in the *Communist Manifesto* that the successful bourgeois revolution in Germany would immediately open the door to the proletarian revolution.

In practice the bourgeoisie preferred not to take that chance, but instead to do a new deal with the old regime.

It was this which led Marx to put forward the "battle cry" of permanent revolution, a stern warning on the need for the working class to organise itself separately from the bourgeoisie and to prepare to fight on its own behalf to complete the struggle for democratic rights and for its own power.

Half a century later this same spirit of working class independence became part of the driving force of Lenin and the Bolsheviks.

Indeed it was precisely over the necessity for this type of firm and disciplined leadership, and the rejection of any perspective of class collaboration with the "democratic bourgeoisie" in Russia, that the Bolsheviks split in 1903 from the Menshevik wing of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party.

The Mensheviks — ignoring the



Through the strategy of permanent revolution the Russian working class rose to power in a predominantly peasant economy

lessons of 1848 — clung to the notion that the liberal bourgeoisie would play the leading role in the democratic revolution in Russia, Lenin argued that the centrality of the agrarian question in a backward land of massed peasantry raised the central role of an alliance between the workers and the poor peasants as the driving force of revolution. If victorious, Lenin argued that these combined forces would establish a "democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry".

This formulation left open the possibility of a regime which fell short of a revolutionary workers' state, but which rested on a more radical mass base than a "democratic" bourgeois regime. Lenin did not at first rule out the possibility that the peasantry might even develop a mass party of its own which might play some independent role.

Trotsky criticised not Lenin's focus on the agrarian revolution, nor the emphasis upon forming an alliance of the most oppressed against the Tsarist aristocracy and the liberal bourgeoisie, but the fact that Lenin's formula placed two antagonistic forces simultaneously in the driving seat. It left open whether the actual dictatorial power would be exercised by

the proletariat or by the peasantry when it came to the crunch.

Trotsky argued that the peasantry, for all its size and weight, did not have the political independence to form a genuine party of its own which would not either fall prey to the bourgeoisie or follow the lead of the proletariat.

The completion even of the tasks demanded the peasantry could only be carried through if the working class assumed the leading role, breaking boldly from the landowners, and making the democratic programme part of its own.

Pursuing the argument in his 1904 pamphlet *Results and Prospects*, Trotsky pointed out that a vic-

torious alliance of the theory of revolution in stages out their workers or

people. It would hardly be a "democracy" in the traditional sense. And on the level of immediate demands, the same government, theoretically representing both peasant and working class interests, would need to take steps to defend the agricultural proletariat — measures which would be strongly opposed by sections of the peasantry.

Other contentious issues would be the fight for the legal 8-hour day; support for the unemployed; government support for strikers; and the need to expropriate those capitalists who attempted to lock out their workers or disrupt the new regime. To each of these questions a proletarian answer would need to be given.

The expropriation of the large estates raised a further question: would a hypothetical "democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry" decide to carve up those estates into small plots for landless peasants and agricultural



restored Menshevik

workers?

Or would it decide rather to retain them as larger units, and farm them collectively? The proletarian programme points to a collective, socialised economy: but the traditional peasant demand is for individual land ownership.

Such questions, Trotsky stressed, could prove decisive for the very survival of a revolutionary government: on each of them the only consistently revolutionary line came from the proletariat, not the peasantry.

The democratic programme, and even the minimum demands of the workers, could only be achieved by a government under the control of the working class, the dictatorship of the proletariat. For this reason, Trotsky argued, the "democratic dictatorship" formula should be discarded.

**T**he Marxist goal was to wage an independent struggle within the unfolding democratic revolution, and to create the conditions for the working class to play the leading role, cementing an alliance with the poorest sectors of the peasantry, so that the democratic revolution against Tsarism could "grow over" in an uninterrupted way into the socialist revolution and the seizure of power by the workers.

Nor was it a question of Marxists artificially trying to fabricate a process of "growing over". In the emergence of the powerful Soviets (workers' councils) based on the key workplaces, and reaching into the army, the Russian working class and sections of the peasantry showed in 1917 that the struggle had by no means been completed in the February "democratic" revolution.

At the same time the Russian bourgeoisie and their reformist hangers-on gave proof that the democratic programme could not be completed while they were in charge: it could only be carried through under the leadership of the working class.

Stridently denouncing Joseph Stalin and other "old Bolsheviks" within Russia who had since February 1917 given support to the bourgeois "Provisional Government" and even to its continued involvement in the war, Lenin in his *April Theses* reaffirmed the fight for an independent class line, and for internationalism, and on his return to Russia decisively shifted the line of the Bolshevik Party toward what would be the October Revolution.

Again the watch-words for this turn had been established by Marx and Engels sixty years pre-

**"The permanent revolution, in the sense which Marx attached to this concept, means a revolution which makes no compromise with any single form of class rule, which does not stop at the democratic stage, which goes over to socialist measures and to war against reaction from without: that is, a revolution whose every successive stage is rooted in the preceding one, and which can end only in the complete liquidation of class society."**

[Trotsky: *Introduction to The Permanent Revolution*]



viously, when they insisted:

"Alongside the new official governments [the workers] must simultaneously establish their own revolutionary workers' governments, either in the form of local executive committees and councils or through workers' clubs or committees..."

"In a word, from the very moment of victory the workers' suspicion must be directed no longer against the defeated reactionary party but against their former ally, against the party which intends to exploit the common victory for itself."

