

# WANTED A NEW PARTY

There is an urgent need to build a new type of political party to fight for the interests of the working class and professional people.

The multitude of problems pressing down on working people all require a political solution.

Unemployment, bad housing, run-down hospitals and schools, and deteriorating public transport are all *political* issues first and foremost.

The rapidly deteriorating conditions of life are the result of the Tories off-loading the world

economic crisis onto the backs of workers. It is not possible to challenge the Tories successfully unless the deep anger and frustration over their policies is organised and expressed politically as a priority.

*by The Editorial Board*

Tens of thousands of miners, rail and bus workers have taken industrial action to defend jobs and conditions. Teachers are joining in the wave of opposition to the government. But the leaders of these actions have

severely limited the possibilities of success.

Firstly, one-day actions are totally inadequate. Union leaders simply wear out their members with a succession of 24-hour stoppages.

Secondly, the universal hatred for the Tories is turned into a mere protest at the wanton destruction of jobs and services. The stated objective is to compel the employers and the government to "deal a deal", to get the Tories to make a U-turn and "see sense".

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Actions of this kind cannot produce results. Those who loyally support them are prevented from confronting the enemy in a serious way.

The reality is that in Britain today there is no possibility of a compromise on fundamental questions of jobs, housing, health and education.

Far from doing deals, the Tories are now preparing to privatise the National Health Service and council housing, scrap state pensions and bring in yet more anti-union laws to make it illegal to oppose the government.

It is no longer adequate just to resist the Tories. We must plan to defeat both the government and the crisis-ridden capitalist system they represent.

That is why a new political party committed to a fundamental challenge to the capitalist system as a whole is required.

Millions of people have consistently voted Labour in the hope that, if elected, a Labour

government would defend workers' interests in parliament.

Labour has now lost four successive elections, largely because the party under Kinnock and now Smith has tried to imitate Thatcher's, and now Major's, policies. It is increasingly clear to vast numbers of Labour voters that the party has changed beyond all recognition.

### RIGGED ELECTIONS

In any case, the Tories have rigged the election system to create a one-party state in Britain. Large areas of public life are now run by unelected "quangos", stuffed full of Tory appointees.

The degeneration of Labour, which now proposes to break from its trade union roots, produces both the need and the opportunity to build a different kind of party.

Labour was built in the hope that change could come through electing MPs to parliament. Ninety years' experience has demonstrated that this is not a realistic proposition. Parliament proved to be another

mechanism used by the ruling class to maintain its grip over the majority of society.

A new party must above all be revolutionary in its outlook. It must be committed to winning the working class to support the need to overthrow, not patch up, the rule of profit-hungry employers, banks and land-owners.

Such a party will tell the truth about the world crisis of the capitalist system. It will oppose nationalism and racism and struggle for socialism internationally.

The party will be disciplined and organised, and will train its members as Marxists, as revolutionary thinkers and fighters.

To trade unionists, the unemployed, students and young people, we say this:

- If you want to defeat the Tories for good, the building of such a party is a priority.

- The Communist League is committed to this objective. We appeal to you to join us in fulfilling this historic challenge.

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# 'Left' do-gooding and the SWP

by Paul Feldman

There is a long history in Britain of left groups who use revolutionary, even Marxist, sounding language, but whose practice is completely reformist.

One of the most prominent is the Socialist Workers Party, whose origins go back to the Korean War of 1950. The SWP's leader, Tony Cliff, was thrown out of the revolutionary Trotskyist movement for refusing to support North Korea against American imperialism.

Cliff's repudiation of Marxist internationalism in favour of anti-communist opportunism became the basis of a group called International Socialism and later, the SWP.

For Marxists, the most pressing task is to raise the level of understanding of those in struggle, to fight in practice for revolutionary consciousness, and in this way to build a party guided by the development of Marxist theory.

This is a difficult and complex job, because there is always a contradiction between the objective tasks facing the working class and the thinking of workers making their experiences under capitalism.

## EVERYDAY STRUGGLES

That is why the Russian revolutionary leader, Lenin, developed a party dedicated to more than just supporting everyday struggles. Doing that, he explained, actually reinforces the very system that oppresses workers.

Spontaneous struggles, such as trade union disputes with employers, cannot by themselves lead to the consciousness required to overthrow capitalism. Trade union consciousness, Lenin insisted, is capitalist in essence because it accepts the continued rule of private property.

An understanding of the historic role of the working class as the only force capable of overthrowing capitalism, therefore, must be introduced from the **outside**, by a party with an outlook developed in opposition to capitalist ideology.

A Marxist party, said Lenin,

inevitably comes into conflict with immediate understanding. This is necessary and vital. Only through this conflict can a disciplined revolutionary party be built.

The SWP, of course, rejects the revolution that Lenin led in Russia in 1917. They say its outcome was "state capitalism", and they write off the achievements of the first ever successful workers' revolution.

Any issue of the SWP's paper, **Socialist Worker** shows that this group has absolutely nothing to do with Marxism as the science of revolution.

It is full of good old-fashioned English radicalism, where SWP members are encouraged to feel better by doing something for the workers.

The paper is littered with picket-line reports, but what is totally absent is any attempt to analyse politically the class struggle in Britain and internationally.

Every battle is reduced to the need to build up militancy, with absurd headlines like "raise the level of the fight". The message is that effort alone can change the capitalist system, in spite of its array of state power, ideological dominance and political allies in the Labour and trade union movement.

In the issue of April 24 the paper reports on what it patronizingly calls a "a huge wave of justified anger" in South Africa following the murder of Communist Party leader Chris Hani.

For revolutionaries, the essential question in South Africa is the organising of the masses to take power from the white, settler capitalist class and build a workers' state. Negotiations cannot produce this change.

**Socialist Worker** does not agree: "It is the mass strikes and workplace organisation which shook the apartheid regime and forced it to the negotiating table," it states.

"The most effective way forward is to use the power of black workers for both political and economic demands - for immediate elections, for a purge of the security forces, for

decent housing and an end to the job losses."

This is reformist treachery, pure and simple. The whole power of the working class must be mobilised - for immediate elections! Even the notorious apartheid state terror machine would survive - it would only have to be "purged".

Pandering to spontaneity is evident on every page of the paper. Take the question of the teachers' determination to boycott national curriculum testing this summer.

What should the aim of this action be? According to **Socialist Worker** "we have to turn the battle for education into another political disaster for the Tories".

So that is what it is all about! Turning issues into "political disasters" for the enemy.

In truth, the SWP does not believe that the working class can or should struggle openly for power as the only answer to mass unemployment and the destruction of schools, hospitals and social services.

