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Socialist OUTLOOK

Iraqi attack exposes safe haven fraud

No to all US intervention

CLINTON'S BOMBING of Iraq has once again shown the bankruptcy and hypocrisy of US policy in the region.

Although it is portrayed as a response to Saddam Hussein's seizure in temporary alliance with Massoud Barzani's Kurdish Democratic Party - of Irbil, this attack is mainly for US domestic purposes.

At the height of the US election campaign, Clinton cannot afford to appear weak in the face of such a provocation by arch-enemy Saddam.

As we go to press, the first reports are coming in of the inevitable civilian casualties. It also appears that Iraqi troops were already withdrawing from Irbil before the US attack was launched.

But none of this matters to Clinton, who is willing to slaughter as many foreigners as necessary in order to be re-elected. It is not clear if he intends to continue with the attack, though this is unlikely to involve the use of ground troops, with resulting US casualties.

As usual, the British government, which offered the use of its bases in Diego Garcia, is the most slavish supporter of US action. Socialists in Britain must be ready to respond to any British intervention, including possible military action.

The Iraqi hijackers currently on remand in Britain had all tried unsuccessfully to apply for asylum in several countries. The hijack was a desperate attempt to escape Saddam's brutality and find a safe haven in the West. They should immediately be freed and granted asylum.

Other western allies have been more sceptical, with Spain opposing



Kurds demonstrate in Trafalgar Square September 1

the attack and Germany expressing doubts.

The Arab League has also condemned the attack. There has not yet been any public response from Turkey, which under its new Islamic government has been hinting at a

realignment in its foreign policy towards the Arab world and away from the West.

The latest developments once again demonstrate the emptiness of the UN's 'safe havens' policy. In Irbil, which was supposed to be just

such a 'safe haven', dozens of Iraqi dissidents have apparently been murdered by Saddam's Republican Guards.

Saddam's attack is only the latest in a series of military interventions by Turkey, Iran and Iraq against Kurdish guerillas operating from the 'safe haven'. Iran - in alliance with Jalal Talabani's Patriotic Union of Kurdistan - is reported to have occupied a large part of the zone.

Last year when Turkey invaded the area as part of its vicious campaign against the Kurdish People's Party the West stood aside.

These interventions are no surprise to those who have argued that 'safe havens' are a fraud. In both Bosnia and Kurdistan, they were designed to ensure stability for imperialism, not to protect victims of aggression, and certainly not to ensure self-determination.

In Bosnia, 'safe havens' were the alternative to arming those fighting for a multi-national and united Bosnia. Massacre in Srebrenica was the result.

The Kurdish 'safe haven' was a way of denying the legitimate demand for an independent Kurdish state. This demand has been resisted by the West since the 1920's, when Britain bombed and gassed Kurdish guerillas in order to establish the present Iraqi state.

Factional and clan fighting between various Kurdish groups has assisted predatory neighbours in their fight against Kurdish self-determination. A Kurdish state cannot be achieved in alliance with the reactionary and bloodthirsty regimes in Iraq, Iran and Turkey.

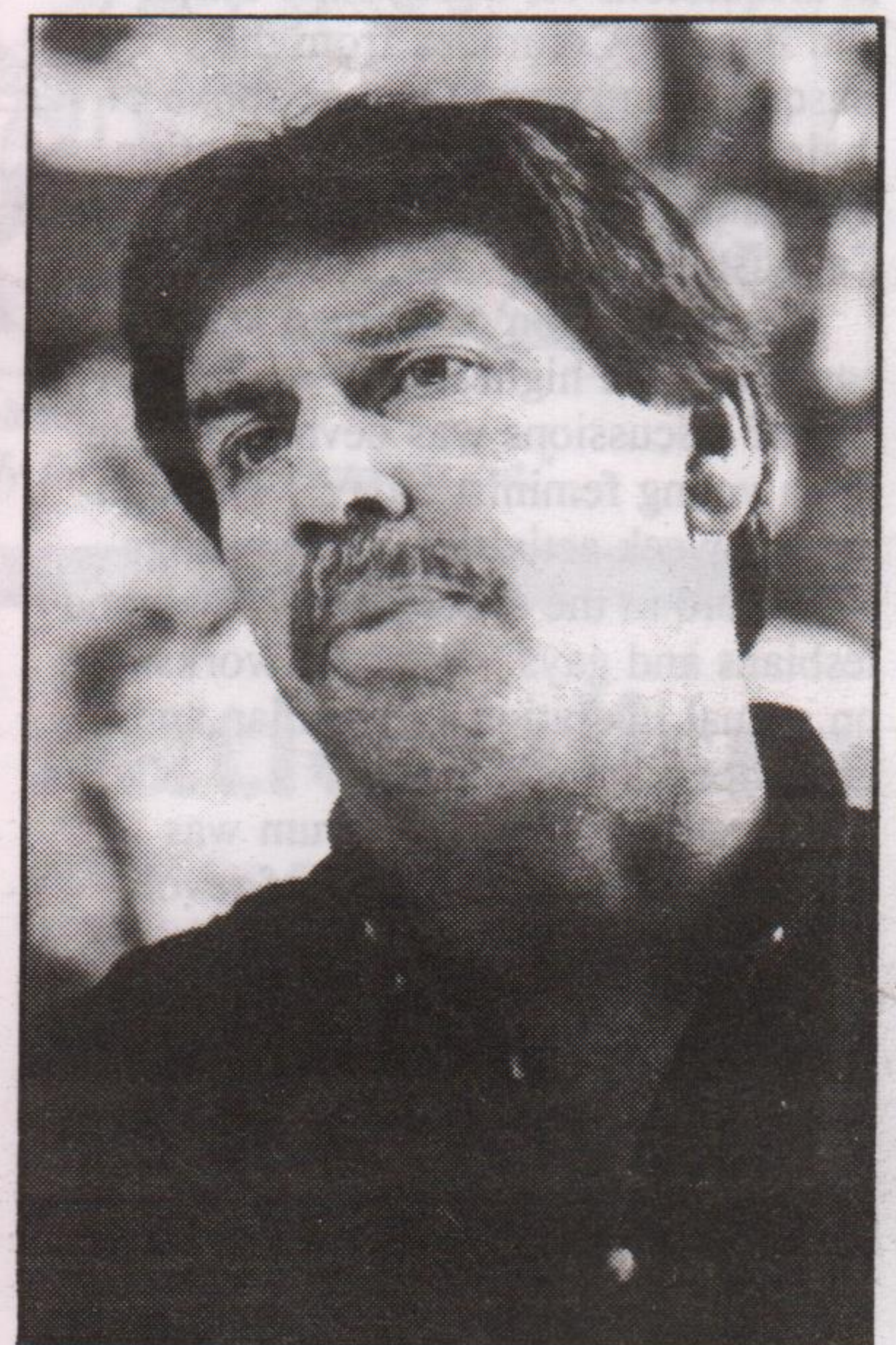
Marchers bid to rock Blackpool

By John Lister

AS THE COUNTDOWN begins to the next general election, the Welfare State Network is determined not to allow this year's Labour Conference degenerate into another stage-managed jamboree.