"To be able forcefully and threateningly to oppose this party, whose betrayal of the workers will begin with the very first hour of victory, the workers must be armed and organised."

"The whole proletariat must be armed at once with muskets, rifles, cannon and ammunition, and the revival of the old-style citizens' militia, directed against the workers, must be opposed."

"Where the formation of this militia cannot be prevented, the workers must try to organise themselves independently as a proletarian guard, with elected leaders and with their own elected general staff: they must try to place themselves not under the orders of the state authority but of the revolutionary local councils set up by the workers."

In the fight to take forward the uninterrupted, "permanent" revolution, and in the fight to mobilise armed bodies of workers as part of a dual power challenge to the Provisional Government, Lenin was therefore building on the actual situation in Russia and on the Marxist tradition and the lessons of the 1848 revolutions.

In the aftermath of the successful Russian Revolution, Trotsky began consciously to work through these lessons and to spell out the necessity for the Communist International and Communist Parties to learn them too, and fight for the dictatorship of the proletariat as the only means to complete the democratic revolution.

But he ran into immediate opposition from Stalin and the growing bureaucratic caste which had begun to emerge within the strife-torn, isolated and backward workers' state.

Showing that no political lessons had been learned by some "old Bolsheviks" from the upheavals of the Revolution itself, and giving voice to a mood of demoralisation, conservatism and nationalism among whole sections of the Russian peasantry, Stalin was by 1924 feeling his way towards a renunciation of international revolution, dressed up in his "theory" of socialism in one country.

This is one reason why the bureaucratic machinery of the Kremlin expended such energy in slandering Trotsky's line - the line of Lenin and Marx - and instilling in the degenerated "Communist International" the discredited formulae of the Mensheviks.

Today it is a hallmark of Communist Parties and CP-influenced groupings which have descended from Stalin's Comintern that they - like today's nationalist leaderships and so-called "liberal" bourgeoisie - adamantly insist upon the separation of the democratic and socialist revolutions. That is the cornerstone of their search for "progressive" sections of the capitalist class and "broad popular alliances."

When we argue today that there is only a working class solution to the struggles in Indonesia, South Korea, South Africa, and the Philippines, we are not arguing for any less emphasis on the democratic tasks to be accomplished in the revolution.

We are certainly not arguing against an alliance where appropriate between the working class and the poorest layers of peasants and petty bourgeois.

**W**e are stressing that even the minimal demands of the proletariat and the carrying through of the democratic revolution go beyond anything that can be accomplished by or under the leadership of the "democratic" capitalists. We are insisting that the workers, committing themselves to the struggle must build and maintain their own independent organisations, and develop their own demands and programme.

Fighting alongside the various "democrats" who are prepared to use revolutionary means against the existing regime, workers must also maintain their own, revolutionary organisations.

Incorporating the democratic demands, alongside the specifically socialist programme of a workers' organisation, they must remain committed to the socialist struggle - and (as Marx and