## QUESTION MARKS

That is why its paper is littered with question marks. "Bosnia: Is there an answer?", "Why is Britain in decline?", "What causes crime?", "Is there an alternative to capitalism?", "Will women always be oppressed?" are just some of the choice posers in the April 24 issue.

The British working class has waged countless struggles in the last 200 years. Trade unions were built first in England. If militancy alone could result in socialism, then it would be here now.

What is actually needed is a party which, while it supports every battle against government and employers, above all takes every opportunity to reveal the revolutionary essence to those involved in defending jobs, wages and conditions.

Those like the SWP who reinforce illusions in rank-and-file militancy simply use left words to cover a thoroughly reactionary, anti-Marxist swamp of "do-gooding" liberalism.

# The cause of conflict in Bosnia

John Eden examines the historic roots of the conflict in former Yugoslavia and the role of Stalinism and imperialism in the creation of the present situation.

The barbaric ethnic cleansing being carried out in Bosnia today by ultra-nationalists on all sides is the outcome of attempts by the Yugoslavian Stalinists to hold on to power.

Their turn to nationalism was a cynical attempt to prevent the political revolution, led by Mikhail Gorbachev in the USSR, from spreading to their own country.

Gorbachev's moves during 1989 to end the right of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union to be the only party in the state also threatened one-party rule in Yugoslavia. But the Serbian Communist Party leader Slobodan Milosevic was determined to preserve both it, and the privileges that went with it.

Resorting to a mythical mix of socialism, Serbian nationalism and Orthodox religion, Milosevic prepared to use force to maintain one-party rule.

In the absence of a revolutionary socialist leadership, the desire for change among the masses was exploited by nationalist forces. Nowhere in the world has the national question been such a dominant feature in politics as in Yugoslavia, whether during the pre-war capitalist or post-war Titoist regimes. Feelings of national oppression were very strong, particularly among the Albanians of Kosovo and Macedonia and also the pre-war Croats.

The first attempt to crush the political revolution in Yugoslavia came with the suppression of the ethnic Albanians in Kosovo. In 1989, on the occasion of the 600th anniversary of the defeat of the Serbs by the Turks in Kosovo, a million-strong rally of Serbs was held. Those present were mainly Serbs from Croatia, Vojvodina, Bosnia and Kosovo, not from Serbia itself. It encouraged an outpouring of ultra-nationalist Serbian feeling. The Stalinists made open threats that this force would be used to crush the independently-minded republics of Croatia and Bosnia.

To sum up, there was a situation

where Stalinism was collapsing, and there was a total absence of revolutionary leadership. The powerful desire for political change, combined with the unresolved nature of the national question in Yugoslavia, led to the re-emergence of all of the pre-1945 political parties.

## MULTI-PARTY ELECTIONS

The 1990 multi-party elections marked the end of one-party Stalinist rule. In Serbia, the Radical party re-emerged. It is the party of "Greater Serbia", which between the world wars tried to weld together a unitary state under Serbian domination.

In Croatia, the former Stalinist, now nationalist, Franjo Tudjman founded an independent Croatia on historical boundaries, and not on the basis of national sympathies. The rights of those in the Serbian areas of Croatia were ignored.

The Croatian fascist Ustasha, a tool of German intervention in the Nazi period, also re-emerged. They had been responsible for some of the worst "ethnic cleansing" of World War II, particularly against Serbs in Bosnia.

In 1991, with Slovene and Croat independence, the Yugoslav idea finally ended. The land of the south Slavs never really had any room for the non-Slavs, the Albanians.

The original concept of Yugoslavia came from the Slovene and Croat middle class intelligentsia during domination of the area by the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Their idea was called Democratic Pan-Slavism.

But from its very birth in December 1918, as a country named "The Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes", the idea of Pan-Slavism was really still-born. Just as the capitalist class led by the Serb bourgeois could not solve the national questions between the wars, nor could the Stalinist bureaucracy between 1945-1991.

To understand why this is the case, and for a real understanding of the revolutionary questions involved

in the struggles of the Balkan masses, the works of Christian Rakovsky are worth serious study.

Rakovsky was born a Bulgarian, but because of the Second Balkan War of 1912-1913, he became a Romanian citizen, when his part of Bulgaria was annexed. Rakovsky was very knowledgeable about the Balkans and the national question. He was a close collaborator with Leon Trotsky and a fellow organiser of the Left Opposition in the Bolshevik Party against the rise of Stalinism.

During February 1988, under Gorbachev's leadership of the CPSU, leading Bolsheviks who had been sentenced to death or detention in the Moscow Trials of 1938 were rehabilitated. Christian Rakovsky was one of them. That spring Gerry Healy wrote the following about Rakovsky in "Marxist Monthly" (April 1988):

"His early years in the Balkans, before he joined the Bolshevik Party, provided him with a long experience in dealing with the problems of national oppression. Now that the nationalities problem, due to perestroika, has become a major issue under Gorbachev, a close study of Rakovsky's writings on this problem is vital for the development of Marxism in the USSR.

"In his article 'A New era of Soviet Development' published in Kharkov in 1923, Rakovsky writes: 'Indeed, the October Revolution only began to solve the national question. It did not solve it. The October Revolution created conditions in which the national peculiarities developed in the course of history would survive... Obviously the task of the Communist Party after the October revolution consisted in not ignoring the issue, but searching for the best relations between the nations where Soviet power had been victorious.'"

Even more than the republics of the former USSR, the national peculiarities are stronger for historical reasons in former Yugoslavia. As Rakovsky wrote, the socialist revolution only began to

resolve the national question. For the workers of former Yugoslavia the solution requires a struggle for free independent socialist republics of Croatia, Slovenia, Serbia, Bosnia and Albania. This can only be achieved by these workers struggling for world revolution.

Instead, these workers are at present killing each other, and this is a defeat for the working class, and an indication of the depth of its crisis of leadership.

Imperialism, having encouraged the formation of states with no regard to their substantial ethnic minorities, now plans military intervention in former Yugoslavia. The war-mongering in Britain is led by the reactionary Labour leaders, in alliance with ex-Tory leader Thatcher.

These military plans, which could plunge large sections of Europe into war, have nothing to do with concern for the plight of the Bosnian

muslims. Imperialism has no concern for oppressed peoples – as the Palestinians and Eritreans can testify

Intervention would be for one purpose only – to impose the rule of Western monopolies and banks in a strategically important area. This was denied to them by the Red Army and by Tito's Partisans at the end of World War II. With the Stalinist bureaucracy defeated, the imperialists see a fresh opening.