The Network is supporting a Coast to Coast March from Hull to the Blackpool conference, which will raise in every town en route the need for a radical Labour programme, defend and extend the welfare state.

Sponsored by Trades Councils and labour movement bodies in Humberside, Yorkshire and the North West, the March will set off from a rally in Hull on September 24, stopping for meetings and receptions in Goole, Doncaster, Barnsley, Huddersfield, Oldham, Manchester, Bury and Preston be-



Alec McFadden

fore its arrival in Blackpool on Tuesday October 1.

As one of the march organisers, Alec McFadden, sums up:

"This is not a token protest march but a serious attempt to influence and persuade the Labour Party to save the welfare state. The marchers will represent a cross section of working class people: unemployed, low-paid, students, nurses, civil servants, council workers and pensioners."

The rallies en route will build support for the Welfare State Network's Emergency Plan to rebuild the Welfare State. Copies of the Plan are available from the WSN, 183, Queen's Crescent, London NW5 4DS.

To join the march, or sponsor it, contact John Howard 0161-789-2999 or Alec McFadden, 0161-764-8390.

Self determination for the Kurds

Young rebels rock Portugal

George Thompson

'WELCOME TO THE Black Sheep Republic' declared the banner at the entrance to the 13th International Youth Camp held in Amarante, Portugal in July 1996. Hundreds of young rebels from 16 European countries flocked to attend the annual event organised by the Fourth International.

We discussed the capitalist crisis in Europe, the theme of the camp, planned new campaigns and exchanged experiences. There was plenty of time to party. Bands sympathetic to the FI played a free concert for us and thousands of local youth.

The event was big news in Portugal, a major item on the television news and in the papers. The PSR, the Portuguese section of the FI, can attract such headlines because of the reputation they have gained championing youth struggles. They lead campaigns for drugs legalisation, lesbian and gay rights, free education and an end to military service.

The need for a socialist alternative to the capitalist crisis in Europe is visible everywhere in Portugal. Old age pensioners beg on the streets. Immigrants and gypsies live in shanty-houses. A blind man was on hunger strike outside Parliament demanding work. On the way to Amarante, we met a 17 year old self-professed communist who told us of her heroin-addicted best friend's death in her arms. In her words, "You must fight, fight, fight".

The camp had its young veterans of struggle. The French described the December events, Dutch comrades told of their march to Chernobyl against nuclear power, and the Germans how they faced imprisonment under anti-terrorist laws for supporting Kurdish self-determination. Solidarity was planned in discussions on Cuba, East Timor and Bosnia. Comrades from the Basque country and Quebec spoke of their struggles for self-determination. The camp received greetings from the Zapatistas.

The proportion of women at the camp was the highest ever at 48%. A day of discussions was devoted to 'Being a young feminist today'. Throughout the week activities and meetings were held in the spaces for women and lesbians and gays. We held workshops on sexual liberation and lesbian and gay liberation.

In tradition the final forum was drowned out in the singing of revolutionary songs in many languages.

The goodwill which exists at the camp provides a taste of the future socialist society. Every year is another step towards it.

The 1997 camp is in Denmark. To join up for a brilliant Summer holiday, write now to Liberation, PO Box 1109, London N4 2UU.



On August 23 French riot police broke down the doors of St Bernard's church in Paris, forcibly removing over 200 African immigrants. Some have already been deported.

Police actions have been strongly condemned. Strike threats by civil aviation workers forced the government to use a military plane for the deportations. Le Monde compared government immigration policy to the Dreyfus case. Actress Emmanuelle Beart, star of Mission Impossible was among those arrested at the numerous demonstrations that have swept France. The Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire, French Section of the Fourth International, has played a leading role in organising protests. Alain Krivine of the LCR even featured prominently in British television reports.

LUL workers sold out by ASLEF

AS THE LUL Dispute comes to an end, RMT train crew members in former BR companies are moving into action.

Reluctant participants from the start, the ASLEF leadership took the opportunity to walk away from the LUL dispute as soon as they could.

While the RMT leadership took a more principled position and argued for a continuation of the struggle, without ASLEF involvement, they felt unable to keep the dispute alive. Once again, ASLEF leaders have left their members high and dry.

With little sign of opposition inside ASLEF, many are questioning whether the time has come to move over to the RMT.

Mainline train crews have opened up a new range of actions.

Train crew in seven train operation companies have taken two days strike action. Train crew in other companies are being balloted and will hopefully be drawn into the dispute by the end of September.

Two of the privatised companies have been prepared to negotiate a settlement (£10 a week bonus for past productivity) whereas those still publicly owned are refusing to make any meaningful offer, their hands tied by the government.

They have adopted a strategy of trying to split the union, attacking the union for playing political games inspired by the SLP, while buying off company-based union representatives.

This dispute has been brewing over many years. Pressure has been building up since 1989 to resolve productivity pay issues. Far from having ulterior motives, the national executive has been slow in responding to demands from the ranks.

Ballot results have surpassed expectations, and the first days of action were relatively successful. No longer industrially able to halt everything, RMT train crew have nevertheless delivered a first shot across the bows.

In the past, two or three days of action could lead to victories - clearly more will be required this time - but with

forthright leadership our demands can be won.

Serious problems need to be overcome however.

In the best of worlds, one would hope that ASLEF would positively support the dispute.

The deadline for implementation of last year's "agreement" on a shorter working week ended without movement in a number of companies.

Where there has been change, it is only on the basis of restructuring agreements setting out conditions. Some ASLEF branches are demanding their union fights for implementation of the shorter working week without strings.

However ASLEF actually helping to break the strike. They are encouraging train guards to leave the RMT and join ASLEF to avoid having to strike. They have issued instructions to their own drivers that they should be prepared to work as guards (ie scab) if asked by management.

We have to ensure we win the ballots still being held and widen the action. Ballot papers have gone out this week - over the next fortnight, we have to ensure the vote is delivered.

Connivance between new bosses and RMT regional reps has made it impossible to ballot in two southern companies. The RMT national executive has so far been reluctant to openly oppose these reps. They must now do so. The support exists on the ground if the executive has the confidence to act.

With these problems addressed, the key to winning the dispute will be upping the action. Two further strike days have been called for September. This will keep the dispute rolling but a more aggressive plan of action is needed.

The dispute is only slowly picking up momentum. The focus at the moment is internal, but if the dispute picks up speed, outside support would become more important.

Postal workers send clear message

AFTER THREE months of successful one day strikes, the Postal dispute has reached a critical point. The massive offensive by Royal Mail has failed to create a significant return to work.