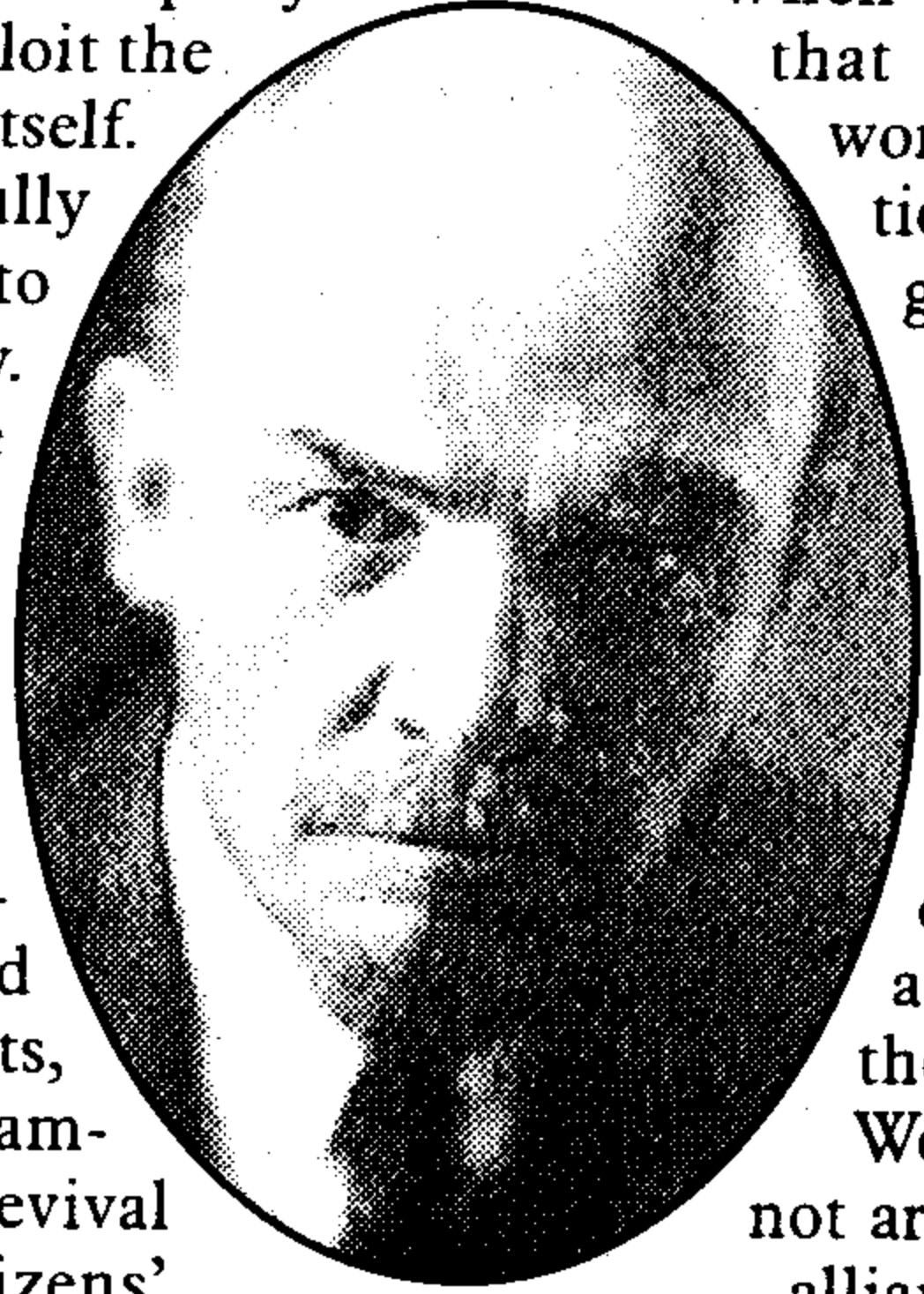


Armed workers won and defended the revolution

Engels insisted) not stop short "until all the more or less propertied classes have been driven from their ruling positions, until the proletariat has conquered state power."

From this standpoint, permanent revolution is not so much a "theory" as a strategic conception, an orientation within every struggle on an international level.

It is not a jargon term to be confusingly used by academics, or a label, but as Marx put it, a "battle cry" for the workers. In it the spirit of revolutionary defiance from 1848 lives on in the battles being fought 150 years later.



Lenin: learned lessons



## Youth in camp of Fourth International

### Terry Conway

IT WAS A TIME for anniversaries: the fifteenth Fourth International youth camp coincided with the 60th birthday of the Fourth International.

Six hundred young socialists made their way from all corners of Europe to a remote (and rainy) corner of Denmark to celebrate and discuss.

After many years work in International Workers Aid participants were particularly pleased to welcome a delegation from Bosnia, as well as from Russia, Poland and virtually every country of Western Europe.

Under the slogan "Reclaim freedom" the forums and workshops explored the ways in which the freedoms of young people, of women, of gays and lesbians, of immigrants and the peoples of the Third World are restricted and eliminated.

We analysed how this is done in the name of the "freedoms" of the capitalist world, the free market, free trade - individual freedoms are counterposed to collective rights for workers, for students, for the unemployed.

Prepared, as every year, by a meeting of representatives of participating youth organisations, the programme combines contributions by comrades of many years experience with those by young comrades, who both reflect the activity of their own organisations and tackle new questions specific to their generation.

The existence of women-only space at the camp allows both for intense discussion of issues of feminism and the opportunity to discuss and relax together as women.

The lesbian and gay space suffered somewhat this year from poor positioning, but nevertheless an ambitious and enjoyable programme of debates took place as well as preparation of the best party of the week.

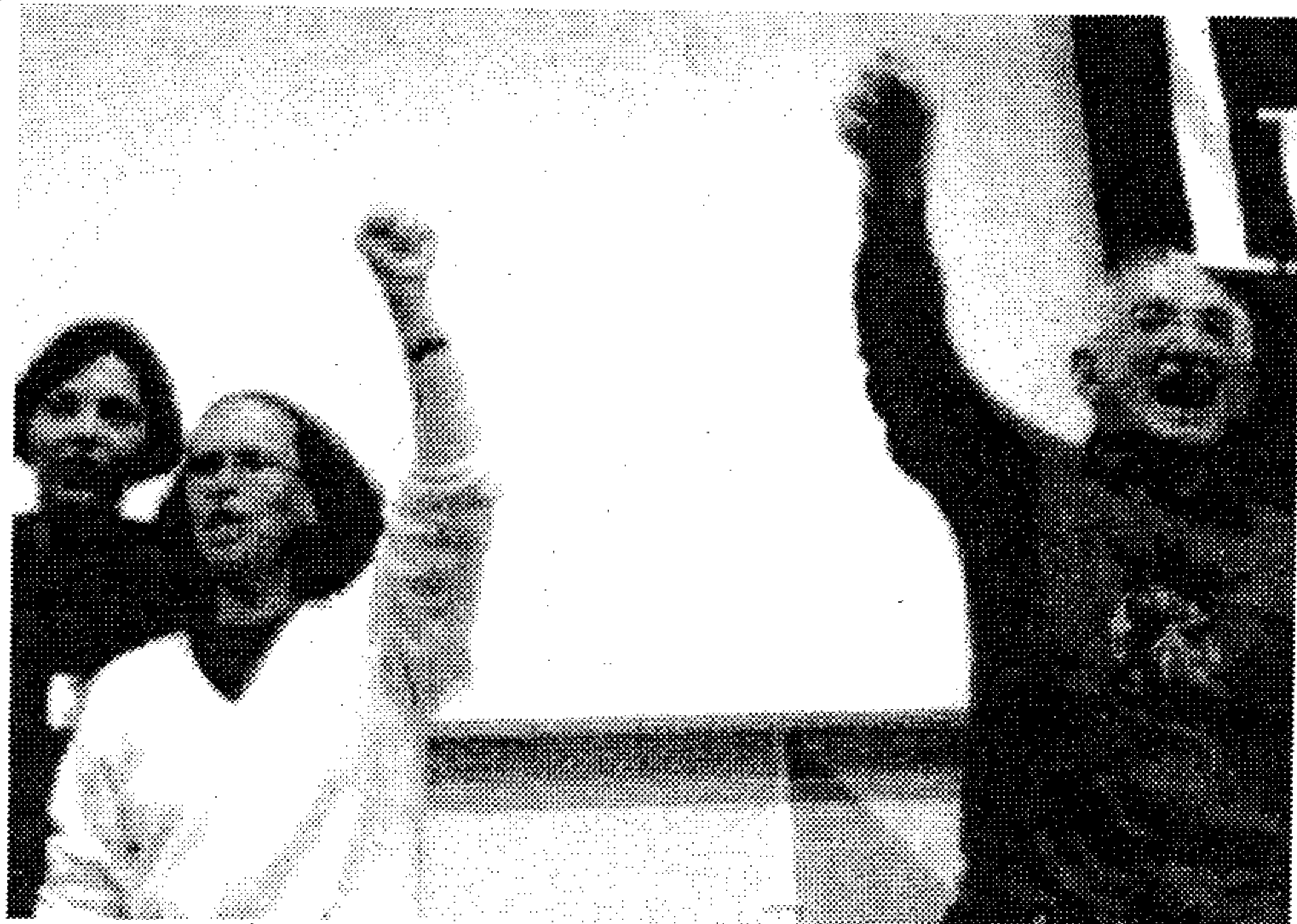
While the existence of these spaces is always controversial with a minority, the arguments for autonomy were overwhelmingly supported.