## *Letter from Moscow*

# When is a democrat not a democrat?

Professor Anatoli Butenko of Moscow State University has the answer.

For any cultured person, never mind whether he lives in the West or East, in England, France, Russia or Japan, the word "democrat" is usually associated with the Greek word, "demos", people. Consequently, it seems quite natural to think that a democrat is a people's servant, their defender. But what is universally recognised is not the law in our country because, for our Russian democrats, the law is, so to speak, unwritten.

Are the self-proclaimed "democrats" concerned about the present plight of our people: workers and peasants, teachers, doctors, white-collar workers, students, pensioners? Or doesn't the people's future worry the democrats? And if this is true - and it is - do they have the right to call themselves "democrats"?

One needn't be a Solomon to understand that these new masters of life are simply replacing the "partocrats", the former nomenclatura. Having deprived the "partocrats" of power, the "democrats" themselves now live well at the expense of the people.

Today they are the representatives of the most active speculative capitalists: rich owners of little shops, owners of commercial stores, prosperous stock-jobbers, as well as businessmen, millionaires, corrupted bureaucrats, administrators of privatised enterprises and the political élite who got cushy jobs after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

They represent the money-laundering mafia, currency speculators and sections of working people corrupted by high salaries. In short, they represent all those those who "live well" in today's Russia.

In a country brought to ruin, where

countless millions of people get poorer and poorer, the new masters not only "live well" but are attracted by the prospect of total and absolute power.

If these are the social layers that inspire the self-proclaimed "democrats" and whose interests they defend, then, in fact, they are not democrats at all. They are ordinary liberals, ideologists of private ownership and free capitalism.

Though not tired of repeating "We've done with communism, once and forever", President Boris Yeltsin, once in a while says that "all-round capitalization is out of the question". As if it were possible to create a society where all people are capitalists!

### ROBBERY OF THE PEOPLE

But ex-prime minister Yegor Gaidar is more frank and shameless. His attention was drawn recently to the fact that during a year when he was head of the government, prices soared five times faster than salaries. The standard of living of many people fell to catastrophic levels.

"Democrat" Gaidar had nothing to say about this impoverishment, this robbery of the people. Quite the opposite. This is what he answered when challenged: "Many of these things are more or less inevitable. Life should be taken as it is, and nothing else. The youthful capitalism we are building will never be a nice, regulated and soft system. We shall be approaching it gradually.

"As to the new bourgeoisie, at first it will remain such as it is now. As a rule, at first it will be a speculative capitalism because this bourgeoisie will not make large-scale investment in production until

we provide the minimal level of financial stability. Under the conditions when the rate of price increases is dozens of per cent per month, speculation is surely the most reasonable activity."

In history, liberals have replaced bourgeois revolutionaries and revolutionary democrats who paved the way for proclaiming freedom and the rights of private owners, the foundations of the private property system.

It is liberalism that is the traditional ideology of private ownership, the basis of the capitalist system, the ideology which in its early days stood for the "invisible hand" of the free market and fought against any interference of the state in social life.

Political figures like Yeltsin, Afanasyev, Popov, Sobchak and others – comprising the main body of "democrats" – have ceaselessly changed their positions, moving rapidly from left to right.

From the "initiators of perestroika" and "renewers of socialism", they became "left radicals", uncompromising opponents of the nomenclatura and its privileges. Then they were democratic fighters against the repressions of 1990-91 and finally ended up supporters of the market economy and open advocates of speculative capitalism.

The "democrats" and political extremism go hand in hand. For them it is either/or - either "we democrats" behind the President, or the Congress of Peoples' Deputies, with Khasbulatov, the Speaker. What follows the referendum is not clear. It is also unclear to the citizens of Russia, who are tired of the hardships they are enduring.

# Palestinians give ta

The Israeli government has been forced to recognise that the Occupied Territories of Gaza and the West Bank cannot be integrated into the state of Israel, and has closed them off, banning nearly 100,000 Palestinians from travelling to their jobs in Israel.

The Israelis claim to be ready to negotiate autonomy for the territories at the 9th round of Middle East Peace talks currently being held in Washington. But at the same time, the Israeli army has stepped up its terror campaign in the refugee camps of the Gaza strip.

The Palestinian delegation at first refused to attend the 9th round of talks unless 400 deportees camped out in no-man's land between the West Bank and Lebanon were permitted to return home. But they came under intense pressure from the Clinton regime, and from Egypt, Syria and the Gulf States to attend

Faisal al-Husseini, leader of the Palestinian delegation, has said that unless this round makes immediate progress towards setting up an autonomous Palestinian state the delegation will leave and the talks will be over. US Secretary of State Warren Christopher gave assurances that autonomy is still on the table

The decision to return to the talks has angered many in the Palestinian camp as a betrayal of the deportees. Israel will concede nothing, they say, because the strongly Zionist Clinton regime will not force them to do so.

There is a great fear that this split in the Palestinian camp will be exacerbated into open factional warfare. The delegates to the talks and their families, have received threats and Fatah (Yassir Arafat's organisation within the PLO), has responded with a leaflet saying that any attacks on delegates will be met with "an iron fist".

In agreeing to go to the 9th round, the delegation from the Occupied Territories has considered the perilous situation of Palestinians living in exile outside Israel and the West Bank.



*Above: Let him go! A woman protests at the arrest of a young Palestinian - Jerusalem*

*Below: An Israeli army sniper takes aim  
Photographs courtesy of the P.L.O. London Office*

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# lks one last chance



Children check to see if it is safe to go outside – Beach Camp, Gaza

Of the 5.5 million Palestinians, one million live on the West Bank, 650,000 in Gaza and 750,000 in Israel. The majority of the rest live in the Arab states. The majority of the population of Jordan are Palestinian exiles. There are big Palestinian populations in Lebanon, Egypt, Syria and other Arab countries. Their fragile situation was demonstrated at the end of the Gulf War, when the Kuwaiti government ruthlessly expelled most of the Palestinians who lived and worked in Kuwait. The day

after an autonomous state comes into being, and for many years after, the majority of Palestinians will still be living in a vulnerable position in exile.

The PLO are constantly under pressure from the Arab states, who are now the main advocates for US policy. All the Arab governments attending the talks – apart from the Palestinians – have sacrificed their independence for American favours.

The Egyptian government is in crisis, as its economy slides into slump and unemployment mounts. The fundamentalist Muslim Brotherhood are winning increasing support amongst the poor and the youth of all classes. The Mubarak government keeps starvation at bay only with the help of American food aid. But the US agrees aid on a month by month basis, dependent on Egypt's continuing compliance with US policy.