The Communication Workers Union (CWU) can win the dispute if it breaks through the stalemate that currently exists.

On the day that the CWU had its seventh one day strike with indications that support for the strike was as strong as ever, Tony Blair gave support to Royal Mail's call for a ballot on the ACAS deal.

The timing of his intervention could not have been more significant. The CWU executive were due to discuss the next moves in the dispute having gone

back to ACAS to clarify Royal Mail's position.

It is no secret that Alan Johnson, the general secretary, wants to end the dispute by forcing a ballot on the ACAS deal. A ballot at this stage, even if the executive recommended opposition, would pass the initiative back to Royal Mail. For this reason it should be opposed.

The pressure from Johnson for a ballot reflects the struggle on the CWU executive. Unlike the postal dispute in 1988 the general secretary cannot just call off the dispute at will.

Any deal will have to satisfy an executive that has been responsive to the views of branch activists. The sticking points on the executive were team working, streaming of mail between the first

and second delivery, and the inclusion of office workers and cleaners in the settlement.

The executive has been criticised for lack of progress on a shorter working week and the pay restructuring package. It is impossible to reopen these issues at this stage of the dispute.

The executive must resist attempts to ballot the membership and escalate the action to bring matters to a head. An open meeting of branch activists, sponsored by 31 CWU branches was held on August 31 to discuss the way forward.

This was an important step forward as such a meeting earlier in March was vital in putting pressure on the executive and directing the dispute. The meeting gave a clear commitment to oppose any settlement that included the issues re-

jected by the executive committee. It agreed that if a ballot were organised it would campaign around these issues.

The meeting discussed the victimisation of union representatives being mounted by Royal Mail. Milton Keynes took unofficial action to defend a steward falsely accused of hitting a manger on the picket line. Southend took official action after a member was falsely accused of head-butting a manger.

Geoff Caldwell, south west divisional representative, is facing the sack as a result of allegations against him over an incident which occurred during a one day strike. In Edinburgh a ballot has been organised for action following the dismissal on one member, and 4 more are facing appeals.

It is clear that other representatives face disciplinary action for the 'crime' of calling strike breakers 'scabs'. Victimised activists should not be left on their own - the national union must defend them.

A demand for amnesty must be part of any settlement. Postal workers have shown tremendous resolve to win this dispute in the face of a massive offensive by Royal Mail management, the Tories, the media and now Tony Blair.

Labour MPs must pledge their support and challenge Blair's statement on the ballot. Trade unionists and Labour party activists should be organising solidarity - get a speaker along to your meeting or help organise a public meeting locally to spread the word.

Poll boosts for the left

Monks' stage managed meeting



Opinion polls point to massive support for the policies of the left

EDITORIAL

THIS YEAR'S TUC conference marks the end of a political silly season. Labour has been busily giving free gifts of rock – and whirly hats – to bemused Brits in Benidorm, while the Tories unconvincingly demonised Blair as the "New Danger".

But for growing numbers of Labour supporters and trade union activists, the problem is that Blair's New Labour is No Danger to capitalism or the employers, and No Solution to the problems they face.

Neither Blair nor TUC leader John Monks want to see their applectarts upset at the TUC or at the Labour Party conference in a few weeks time.

Instead they intend both conferences to be massive displays of 'unity' around the new Manifesto, set-pieces in advance of the imminent election.

Monks, anxious to avoid trouble for Blair, is desperately trying to head off unions such as UNISON, whose conference voted to ignore the pleadings of the Blairites on the platform, and demand Labour put a figure on its proposal for a minimum wage. Monks and Blair agree that the figure should only be set in discussions with employers – hardly a recipe for meeting the needs of low paid workers.

But while Blair promises faithfully not to raise taxes on the middle class and the rich, he has also backed away from giving Britain's growing army of part-time workers the same protection as those in full-time work.

To make matters worse, Blair has made it quite clear that whatever Congress may decide on this or other issues, he and his inner circle will strongly resist any policy change.

Labour's plan for legislation to require employers to recognise unions where 50 per cent of their workers are in favour is likely to be approved by the TUC.

After seventeen years of Tory attacks on union rights this is seen by many as

80% of people (unlike Tony Blair and John Monks) still believe that the class war is alive and kicking in Britain!

a 'fair' measure, redressing the balance.

It is nothing of the sort. The existence of a 50 per cent minimum is likely to encourage employers to *derecognise* unions in many of the countless workplaces – including much of the public sector – where membership is actually less than this.

Little has been said about how any new legislation is to be enforced: but when it is finally enacted there are also likely to be several exemption clauses for small firms.

All in all although several individual union leaders may huff and puff about

some Labour policies or the lack of them, their desperation to get rid of the Tories means they will not pull down the house of "New Labour".

Sadly those who will be demonstrating outside Congress around the minimum wage and in support of the dockers may be representative of union branches and workplaces but are rather less typical of those who will cast the votes!

Behind the scenes, Labour's spin doctors are petrified that taking even the smallest step to protect the rights of workers or to put a price on the minimum wage could scare the business community, and trigger a massive campaign against Labour in the Tory tabloid press.

So while Monks tries to play a 'modernising' role within the TUC, and union leaders try to curry favour by avoiding any reference to potentially catastrophic policies such as Labour's flirtation with Economic Monetary Union, the spin doctors have dictated that Blair's leadership should increasingly distance itself from the trade unions.

Their fear is that unions are bonded in the popular imagination with "old Labour" and the old caricatures – the "winter of discontent", the streets of the inner city overflowing with rubbish, union barons getting fat at Downing Street on beer and sandwiches.

They consistently fail to understand that what drove hundreds of thousands of workers into strike action was the

right wing policies of the Callaghan government – policies now being replicated by Blair and his cohorts.

Labour leaders are also becoming increasingly jittery about the recent loss of a few points in the opinion polls. A recent NOP poll revealed that even among many of those intending to vote Labour, support for Blair's ideas is not strong.

Only 17% of trade unionists declared 'strong support' for New Labour.

Perhaps this is not unconnected to the fact that, according to another recent poll over 80% of people (unlike Tony Blair and John Monks) still believe that the class war is alive and kicking in Britain!

A separate TUC poll also showed how Blair and co. could gain support by a more radical stand rather than their line of refusing to support workers in struggle such as those in the post and on the rail.