To mark the anniversary of the founding of the Fourth International, the camp invited Charlie van Gelderen, sole surviving militant of the twenty-two present at the founding conference in 1938.

ship, spoke for the generation that came into politics in the context of the world-wide youth radicalisation following 1968 and outlined the fight to build a broad inclusive revolutionary movement. Andrea

Peniche from Portugal spoke for the young people present in asserting their commitment to the fight for revolutionary transformation.

The British delegation was regrettably small - and with an average age of well over thirty. We did make some useful contributions I think - not only in the kitchen and



Solidarity between different nations and generations (above)

The warm and appreciative welcome given to Charlie was returned in kind as he assured the evening rally: "Your enthusiasm has relit the flame that was kindled at the historic Founding Conference, sixty years ago when, like many of you, I was in my twenties."

"Don't be disheartened by defeats and set-backs. Don't be dismayed because we are still small in numbers Yours is the future. Stay true to your revolutionary spirit. You must win where my generation failed."

Tatau Godinho, member of the executive of the Brazilian PT and of the Fourth International leader-

through Charlie.

The workshop on Ireland we led was attended by over 80 people and provoked a lively debate on the direction of the peace process.

It was my first camp - after nearly 25 years in the Fourth International. I can't imagine why I didn't go before - and I certainly intend to be back.

Next year will be in sunnier climes - Italy or France. Readers need to start thinking now about how we can make sure we send loads of young people - the camp is one of the best advertisements for socialism I can think of.



# Chinese Trotskyist Zheng Chaolin (1908-1998) Implacable opponent of Stalinism

Wang Fanxi

**Z**HENG CHAOLIN, a veteran of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and a Chinese Trotskyist, died on August 1 in Shanghai. He devoted his entire life to the cause of the liberation of the Chinese workers and peasants.

He was at once a writer, a poet, an historian, a linguist and a translator. His achievements were not only numerous but exemplary. He avoided a desultory or dilettantish approach and probed deeply into the essence of things, assiduously perfecting his skills and knowledge.

Naturally, he was first and foremost a faithful and unyielding revolutionary. His efforts and achievements in other fields took as their keynote his revolutionary thinking, and were shot through with his revolutionary spirit.

Chaolin was born Zhangping in Fujian province in 1901, and as a boy he received a traditional Chinese education. In 1919 he went to France as part of a "work study" programme (under which young Chinese students financed their studies by working part-time in French industry), and came under the influence of western thought, particularly the Russian Revolution.

He gradually abandoned his attachment to the philosophy of Confucius and Mencius and even Lao Zi and Zhuang Zi and embraced the ideas propagated by Chen Duxiu and his co-thinkers who advocated democracy and science. Shortly afterwards he embraced Marxism, and very soon progressed from thought to action.

In June 1922, when some young Chinese Marxists living in Europe held a meeting in Paris at which they set up the "Youth Communist Party". Chaolin was among the 18 delegates, who included Zhou Enlai, Zhao Shiyuan and Yin Kuan.

In 1923 he was selected to go to Russia to study at Moscow's University for Toilers of the East. In July 1924, when the CCP urgently needed cadres as a result of the rapid development of the revolutionary situation in China, he was sent back to China with Chen Yannian and others.

He worked in the Propaganda Department of the Central Committee, edited party journals, drafted internal educational materials and external propaganda materials and translated Bukharin's *ABC of Communism*, while at the same time teaching at the party school in Shanghai.

From 1925 to 1927, when the Chinese revolution grew apace, he participated in the famous May 30th Movement and in the second and third Shanghai worker's risings. After Chiang Kai-Shek's bloody coup on 12 April 1927, Zheng went with the Central Committee to Wuhan,



Chinese Communist Party marchers carry banners of Stalin as well as their own leaders through newly-liberated Canton in 1947.

where he took part in the Party's fifth congress. He was appointed head of the Propaganda Department of the Hubei Provincial Committee.