The Syrians lost their independent position by agreeing to join the imperialist alliance in the Gulf war; with the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Syrians are now also dependent on US aid. Saudi Arabia is currently haggling with the West over the size of its contribution to the cost of the Gulf War, and is seen by the West as the main beneficiary of the physical destruction of Iraq. They too joined the pressure on the Palestinians, agreeing to restore their crucial financial contributions to the PLO only if the Palestinians agreed to attend the talks.

## Europe in Crisis

by Aileen Robertson

All over Europe, workers are paying for the economic crisis, through mass unemployment, cuts in public spending and loss of democratic rights. It is not only in Britain that the institutions of the capitalist states are crumbling:

### Italy:

The results of a referendum showed that the Italian people totally reject the post-war constitution which permitted the Christian Democrat and Socialist parties to steal millions. Over 2,500 politicians, business-men and civil servants are now under investigation for corruption, including 200 members of parliament, three party leaders and three former prime ministers. The amount of money involved is around £70 billion worth of bribes and kick-backs – equivalent to 65% of Italy's budget deficit.

The boards of state-owned

industries set up foreign bank accounts to store billions in bribes. No major contract was allocated without money changing hands. The £16 billion of aid allocated for rebuilding after the Naples earthquake of 1980 vanished into the pockets of organised crime and corrupt politicians. People made homeless are still living in tents.

In this situation a truly socialist leadership would put forward a programme to bring the working class to power and end the corruption and waste. But the biggest working class party, the former Communists (Stalinists), now known as the PDS, are manoeuvring to rescue the old regime in return for a seat at the table of corruption.

They have promised not to oppose the privatisation of state-owned industries, or the resulting mass sackings. They say they favour a neutral, non-political government of

judges and businessmen – in other words an unelected oligarchy. But they would settle for a coalition government drawn from all the main parties as proposed by Italy's President Scalfaro.

This would include the corrupt Christian Democrat and Socialist Parties, and also members of the extreme rightist nationalist "Northern Leagues" whose policy is to break up Italy into two states – a rich and modern north leaving the backward, mafia-ridden south to its deserved fate, as they see it.

### France:

The new right-wing government is already facing militant action by angry fishermen and farmers, demanding an end to EC legislation which is forcing them out of business. The black population, with the support of many white youths, are in revolt over increased

# Millions forced to slave labour

*World Labour Report 1993, price £9.90*

*International Labour Office, Vincent House, Vincent Square, London, SW1P 2NB Tel: 071 828 6401*

*Reviewed by Robert Knight*

As a result of the world slump and the debt burden on poorer nations, the most extreme forms of exploitation – including slavery – not only still exist but are on the increase. Slavery survives both in its ancient form of enslavement by conquest, but also in more modern forms such as debt bondage and child selling.

## SLAVERY IN SUDAN

The United Nations has accused the Sudanese government of complicity in enslaving thousands of its own people. The Government arms militias conducting an internal war with the Sudan Peoples

Liberation Army, in the knowledge that the militias are taking slaves as booty. The slaves fetch between US\$30 and US\$60 each. The youngest children work as domestic servants; those between 7 and 12 tend goats and other livestock and dig wells, while older males are forced to cultivate fields, possibly fields that were once their own.

In the war area, destitute families forced off their land sometimes sell their own children into slavery. Merchants will pay around \$70 for boys between 7 and 12, but to avoid charges of slavery this is commonly referred to as "pawning" or "renting" children.

In theory parents can buy their children back – at double the price. But since the merchants sell the children on to new owners the parents have no way of finding their sons.

The poorest workers in Asia and Africa are effectively paying off their countries' debts to the world banks by their own enslavement. Millions have been forced by the slump into debt bondage. An employer offers an advance against future earning – but since the wages are minimal, and unfair charges are made for food, tools, and accommodation, the debt is never paid. In fact, with fines for unsatisfactory work and other tricks,

## Europe in Crisis

*continued from previous page*

►repression and anti-immigrant attacks. The killing in police custody of two north African youths last month led to street demonstrations, violently suppressed by riot police.

### *Germany:*

The world's biggest trade union, IG Metall, is organising strikes in both former East and West Germany. The employers unilaterally scrapped an agreement to gradually bring wages in the East into line with those in the West. Jochen Kletzin, chairman of the Leipzig branch of IG Metall, told 10,000 demonstrators that the employers wanted to force workers in East Germany back to 19th century working conditions, selling their labour cheap to compete for the few remaining jobs. Wages in the East are 52% of those in the West; but prices are 98% of those in the West. Unemployment in the East is 35%, and in many areas is now higher than during the slump of the 1930s.

But the economic crisis is not confined to East Germany. In West Germany, output has fallen by 2% this year, and in mechanical engineering alone it is projected some 150,000 jobs will be lost. Germany has missed the boat on the

new high tech industries, and is increasingly less competitive.

### *Spain:*

Rising unemployment and accusations of corruption are making the Spanish Socialist Party government increasingly unpopular, and it is unlikely to win the June General Election outright. A coalition with Catalan and Basque nationalist parties is being discussed and the Socialists have given up any pretence that they are the party of socialism or the working class. Every day 2,000 more Spaniards join the dole and unemployment is running at over 20 per cent.

The election may bring to power the old Franco fascist Party, the Partido Popular, whose new younger leadership see themselves in the Thatcherite mould.

### *Belgium:*

In Belgium, attempts to form a new coalition after the previous one collapsed, hinge on the decision of a Zen Buddhist MP, who refuses for religious reasons to participate in votes about the economy, and who often has to abandon his political work for long periods to direct productions of Shakespeare plays!