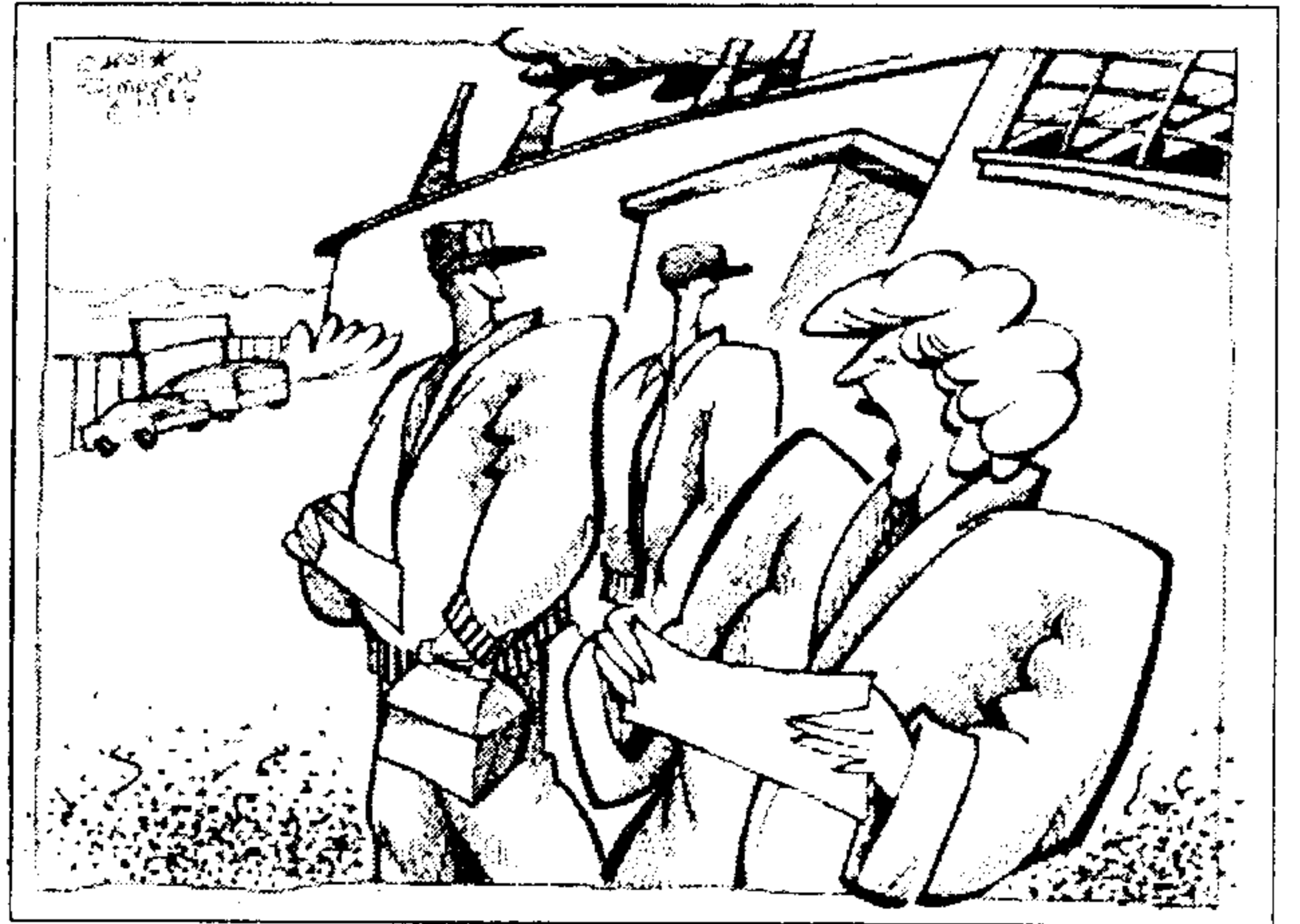
The overwhelming majority of workers want stronger em-

ployment rights - 86% supporting equal rights for part timers for example. 87% (including 66% of Tory voters!) backed a national minimum wage.

Instead of toadying to Blair and kowtowing to his disastrous policy retreats, union leaders should use this TUC Congress to spell out their demands of a new Labour government.

The Labour Party could significantly increase its vote by turning back to its roots in the unions and addressing the concerns of those at the bottom of the pile.

But instead its eyes are demonically fixed on the fat cats in the City.



"If the TUC triples the minimum wage... we might just about qualify for a middle class tax cut."

Neither the fortress of capital nor the answers of nationalism

For a democratic Europe of solidarity

IN JUNE 1997 the heads of state and government of the European Union will try to lay the foundations of a powerful supranational state. The logic of Maastricht and its convergence criteria are meant to give birth to a single currency.

The script has already been written, although the populations affected have never been consulted.

From the middle of 1997 an executive is supposed to come into existence, alongside an embryonic army which will form the European pillar of NATO. There will be a single police force and common repressive

laws, especially on the issue of immigration. At the beginning of 1998 there will be a single currency, the Euro, managed by a Central Bank subject to no democratic control.

By the end of the century this Europe of trusts and finance capital will extend from the Atlantic to the Russian borders, from the North Pole to Gibraltar.

The following is translated from a leaflet produced by the sections of the Fourth International at the G7 counter-demonstration at Lyon in July 1996

No to a New Imperialist Super-power!

This Europe desired by governments and tailored to meet the needs of powerful industrial and financial groups carries within it a logic of war: trade war against its U.S. and Japanese rivals.

Austerity policies, as brutal as they are unjust, will lead to war against the peoples of Europe, engendering misery and exclusion from one end of the continent to the other.

This is without taking into account the poverty and mutilation inflicted on the Third World by this new imperialist

Twenty million unemployed! 50 million living in poverty! This is the Europe of unemployment and 'mad cow' disease. Its multinationals exploit humanity from the four corners of the earth, showing their contempt for democratic and ecological concerns expressed by the peoples.

This is the Europe of complicity in genocide in Rwanda and of ethnic cleansing in Bosnia. It will never be ours.

No To Any Nationalist and Chauvinist Response.

Nationalist responses are a dead-end, poisoning cooperation and solidarity be-

tween peoples. They cannot confront the globalisation of capital and the Europe of finance capital imposed on the backs of those at the bottom of the heap by those at the top.

The present European Union is nothing more than the concentrated expression of the desires of the national governments and their capitalist partners? Any belief in 'national solutions' runs the risk of strengthening jingoism and increasing the appeal of the ideas of the far-right?

How can anyone believe, in the world that actually exists, that problems of un-

employment and health, of transport and energy, let alone the problems of population migration and nuclear disarmament can be resolved on a national basis.

We have to fight against the Europe of the powerful, of Kohl and Chirac, under an internationalist banner.

We fight for a different Europe, a social and ecological, a democratic and egalitarian Europe: a Europe of bread and solidarity.

Break With the Liberal Economic Logic!

Euro-centrism, euro-egoism are the fruits of a liberal economic logic applied by all the member states, whatever party is in government. We need to counterpose a different logic, one based on social priorities which acts in favour of the two billion people living in absolute poverty.

Creating millions of jobs, meeting elementary needs for nutrition, health and education - these should be priorities for the Europe that we want. In opposition to the all-powerful financial markets and private sector we have to pose public power and a democratic subsidiarity at all levels.