After the final defeat of the revolution he took part in the party's famous August 7th conference. Soon afterwards he secretly moved back to Shanghai with the new Central Committee and took charge of the new party organ *Bolshevik*, as its chief editor.

In 1928 he went to Fujian to reorganise Party affairs in the province.

In 1929 he married comrade Liu Jingzhen. Not long afterwards he was arrested for the first time by the Guomindang. Fortunately, his identity was not discovered, and after just over 40 days he was released as a result of the secret intervention of the party.

**B**etween 1929 and 1930 he began to come into contact with Trotsky's writings on the Chinese Revolution. Deeply impressed, he turned towards Trotskyism, together with Chen Duxiu and others. In May 1931 he, Chen Duxiu and three other comrades represented the Proletariat group at the unification conference of the four Trotskyist groups.

He was elected to the Central Committee and took charge of its Propaganda Department. Not long afterwards, he was arrested by the Guomindang authorities and sentenced to 15 years in prison, though he was released after just seven years, when the Japanese war broke out.

After his release he rested and recuperated for a while in a village in Anhui Province together with his wife, and proof-read and translated the remaining parts of Trotsky's *The Revolution Betrayed*, a third of which had already been translated by two

other Trotskyists in Nanjing prison.

In 1940, he returned to Shanghai, where he joined the leadership of the Chinese Trotskyist organisation and the editorial branch of the underground paper, *Struggle*. He translated volumes two and three of Trotsky's *History of the Russian Revolution*.

After the outbreak of a new world war in Western Europe in 1939, differences of opinion grew up in the Chinese Trotskyist leadership. These were principally over what attitude to adopt to the Chinese resistance once the Anti-Japanese war in China became caught up in the wider war.

A protracted dispute ensued, and spread from political to organisational issues. As a result the Chinese Trotskyist organisation split in 1942. Chaolin was a leading member of the group later known as the International Workers Party of China.

On December 7 1941, the Japanese army occupied Shanghai's foreign settlements and revolutionary activity directed against the Japanese became extremely difficult. From then until the Japanese defeat in August 1945, Chaolin put his main effort into writing.

Apart from editing *Internationalist*, the underground Trotskyist journal, he wrote his memoirs and *Three Travellers*, a collection of political debates in the form of imaginary dialogues. He wrote the *ABC of Permanent Revolution* and a Critical Biography of Chen Duxiu (uncompleted). To earn a living he also translated some literary works, among them Ignazio Silone's *Fontamara* and a book by Andre Gide.

From August 1945 to May 1949, from the Japanese surrender and the civil war between the Guomindang and the CCP to the Communist victory in China, he wrote numerous articles for *New Banner*, a publicly declared Trotskyist fortnightly which was banned by the Guomindang government after 21 issues.

On the eve of the Communist occupation of Shanghai, the

group to which he belonged reorganised as the International Workers Party (IWP) which he helped to lead. In the meantime Chaolin systematically researched the social material of the new China and wrote a pamphlet *On State Capitalism*.

In the next two to three years the IWP continued its activities under Communist rule, and extended its influence. As a result, on 22 December 1952, its entire membership, together with all the other Chinese Trotskyists and even sympathisers, were rounded up by the Maoist political police.

This development had naturally been foreseen. As a precaution, the other Trotskyist organisation under Peng Shuzhi, had already transferred its leadership to Hong Kong. The IWP also decided to send someone to Hong Kong to set up a liaison station.

However, Chaolin himself refused to go and insisted on staying behind in Shanghai, although he was fully aware of the danger that he faced there. His St Peter-like spirit led him not to a martyr's grave but to a further 27 years in prison including physical and spiritual abuse.

**I**n June 1979, as a result of changes in the leadership of the CCP and in response to calls by people both inside and outside China (in 1979 he was declared a prisoner of conscience by Amnesty International), Chaolin and 11 other survivors of Mao's gaols were restored to liberty.

In all he spent a total of 34 years behind bars, equalling the record for political imprisonment set by the French Revolutionary Louis Auguste Blanqui.

Chaolin's wife Liu Jingzhen died less than half a year after her and Chaolin's release from a Labour Camp in June 1979.

Their son Frei, born in 1938, died in 1945. In his final years, Chaolin was cared for by his great niece.

In the 19 years between his release and his death, Chaolin suffered poor health as a result of his years in prison, but he refused to give in to this. He put enormous effort into reflecting on and writing about events in the world around him.

In those years he achieved three main things.

First, he helped various historians write true histories of the Chinese Revolution and the CCP (including Chinese Trotskyism), to correct distortions made, consciously or unconsciously, and in particular to refute past slanders and distortions directed

by the CCP against Chen Duxiu.

Secondly, he reflected independently and systematically on fundamental questions on the Chinese and world Revolution, putting the process and outcome of those reflections into writing in his long essay *Cadreism*.

Thirdly, he repeatedly demanded of successive congresses of the CCP that they rehabilitate the Chinese Trotskyists, formally declare the Trotskyists (in China and throughout the world) not to be counter-revolutionaries, and to admit that the past suppression of the Trotskyists was wrong.

He recorded his efforts in these regards in writings of more than a million Chinese characters. Unfortunately, so far it has been possible to publish only a small part of them.

Even though Chaolin enjoyed personal freedom after 1979 and was named as a member of the Shanghai Municipal Political Consultative Committee, he was still labelled a "counter-revolutionary" and still suffered

from discrimination. In recent years his memoirs were published "internally" (i.e. for restricted readership) and his translation of D. Merezhkovski's *The Gods* was republished.