### *The European Community*

The introduction of the single

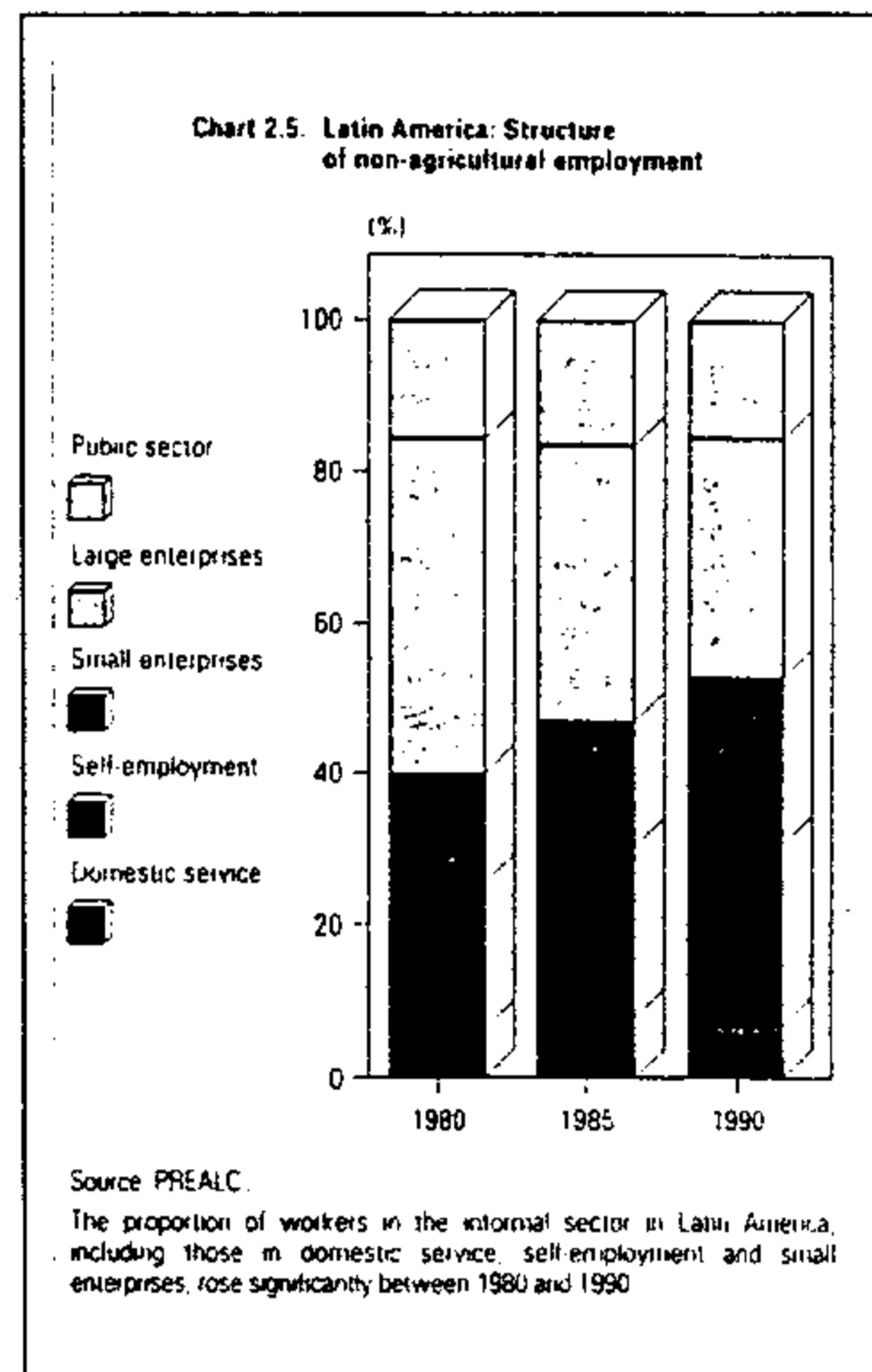
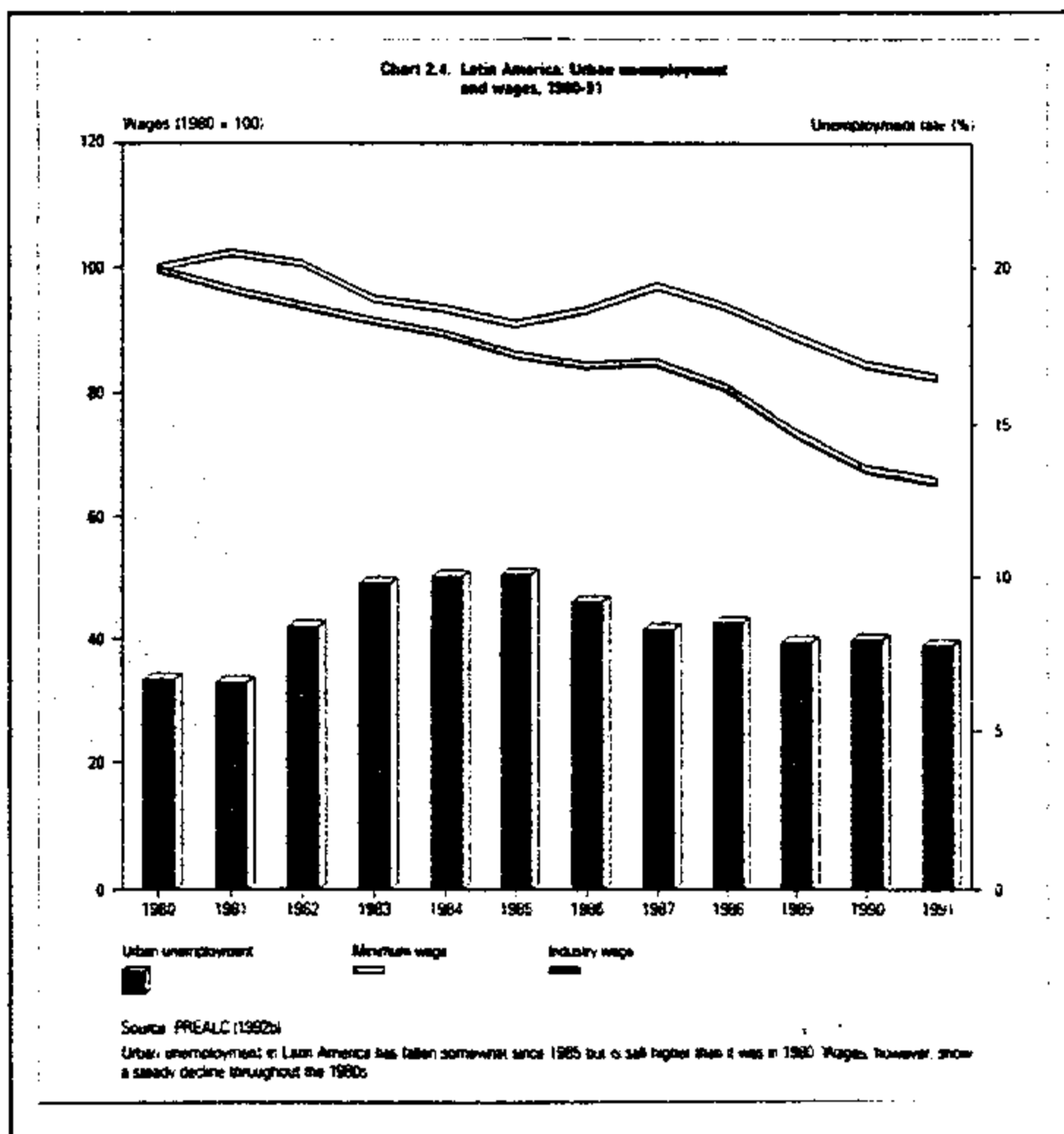
European market has not prevented a trade war between the community countries; the old tensions and hostilities between the capitalist governments are re-emerging.