Radical social transformation is incompatible with the continued hold of 400 multinationals over our societies and the public institutions at their heart.

Unity With Those in struggle

We stand in solidarity with the landless peasants in Brazil who organised

against the great landowners, the German ecologists who stood up against nuclear waste and the trade union movement in Indonesia confronting the military dictatorship.

We support the 'women in Black' who have defied the nationalist governments in former Yugoslavia and the indigenous people of Chiapas who have overturned the plans of the single ruling party.

We fight alongside the people of Cuba struggling against the American embargo, the mothers of Russian soldiers, who are opposing the war in Chechnya and the workers of France and Germany, of Italy and Belgium, fighting austerity.

Our aim is to bring together all these struggles through a vast solidarity movement that knows no frontiers. Whilst recognising the specificities of each struggle, we want to unite around what they all have in common.

The large social movement in France in December 1995, the massive demonstration by German workers against the austerity plan of the Kohl government show the way.

Why don't we work together to organise a huge European-wide demonstration to coincide with the inter-governmental conference at which the capitalists will be trying to bring their aims to fruition?

This is the road of hope and reason.

Our Bodies – Our lives Our right to decide

Terry Conway

SUMMER 1996 has seen a series of concerted attacks on the rights of women to control their own fertility. The fact that organisations such as Life and SPUC were to the forefront in this attack is no surprise to anyone in the pro-choice movement.

Life and other anti-abortionists were quick to intervene into the public debate that was generated when 3300 embryos were to be thawed and called for the solicitor general to intervene. The Embryology Bill passed in 1991 prevented embryos being stored for more than 5 years if both the donors involved did not give their active consent to a five year extension.

Chaos was breaking out with one woman trying to extend the life of her embryo through the courts but being powerless to do so – presumably because the man involved either dissented or could not be contacted. Staff in the

centres involved, obviously in favour of the work they are mainly involved in were clearly concerned about the bu-

reaucratic nightmare that might lead to some missing the deadline by minutes. But Scarisbrook and his cronies in Life had a different angle. They saw this as a golden opportunity to peddle their stale old arguments about life beginning at conception.

They campaigned for couples to come forward to 'adopt' the embryos and for the law to be changed for this to be permitted without the agreement of the donors. From interviews with one couple who came forward it seemed clear that those interested in this course of action did so not because they were previously interested in having a child but because they were morally opposed to these embryos being thawed.

Anti-choice activists, and their sympathisers are demanding an end to the limited rights to abortion that women have. Some want the total repeal of the Embryology Bill. The Catholic Archbishop of Westminster, Cardinal Basil Hume argued that they should destroy

all of the 60,000 frozen embryos that were stored on August 7. This he said would be a lesser evil!

Socialist Outlook also wants and will fight for changes to the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act but from a rather different angle. We opposed the Act at the time precisely because it would restrict the ability of women to control their bodies. In the May 1990 issue of Socialist Outlook, we argued that 'it was a defeat for women in the struggle to take control of our bodies and our lives'.

No outside agency, no part of the state should have the right to decide that some people are 'fit' to have parent and that others are not. Such additional intrusion into women's right to decide has led to increasing discrimination against lesbians and single mothers.

Earlier in the summer we saw the debate about whether a woman who was HIV positive should be entitled to fertility treatment. This weekend the press is

about it. While the woman's details were not disclosed it was clear that the doctor's statement and the press coverage was de facto a breach of patient confidentiality.

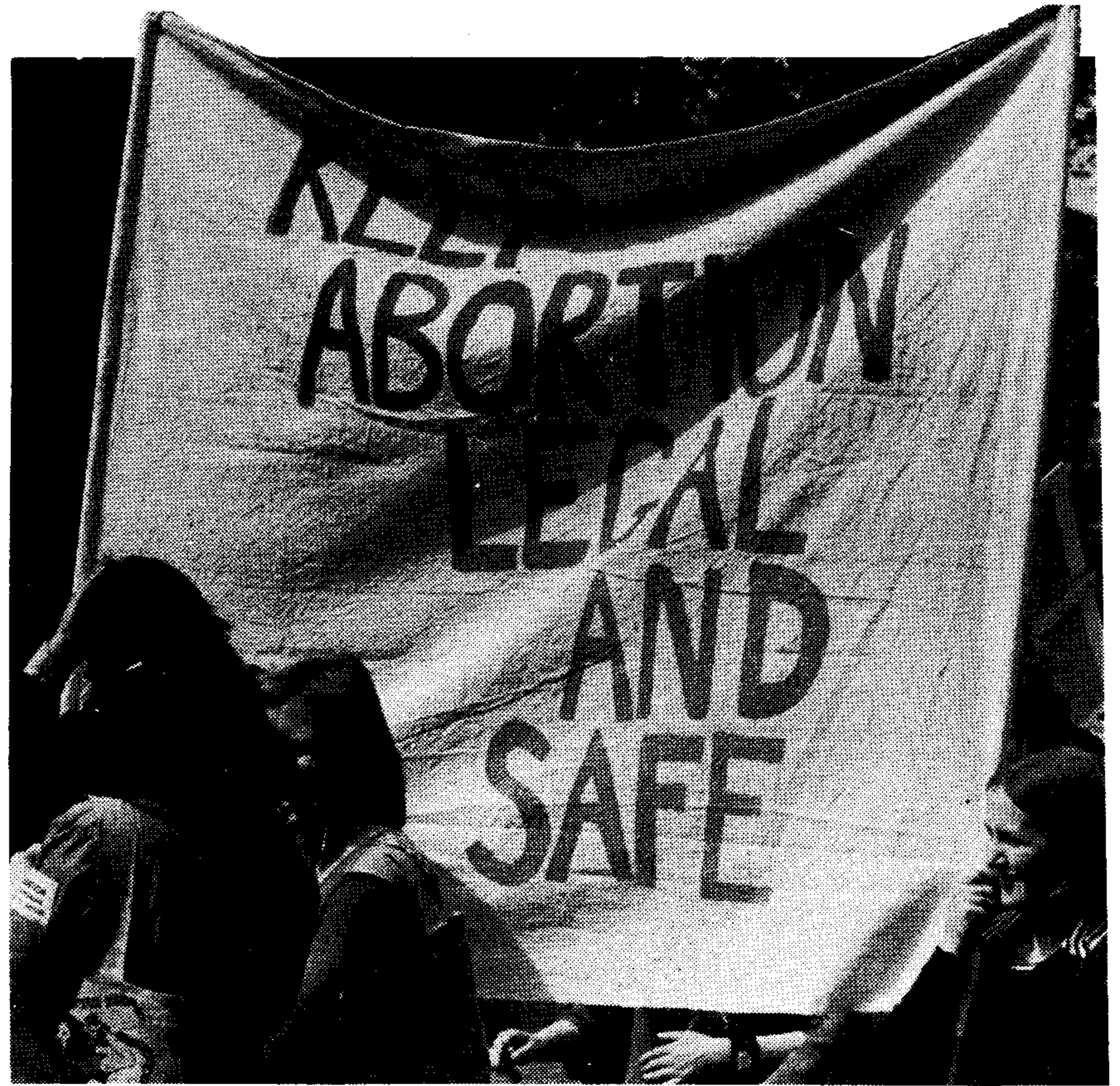
The woman was subject to a massive public debate by people who had no idea of what her precise circumstances were. It was a relief to discover that in fact the abortion had already taken place a month earlier but the pontificating about the case remained extremely distressing. Many of those who offered advice ignored the fundamental truth about abortion, pointed out by Ann Furedi of the Birth Control Trust that 'no woman undertakes an abortion lightly'.