None of his main works, however, which deal with political questions, whether written in prison or after his release, have received permission to be published, because he has all along resolutely maintained his opposition to Stalinism and Maoism.

Of his main writings, only his memoirs have appeared in English, in a volume titled *An Oppositionist for Life: Memoirs of the Chinese Revolutionary Zheng Chaolin*, published in the USA in 1996 by Humanities Press. From these writings, foreign friends can get some idea of the life of this remarkable Chinese Marxist-Trotskyist.

**The entire membership, together with all the other Chinese Trotskyists were rounded up by the Maoist political police**

**Deeply impressed, he turned towards Trotskyism, together with Chen Duxiu and others.**

# SOCIALIST OUTLOOK

## Where we stand

IN THE NINETIES, millions of women and men have taken part in mobilisations against the evils of capitalism and the bureaucratic dictatorships. This reflects the fact that humanity face widening dangers. Ecological, military, social and economic devastation faces millions of people.

Many more people recognise the barbaric nature of capitalism. In a situation where the inability of the social democratic and communist parties to provide socialist solutions is becoming clearer, the task of creating new leaderships remains ahead.

**Socialist Outlook** is written and sold by socialists committed to this struggle. We are the British supporters of the world-wide marxist organisation, the Fourth International. We stand for the revolutionary transformation of society and a pluralist, socialist democracy world wide.

The overall goal which we pursue is the emancipation of all human beings from every form of exploitation, oppression, alienation and violence.

Socialism must be under the control of ordinary people, democratic, pluralist, multi-party, feminist, ecologist, anti-militarist and internationalist. It must abolish wage slavery and national oppression.

The working class is the backbone of unity among all the exploited and oppressed. The working class and its allies must uncompromisingly fight against capitalism and for a clear programme of action in order to gradually acquire the experience and consciousness needed to defeat capitalism at the decisive moment of crisis.

The movements of women, lesbians and gay men, and black people to fight their particular forms of oppression make an essential contribution to the struggle for a different society. They are organised around the principle "None so fit to break the chains as those who wear them".

The whole working class needs to fully commit itself to these struggles. Furthermore we fight for a strategic alliance between workers and these organisations - an alliance which respects their legitimate autonomy.

By building simultaneously revolutionary organisations in each country and a revolutionary International, we aim to guide and encompass the global interests of the workers and oppressed. By building a united struggle against exploitation and oppression we aim to ensure the survival of the human race.

If you think this is worth fighting for, and you like what you read in *Socialist Outlook*, why not join us? Drop a line to the address on this page, and we'll be in touch.

## 300 Club



### EVERYONE CAN BE A WINNER!

The **SOCIALIST OUTLOOK 300 Club** offers readers and supporters the chance to win a £50 cash prize or alternatives each month - for just a £5 donation.

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To join the 300 Club, send us a Standing Order for £5 per month, or drop us a line at PO Box 1109, London N4 2UU, and we will send you a form.

This month's lucky winners are (3rd prize) Carl Taylor (2nd) Anita Patel, and the top prize goes to Keith Sinclair.

# New Young Left Journal

I am writing to you as a young socialist hoping to contribute to the job of producing a publication that I hope will be able to fulfil some kind of a role in helping bring open debate to the converted Left, convert new people to the Left, and act as a useful publication for people trying to get involved with socialism.

The reason that I have chosen to try and do this is last year when I first became interested in socialist ideas it was very hard to get involved with socialism in any way.

I am hoping that this publication can make that task easier for anyone in a similar situation by providing an introduction to socialist ideas combined with a list of addresses for people to write to.

For example it is very frustrating that no organisation to the left of the Labour Party is active in this area around Peterborough, and I hope to help build the Left locally with this publication and help socialists in other places in a similar position.

In order to do this, I would like to ask for your assistance. Firstly, I would like to ask you if it would be alright for your address and details of what you do to be included in the publication on a directory on the back page of the journal.

Secondly, I would ask for you to mention the publication in your publications or if any young socialists ask for an address of an 'introductory socialist publication.'

Any contributions to the journal in reply to articles

written would be gratefully accepted as would any other letters or articles written by anyone on any subject relevant to the Left.

Of course, I would like to be able to promote your organisation in any way possible, and would therefore like you to keep the publication informed of any news involving your organisation such as the release of publications etc.

YLJ doesn't want to compete with any of your publications in any way, and will always encourage people to purchase and consider them.

**M I Willgress, Editor, Young Left Journal**

For further information contact M I Willgress, Editor, *Young Left Journal*, 26 Chisenhale, Orton Waterville, Peterborough, Cambridgeshire, PE2 5FP.



We welcome readers' letters on any topic. Letters over 400 words may be cut for space reasons. Write to *Socialist Outlook*, PO Box 1109, London N4 2UU. email: outlook@gn.apc.org

# WHAT'S ON

## September Saturday 12

MARCH and Rally in support of the sacked Tameside Care Group strikers. (see page 8)

## Sunday 13

PUBLIC meeting organised by the Jewish Socialists Group, 'No more ghettos! Solidarity with the Roma people!'. 7.30p.m., West London Synagogue, 33 Seymour Place, London W1.

## Saturday 19

CONFERENCE of the Left in the TGWU, supported by the Liverpool dockers. 10.30a.m., Blue Coat Chambers, School Lane, Liverpool.

## Saturday 19

PENSIONS Day March & Rally. Meet 1p.m. at Embankment Underground station, London, for march to Trafalgar Square.