The European Community promotes free market economics and undermines the rights of workers. Multi-nationals, like Hoover, shift work around the community in search of the lowest wages and the worst working conditions. The Social Chapter, of which the British Labour Party makes such a fuss, is part of this process. It offers a few minimum rights, all of them unenforceable, as a substitute for the strength of workers organised in trade unions.

Trade union leaders throughout Europe have abdicated their own responsibility to fight for their members' jobs and wages.

The European Community is a treaty of bankers and monopolies which has nothing to offer the working class. It is a racist entity, aimed at keeping the poor of Eastern Europe, Africa and Asia out. It promotes nationalism and racial hatred, and is increasingly placing Europe on a world war footing. A workers' government will leave the EC and fight to expropriate the monopolists and bankers, and their representative governments, to build a socialist united states of Europe.





it usually increases. Even the death of the original debtor offers no escape; the employer may pass the debt down from parent to child, or even grandchild. Cases have been found of people slaving to pay off debts eight generations old.

In Pakistan around 20 million people – 7.5 million of them children – are bonded labourers. In India 5 million adults and 10 million children are bonded. Several million children 5-14 work in agriculture; around a million in construction and quarrying and hundreds of thousands in carpet-weaving, match and firework making, and jewellery-making.

In Peru's gold mines, workers are given an advance for a 90-day wage contract and then work long hours for low wages to pay off the debt. At the end of the contract, employers break agreements to pay return fares, so workers are stranded.

In Brazil, forced labour is used to clear vast estates of forest for pasture. Gang bosses, known as **Gatos** (cats), recruit poor workers with promises of good wages and working conditions. On arrival at the sites, thousands of kilometres from their homes, they find the promises are empty. And if they try to leave they are told they must pay for the transport they have used and food eaten on the journey – and end up working off debts. Gunmen hunt down those who try to escape.

In Haiti the gang bosses are **Buscones** (searchers) and they

operate in the same way to recruit workers from the Dominican Republic for the sugar plantations. The Haitian military is involved in this trade. Guards have been known to keep workers clothes and belongings to prevent them leaving; and lock the workers in at night.

Those who do manage to leave may subsequently lose their belongings at military checkpoints set up during the harvest, where their money and belongings are stolen by soldiers.

### THE "INFORMAL" ECONOMY

"Informal" work, which employs 62% of urban workers in Africa, is mainly day labour where no rights or social security benefits are offered. Wages are not fixed to any government minimum, workers can be sacked on the spot and are not permitted to join trade unions.

In most of the world's poorer countries this kind of work is now the only growth sector. It is unskilled, and has low productivity. Most of those employed are picked up in market places on a day by day basis. Wages in this area have dropped so low in some areas that they do not even keep families above starvation levels. For example in the Caribbean, malnutrition and disease amongst the families of people who are in work is now being noted.

In Latin America, average

unemployment has actually gone down from 10.1 to 8 per cent. But this is linked to a huge increase in the "informal" sector, where wages dropped by 42 per cent.

This low-wage illegal economy is used to drive down wages in other sectors. In Latin America, wages in the public sector and agriculture decreased by around 30 per cent, in construction by 20 per cent. In urban areas of Africa, wages in the "legal" sector fell by 30 per cent between 1980 and 1986. In Tanzania in 1989, the legal minimum wage would buy ten kilos of beans and five kilos of rice – hardly enough for one worker, let alone a family.

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Socialist Future brings you exclusive information and pictures from Britain and around the world. Our "Letter from Moscow" was written and translated in Russia especially for this issue. Advanced techniques allow us to produce Socialist Future at low cost, but we depend on you, our readers, to keep us going and growing.

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## Artists create new studios near Finsbury Park

High rents for studios have created problems for most artists.

Many are forced to do more and more work, simply to finance their studio space.

Many sublet a part of their already tightly packed studio spaces, but are still forced to do other work, just to pay for a few square feet.

This means that artists spend so much time and energy doing non-creative things that there is not much strength left over to exercise their professional skills.

A group of ten artists working in Hackney's "Space Studios" felt that enough was enough and decided to take matters into their own hands.

One of them, Sotirakis Charalambou, found a large building next to Finsbury Park which was in the hands of a receiver.

He joined with Michael Grossbard and eight other artists to raise enough money to buy the property, for themselves and transform it into studio spaces.

Out of these 21 spaces in Scarborough Road, 17 are now in use. The occupants own their own studios on 99 year leases.

The building has been refurbished to a high standard, providing excellent facilities for the occupants, including hot showers and a car park.

It is run by a co-operative management and all major decisions are reached democratically.

The Gallery at John Jones, one of the most spacious and exciting venues for contemporary art in north London, is showing work by 19 of the artists from Park Studios.