The overwhelming majority of those who intervened did so as if they could put themselves in this woman's shoes and had the right to find her guilty. But any woman who has considered having an abortion, what ever her final decision, will be all too

well aware that the statements of those who argued 'that this decision is bigger than she knows' have no idea what they are talking about. Have these people given a thought to the millions of women who have died from back street abortions. Despite the fact that women are usually aware that such a course of action can lead to their deaths or to serious and painful infection where free legal abortion is not available there is often no other choice.

The anti-abortionists intervened in this instance as well, this time mounting an appeal for money which they claimed would allow the woman to go ahead and have twins. They were to claim to raise somewhere between £60,000 and £40,000, money that they do not make available for existing mothers struggling on the breadline! Nor was there the basis to assume that the woman's decision was based on finances. Bennet refused to pass on these offers of financial 'help' to the woman and the anti-abortionists ended up with egg on their faces when it became apparent that the abortion had already happened.

This case was to lead to calls for the tightening of the already 1967 Abortion Act and not just from those who oppose all abortions. Jill Knight, an officer of the Tory 1922, committee has argued this and is against abortions being allowed for social reasons.



No outside agency, no part of the state should have the right to decide that some people are 'fit' to be parents and that others are not

full of the supposed 'scandal' that two gay men are about to parent a child born to a surrogate mother.

Socialist Outlook defends the right of every woman to have access to fertility treatment free from moral judgements about the households they live in. We fight against the homophobia that says that lesbians or gay men are any less able to provide loving homes for their children than anyone else – the prejudice which tears many children away from their lesbian mothers through lost custody cases.

The second debate was to arise when Professor Philip Bennet of Queen Charlotte hospital told the Sunday Express that one of his patients, a woman in 'socially straightened circumstances' had decided to have one of her 16-week old twin foetuses aborted because she couldn't cope.

It remains completely unclear why Bennet, who despite being a Christian apparently defended this patient's right to make such a choice spoke to the press

She stated 'What is happening today, is not what was intended, right across the board of those who voted for the Act.' 'They did not intend that it should be used simply when the woman did not want the child. There had to be a good reason'.

Jill Knight and others like her are of course audacious to assume they know the full facts in the case, but it is already the case that the 1967 Act is very restrictive. There is no way that the legislation on the statute books today gives women the right to choose.

Unless one was away on holiday, it was impossible not to know something of the story of Mandy Allwood, the woman pregnant with eight foetuses. The media exposure which she apparently sought, did not however mean that Mandy got an impartial hearing by any means. Its unusual for the press to print pictures of the men involved in such cases unless they are famous but they did in this case.

Could this possibly be because he is black? The moralists were eager to seize on the information that the man was involved in another relationship – painting Mandy both as an unfit mother and an unworthy recipient of fertility treatment.

It is clear is that come the Autumn and the reopening of Parliament we can expect possible moves to further attack the limited rights that women have to control their fertility. It is also possible that the anti-abortionists will continue to

try to use the courts to attack our rights as they have tried to do in these recent cases. We will need to step up our defence of these rights and welcome the fact that the National Abortion Campaign has called an urgent strategy meeting to discuss the way forward.

We also need to go onto the offensive both around abortion rights and the right to fertility treatment.

Women should have the right to terminate any pregnancy, at any time, and it should be freely available on the National Health Service.

If a woman wants or needs fertility treatment she should get this free through the National Health Service. We must also insist that there are no restrictions on any woman having this treatment, be they married or single, be they in heterosexual relationships or same sex couples.

We also do not accept that there should be any time limit on the research on embryos. We do not accept that life begins with conception.

We demand:

- Free abortion on demand – A Woman's right to choose
- No forced abortion or forced sterilisation
- Free fertility treatment for all women that want it
- An end to discrimination against lesbians



A picket of the Irish embassy

Press join assault on womens' rights

Veronica Fagan

THE FACT THAT the anti-abortionists mounted a concerted attack on a woman's right to choose over the last month or so was not really surprising.

The fact that articles in the broadsheet press were party to the assault is not surprising and in some ways more worrying.

The role of the press was also significant in giving an extended platform to organised anti-abortionists as well as to those who wished to offer moral guidance to or judgement on the individuals under the spotlight.

Melanie Philips in 'The Observer' took up the debate on the fate of the embryos and went on to criticise both the whole basis of the embryology bill and a woman's right to abortion.

She argues '...this is the rights agenda that says it is a woman's right to have a child if she wants one and her right to dispose of it if she does not. Human life has become instrumental, a means to the end of the happiness of someone else.

Unborn babies are seen as a matter of personal property. The idea that there is a potentially distinct human being which calls upon obligations beyond the individual ego has been lost. How could it be otherwise if it is a woman's right to chose.'

She ignores the fact that it is not society that carries and then gives birth to children but individual women.

It is not the demand that women have the right to control their own bodies that is an 'instrumental' one but the notion that our wombs are at the disposal of policy makers and ideologues.

She ignores the reality of the millions of women who have died from backstreet abortions when even the limited access to the NHS that has existed since the 1967 Act was not available.

While she does not use explicitly religious terminology her argument is couched in mystical terms which are deterministic in their approach.

Human beings and most particularly women have to make do with the lot that



The National Abortion Campaign demonstrates

is given them. Underneath this there seems to be a hostility to the notion that science can ever bring progress – that it can be used for the benefit of society and of the individuals that make it up.

If these are the arguments of post-feminists then it is surely clear that women's oppression is alive and well.

The fact that such a debate is happening in the press demonstrates once again the need for a concerted battle for women's liberation.

Post feminism – No Chance!

Marian Brain

SOCIALIST Outlook has always supported the fight for women to control their fertility which is a central aspect of the struggle for women's liberation. We understand that women's role in the family is central to women's oppression in class society.

In the 1990's women continue to be treated as second class citizens. Unless women have the right to decide if when and how to have children we will have little control over other aspects of our lives.