## Saturday 19-Sunday 27

PEOPLES March '98 from Birmingham to Blackpool around the twin themes of Repeal of the Anti-Union Laws and Defence of the Welfare State, jointly organised by the United Campaign for the repeal of the anti-trade union laws and the Welfare State Network. More information from Alec

McFadden/John Howard, c/o Salford TUC, 0161 789 2999.

## Monday 21

Meeting to organise a London Independent Labour Network Group. 7.30p.m., Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, Holborn.

## Sunday 27

Demonstration and Lobby of Labour Party conference called by University College Hospitals London UNISON branch. The Peoples March will also be linking up with this demonstration. Assemble 3p.m. Blackpool.

**Saturday 19-Sunday 27 Peoples March '98 from Birmingham to Blackpool**

## October Sunday 4

KOSOVA Solidarity March, called by the Kosova Crisis Committee. Assemble 11.30a.m. Speakers' Corner, Hyde Park, London for march to Trafalgar Square.

## Saturday 17

NATIONAL Conference, End the Sanctions on Iraq, 'The Silent Holocaust', supported by the Fire Brigades Union. 10a.m., the Mechanics Institute, Princess Street, Manchester.

## November

There will be a special conference called by the Troops Out Movement in Manchester to discuss the current political situation in Ireland.

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# Socialist Outlook

## Indict war criminal Clinton!

**BILL CLINTON** may have the sexual morals of an alley cat: he may be a brutal bully who exploits his power to harass women: but the crimes for which he is not facing investigation are the most serious.

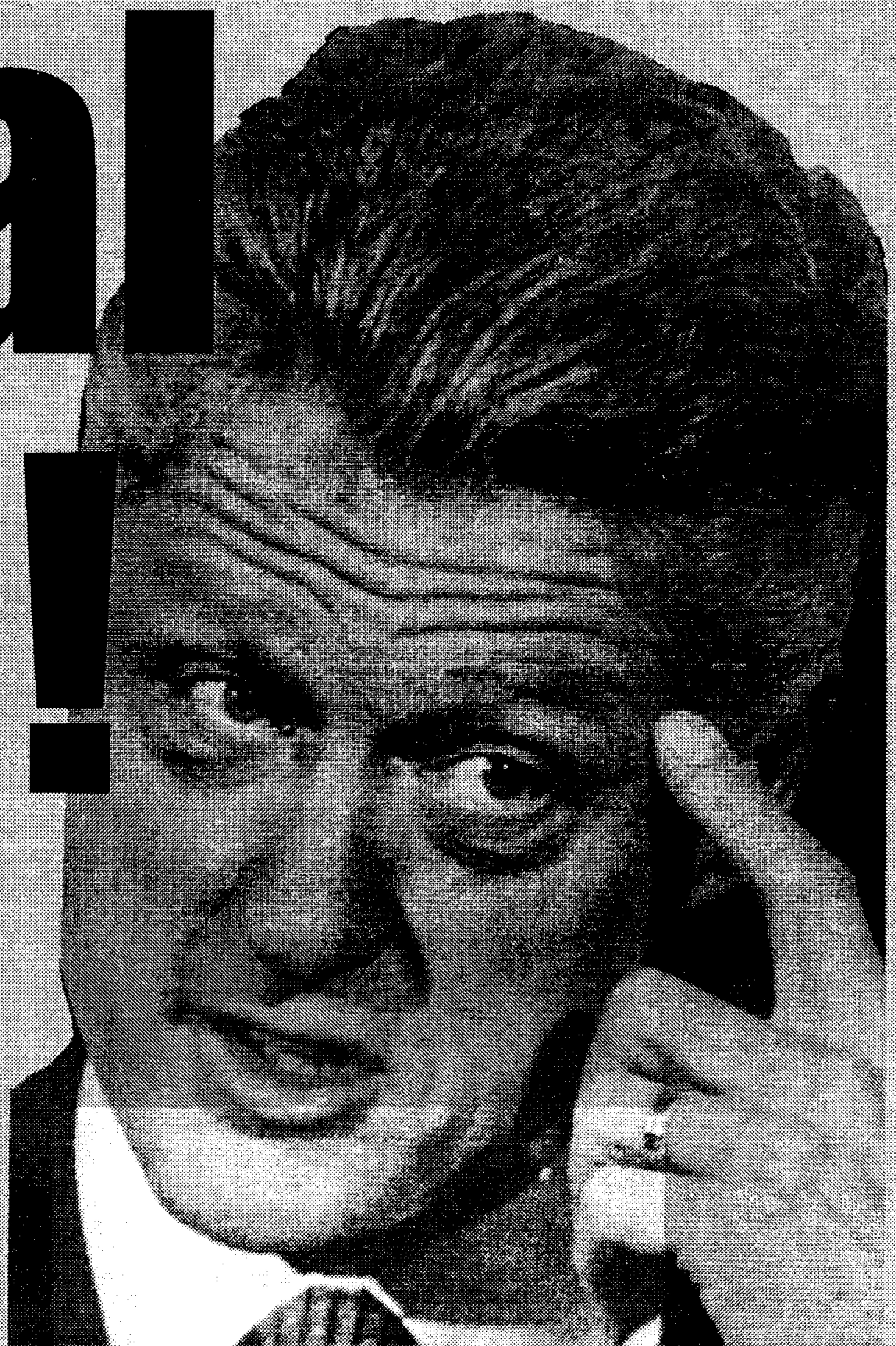
Just two weeks ago he took a cynical decision to unleash Cruise missiles against targets in Afghanistan and Sudan which killed innocent civilians. The eventual death toll in Sudan, where a vital pharmaceutical

factory was destroyed has yet to be calculated.