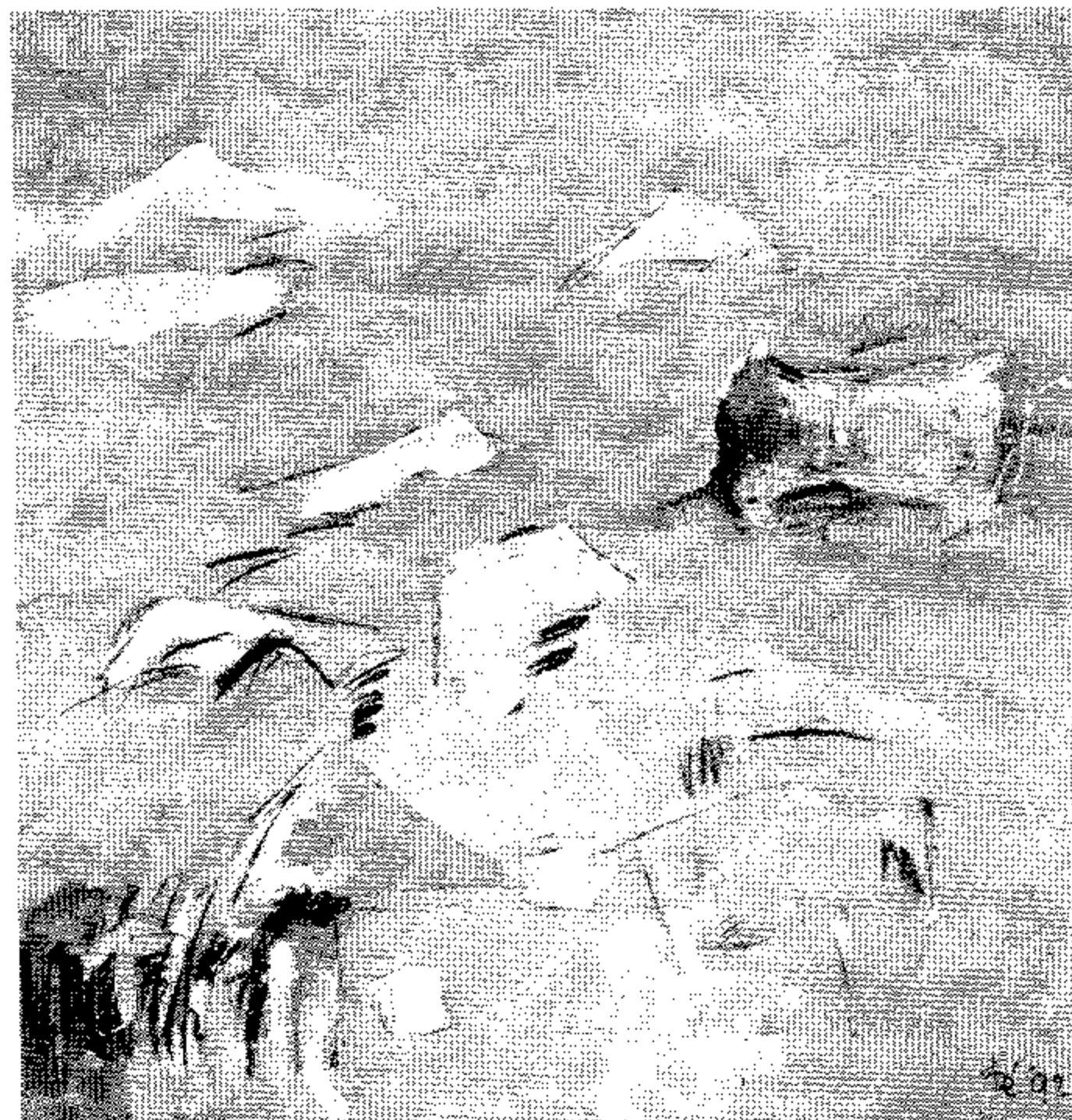


### PARK STUDIOS ARTISTS

Recent work by Mark Barnard, Vanessa Benson, Hedevig Blakstad, Martyn Brewster, Sotirakis Charalambou, Christopher Christophorou, John Das Gupta, Katharine Edwards, Ann-Helen English, Michael Grossbard, Patsy Hans, Guy Hetherington, Louisa Hutchinson, Pat Kaufman, Celia Read, Rebecca Salter, Veronica Slater, John Stathatos, Bé van der Heide.

The Gallery at John Jones  
4 Morris Place (off Stroud Green Road) Finsbury Park, N.4.  
Open Mon-Fri 10-6 Sat 11-4  
Until May 29

*Inside this former factory a new kind of product is being made by north London artists.*

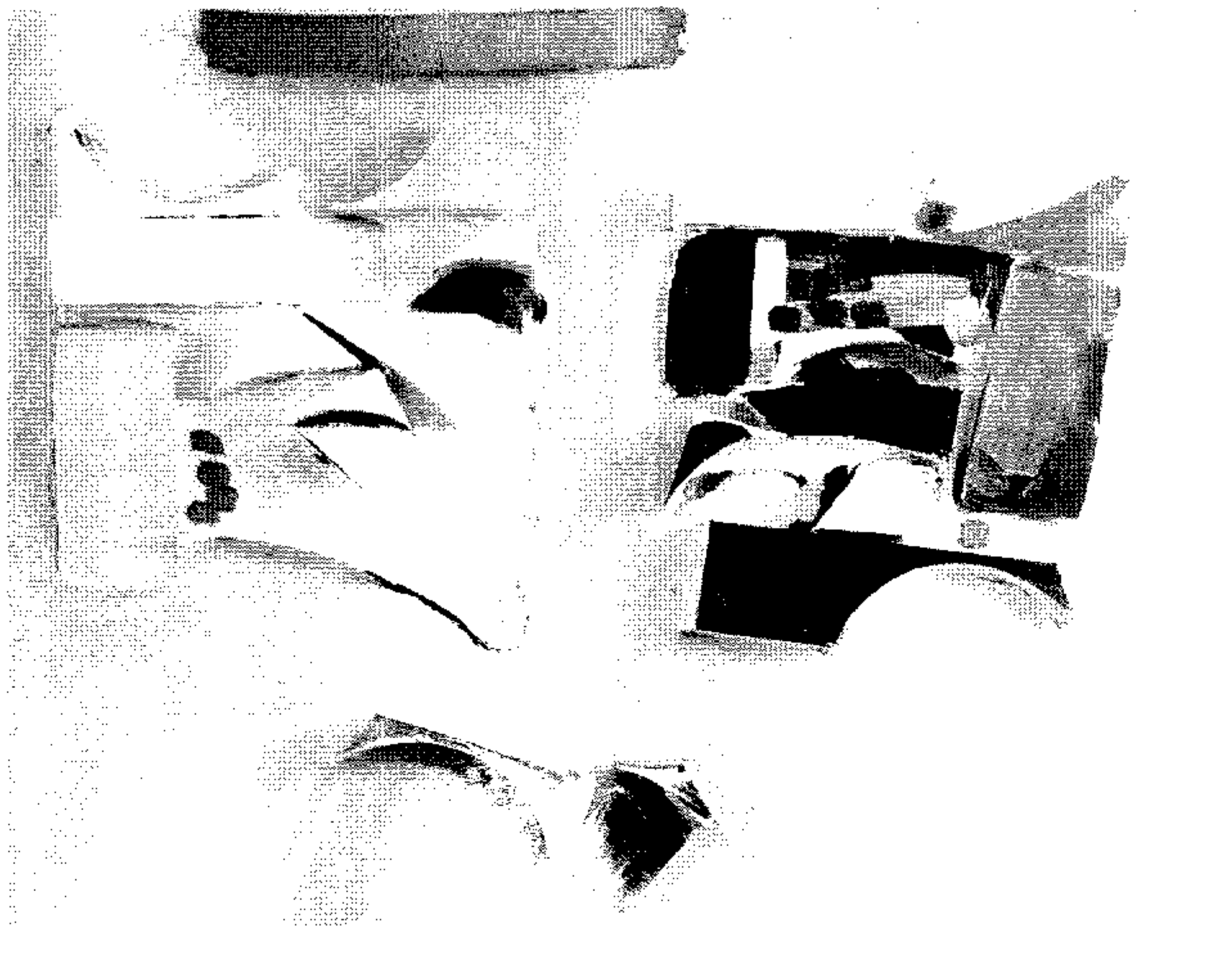


*Remote Place by Bé van der Heide, 1992, charcoal and acrylic on canvas. He is one of the Park Studios artists.*

## New work by Paul Caro

**The Pike Gallery**  
 145 St John's Hill, SW11  
 Tel: 071 223 6741. Until May 16  
 Open 11am-6pm  
 Tues-Fri 11am-5pm Sat/Sun  
 Adm free

Two Dancers,  
 by Paul Caro at the  
 Pike Gallery



It's not often that artist and space fuse together as well as in this burst of colour.