Despite the passing of laws such as the Equal Pay Act and the Sex Discrimination Act, women are far from equal in the world of work. Job Segregation still exists with women concentrated in jobs where skills such as caring or manual dexterity are important to carrying out the work. Women are still paid less than men and part time and casual jobs are on the increase. The lack of childcare provision and the fact that women are bearing the brunt of the cuts in the welfare state and taking on increased responsibility for elderly dependents makes it increasingly difficult for women to take full time jobs.

In the Autumn of 1995, of the 11.3 million women who were in employment 44.5 per cent of these worked part time in their main job. 751,000 women had second part time jobs. The pay is these jobs is in general so low that many women earn less than allows them to pay national insurance contributions and thereby claim certain benefits.

Women's average hourly earnings (excluding overtime) were 79.6 per cent of men's. While more and more women are sole or primary breadwinners in their households this low earning power is still justified by women's position in the family.

In the past few years we have witnessed an ideological offensive by those who want to bolster the traditional family. We have seen, for example, the introduction of the so called Child Support Act, or as it should be called, the Treasury Act which is an attack on women's ability to get benefits.

There is a contradictory situation developing, however, where some right wing ideologues and politicians would like to emphasise the primacy of women playing their 'natural' role of wife, mother. At the same time capitalism needs a supply of flexible and cheap labour. And for others on the right the opposition to state intervention extends to the area of personal life and the family. This is the context in which figures such as Theresa Gorman have supported women's abortion rights.

The Womens' Liberation movement which developed in Britain the late sixties and seventies fought concerted campaigns on the related questions of women's position in the family and the workplace. Through mass action women were able to win important victories and gain important backing in the unions and the labour party. The support of trade unionists and the TUC was important in defeating the various attempts through parliament to restrict even further the limited rights women had won through the 1967 Abortion Act.

Socialists and feminists continue to fight for the right of women to control their lives, and to decide if, when and how they have children. The limited reproductive rights that women have are once again under attack. This attack is taking many forms and pro-choice supporters will have to step up our campaigning not only to defend these limited rights, but to begin the fight to extend them.

Today the fight for women's liberation remains as central as ever to the struggle for socialism. The idea of post-feminist is as irrelevant to women today as the idea that the class struggle is dead was to the 86% of those questioned in a recent poll. The womens' liberation movement may have fragmented but it had an impact on the lives of thousands and thousands of women, far beyond those actually involved in its activities. Crucially young women growing up today have much higher expectations than women of earlier generations. The gap between these expectations and the reality of womens' lives in 1990's Britain could well lead to an explosive situation.

The notion of post-feminist is as irrelevant to women today as the idea that the class struggle is dead

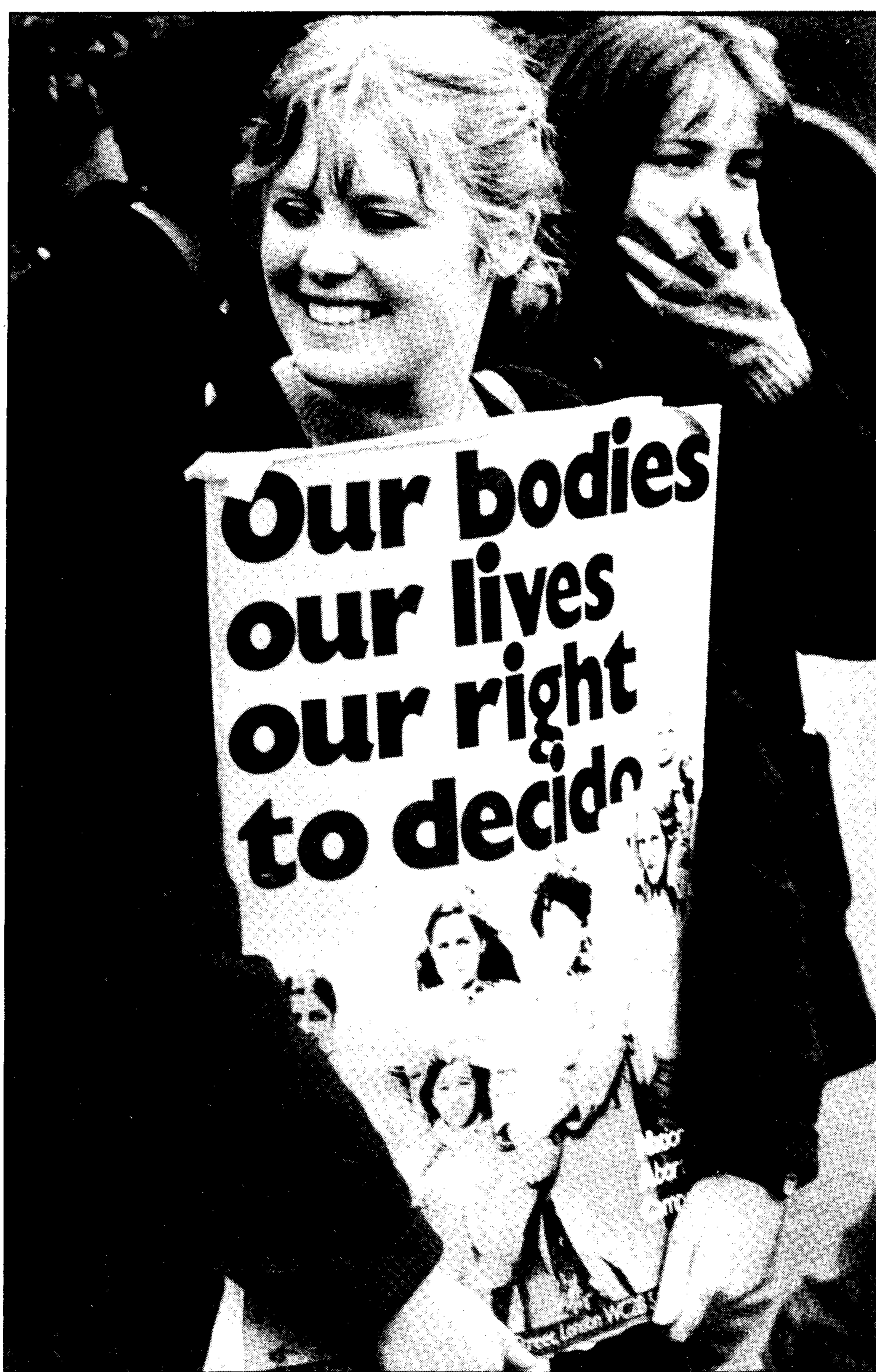
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One year on strike

FIFTY-THREE UNISON members at Hillingdon Hospital will have been on strike for one year on October 1 against cuts in their pay and conditions by private contractors Pall Mall.

Most of the (mainly asian) women have worked for Hillingdon hospital for over 20 years in low-paid employment caring for patients.

The strikers have been subjected to racist abuse and violence on the picket line.