Clinton acted at least in part to divert attention from his own crisis: but he also acted as a gun-slinger for US imperialism. He won backing from reactionaries around the world.

This, and similar offences are the reason he should be indicted as a war criminal by the workers of the world.

■ SEE INSIDE, Page 13



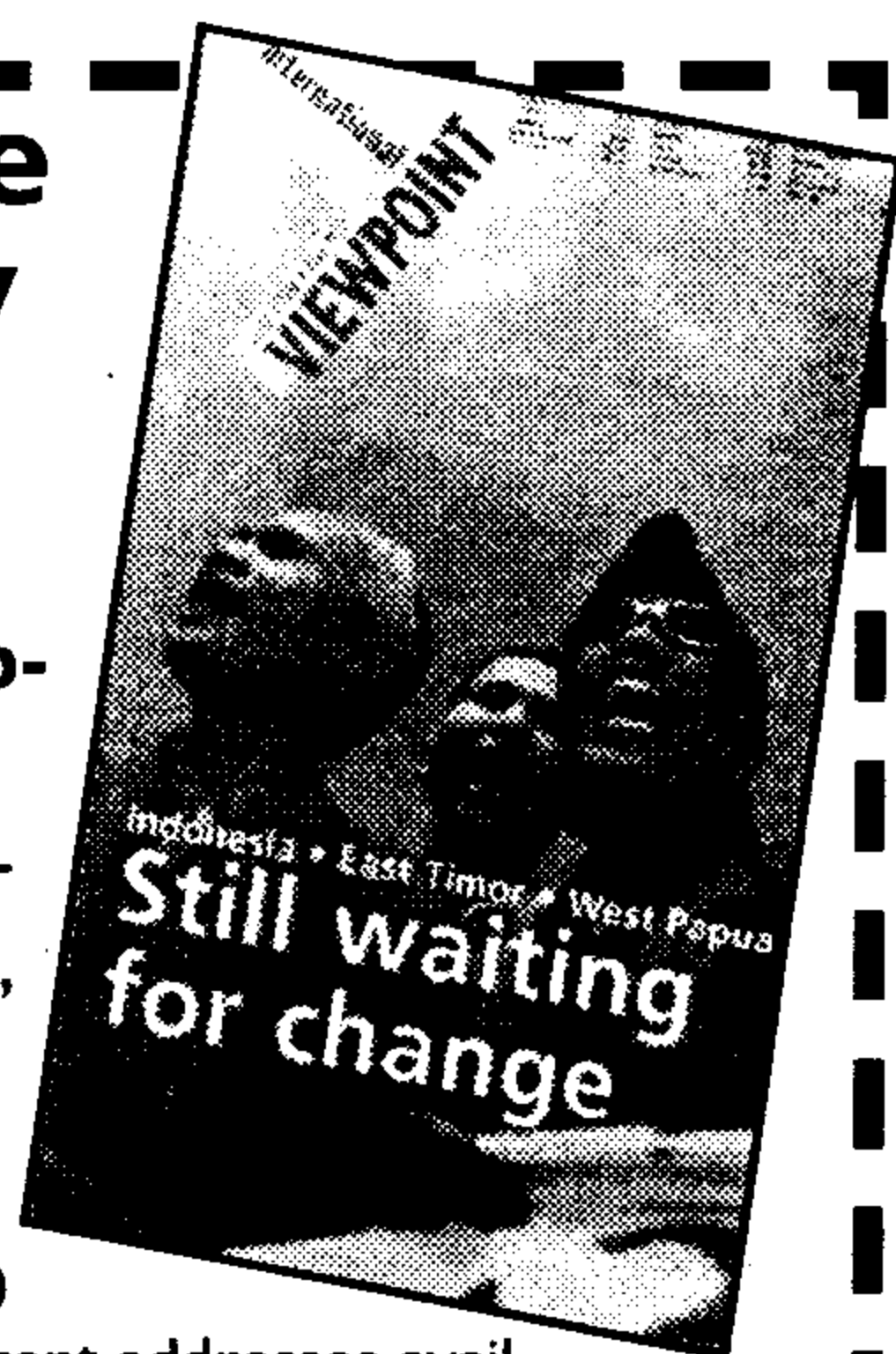
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DKK: Hong Kong \$120 (These and other agent addresses available on request).



### People's March fights for union and welfare rights

LIVERPOOL dockers and the striking Tameside care workers are among the latest to give their support to the March from Birmingham to Blackpool to lobby Labour Party conference, which sets off on September 19.

The People's March is a focus for all those angry at the miserable failure of New Labour to repeal the Tory

anti-union laws, and their continuation of Tory attacks on the NHS and the wider welfare state.

Rallies will be held in Birmingham (September 19), Wolverhampton (September 19), Crewe (Sept 20), Chester (Sept 21), Wirral (Sept 22), Liverpool (Sept 23), St Helens (Sept 23), Salford (Sept 24), Preston (Sept 25) and Blackpool, where the march will link up with the lobby on September 27 called by UCLH UNISON.

There is still time for union branches or Labour Parties to sponsor a marcher or make a donation to the People's March.

■ Further details/donations to Alec McFadden/John Howard c/o Salford TUC, 84 Liverpool Rd, Salford. 0161-789-2999. (mobile) 0831 627531.