Designed by Pike Practice, the gallery opens out into a landscaped courtyard, whose colours and shapes seem an extension of the paintings inside.

Caro combines loosely geometric forms - circles, squares and rectangles - leading the eye into a colour-space continuum.

He creates space and depth through colour, and a musical rhythm by repeating basic shapes.

As the eye physically moves through a progression of shapes, a visual sensation of movement is created.

Sometimes the eye expects a repetition but does not find it. This sets up a kind of tension.

The eye must refer back to the whole painting to find the "answer" to its "questions".

Caro does not describe specific scenes.

Instead the viewer experiences the essential sensation of a musical theme, a garden corner, a festival procession, a landscape, or simply an object such as a square.

Often there are flesh tones, which imply human shapes, faces or bodies, dancing shapes.

The largest work, "Ermine", contrasts a meandering flow of spotted white flanked by colours in free-fall.

Fresh greens, pinks, smoky blues and touches of yellow create their own textures and spatial zones.

"Two Dancers" uses the light-black contrast, but this time in loosely distributed curves and squares of wood mounted on a painted plane.

His small pastels have an uncluttered freshness and finely tuned distribution of colour that marks the exhibition as a whole.

## Work in Progress

Study of base of tree (1993) by Michael Chaitow is one of a new series of nature studies in which the artist seeks to reveal the mutual dependence of human beings and the natural world. Chaitow feels that "at a time of crisis, when prevailing ideas are destructive, fragmentary and limited, there is a need to return to thinking about the basics of life". His paintings are the expression of the search for a basic connection with nature.



Study of base of tree,  
 Michael Chaitow, 1993.  
 Mixed media on paper.

### WHERE TO BUY *Socialist Future*

#### Glasgow

Clyde Books, 19 Parnie Street, behind The Tron Theatre.

#### Manchester

Frontline Books, 1 Newton Street, Manchester, M1 1HW

#### London

Compendium, 234 Camden High Street, NW1

Bookmarks, 265 Seven Sisters Road, Finsbury Park, N4

Housmans, 5 Caledonian Rd., Kings Cross, N1

# FREEDOM FOR ERITREA – VICTORY FOR THE E.P.L.F.

Thirty years of struggle have ended in triumph in Eritrea with an overwhelming vote by the people in favour of independence from Ethiopia and their right to statehood. The total of "yes" votes in the referendum was 99.8%. It is estimated that 98.25 per cent of the population voted.

The Eritrean Peoples Liberation Front first called for the referendum in 1982, when the liberation struggle was at its height. The country had been annexed by Ethiopia, and this illegal act was not rejected by the United Nations. But Eritrea was one of the first African countries to have defined borders, and it has an ancient language and culture. Its existence as a separate nation had been recognised prior to the Ethiopian invasion.

Ten years later and after a war in which Eritrea was devastated and every family lost many of its members, the independence referendum took place.

One of the EPLF's great strengths was its refusal to view all Ethiopians

as "the enemy". By building a formidable alliance with the oppressed minorities inside Ethiopia, the Eritreans assisted the overthrow of the dictatorship of Mengistu Haile Mariam the bloody military leader who was backed with arms and training from the Stalinist bureaucracy of the Soviet Union.

## RECOGNITION

The present government in Ethiopia acknowledged this debt, rejecting pressure from its own right-wing to oppose independence for Eritrea and even setting up polling booths in Adis Ababa for Eritreans living there to vote. It was among the first countries to recognise the newly-independent state.

The start of the political revolution in the USSR brought the end of Soviet support for Mengistu, and when Mikhail Gorbachev withdrew Soviet troops from Afghanistan, it was a message to Mengistu that his days were numbered.

But imperialism did not rush to support the victorious Eritreans,

however, and by delaying recognition has cut it off from any possibility of aid or even borrowing to resolve its deep economic crisis. Eritrea is potentially a wealthy country, with untapped mineral resources and good agricultural land. The imperialists would prefer to deal with a government that was less committed to the well-being of the people and more to lining its own pockets.

In the two years since the end of the war, the international community has given Eritrea less than £20million in aid, and there has been virtually no foreign investment.

With few resources, the Provisional Government has already made some improvements in agriculture, health and welfare. Though the life of the people is still hard, the long struggle has now been rewarded with international recognition.

Many countries have already recognised Eritrea, among them Italy, the United States, Canada, China, Libya, and Egypt.

## *What we stand for*

Grave dangers now confront millions of workers and young people as the world economic crisis of capitalism drives the Tories to destroy living standards. It is clearly not possible to vote out the Tories and elect a Labour government again. The Tories have fixed the election system to ensure they stay in office. The election of the right-winger John Smith as the new leader propels Labour even further to the right, towards a merger with the reactionary Liberal Democrats and a complete break from the trade unions.

The end of parliamentary politics means alternative forms of struggle must develop. Real power has, in any case, always been exercised behind the scenes in the boardrooms and banks, in the higher reaches of the civil service, by property companies and landowners.

To challenge the Tory dictatorship requires a struggle for power. Denied the right to political expression, workers need to organise independently of the state.

There is now a vital need to build Councils of Action throughout Britain, in every locality, to bring together

all those in the Tory firing line.

Every organisation opposed to the Tories, representing trade unionists, the unemployed, young people, ethnic groups, students and small businesses should be represented in Councils of Action.

They would defend and organise health, education, housing and other services and jobs, and protect communities from racist attacks.

Workers organisations would struggle for their policies in Councils of Action.

The Communist League's view is that such Councils should be ready to assume power, to destroy the Tories' dictatorship throughout Britain.

It should be the perspective of Councils of Action to transfer power from the ruling class, to break up and overthrow the capitalist state and its institutions. This is the only way forward for workers in England, Scotland and Wales. Class, not religion, race, nationality or gender, is the fundamental basis for the struggle for power.