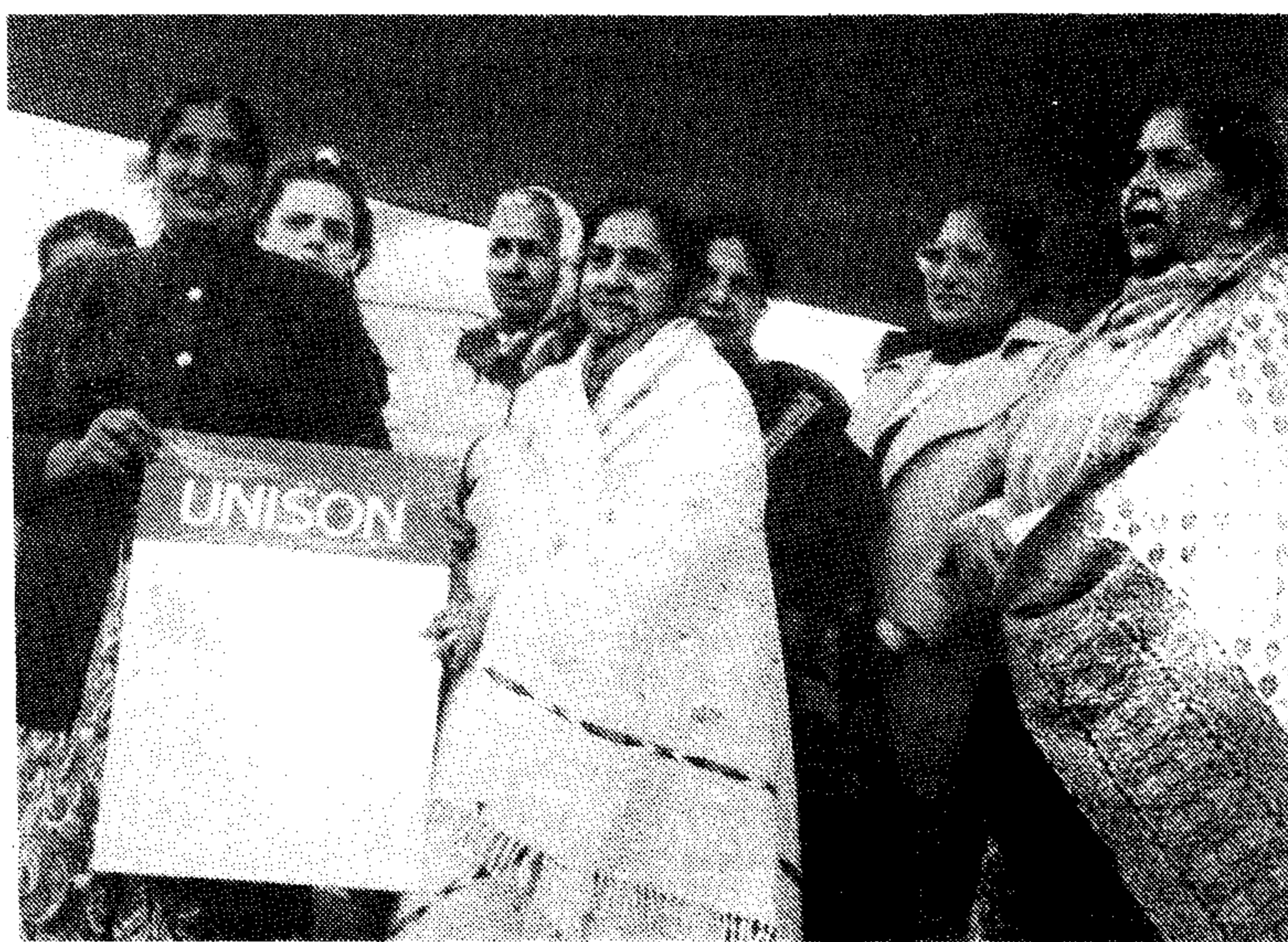
But they have also faced indifference at best, and hostility and sabotage at worst, from UNISON's leadership and officials.

In June 1996, Pall Mall offered them £125,000 to settle the dispute. But in a secret ballot, they overwhelmingly rejected this offer, wanting their jobs back on decent conditions.

Nearly a year on, the strikers are still as determined as ever to continue their fight for reinstatement on their old terms.

A resolution initiated by the Campaign for a Fighting and Democratic UNISON (CFDU) calling for further solidarity actions and publicity was adopted unanimously by this year's UNISON conference.

But this was only the start of the battle to get support. The NEC and officials have had to be pressurised continuously to act on the conference decision.



On August 23, the Pall Mall manager at the hospital was sacked by the company. This may be a sign that the company is weakening, but the campaign of solidarity and protests must be stepped up.

● JOIN the vigil outside the head office of the Davis Service Group (Pall Mall's parent company) Monday 2 to Friday 6 September. This vigil officially organised by UNISON between 10 am and 2 pm (some days until 4 pm) will be at 4 Grosvenor Place, SW1 (Hyde Park Corner and Victoria are the nearest tubes).

Supporters of the strikers are welcome everyday, but the Friday will be a mass vigil with banners.

● PICKET of HSS shops: Saturday 7 September, 10am-12 noon.

HSS is part of the Davis Service Group. Unison has produced a leaflet for customers.

Check out the nearest HSS shop in the phone directory and mobilise union branches and trades councils for pickets. Let the strikers know so that they can try to send a delegation to join your picket.

● FINANCIAL support is still vital. Donations should be made out to "UNISON Greater London Industrial Action Fund" and sent to Greater London UNISON, Civic House, 8 Aberdeen Terrace, London, SE3 0QY

Fred Leplat, UNISON London Regional Committee (in a personal capacity)

No concessions on NHS rationing

THE POTENTIAL birth of octuplets to Mandy Allwood (combined, it is fair to admit, with the media hype arising from her commercial deal with the *News of the World*) has given every two-bit moraliser the opportunity to cast aspersions on her 'fitness' as a parent.

But the case is also handy as a peg on which another brand of ideologist can hang a different line of argument: as health authorities and Trusts battle over who should pick up the estimated £500,000 bill for her care up to and after the birth(s), her situation is being exploited by advocates of rationing care on the NHS.

In practice, while there have been occasional rumblings of reactionary discontent about the NHS paying for 'cosmetic' operations such as varicose veins or tattoo removal, most arguments for the rationing of health care revolve around the fight to deny certain people with exceptional (and potentially expensive) health problems the treatment they need.

This hit the headlines last year when Cambridge & Huntingdon Health Authority debated a whole hour and half before voting that 'Child B' (Jaymee Bowen) should be allowed to die, because the cost of the treatment to keep her alive would obstruct the treatment of more 'ordinary' patients.

Now, as Merton, Sutton & Wandsworth Health Authority (MSW) contemplate the costs of caring for Mandy Allwood, journalists are being told that this might mean cuts in services for local people.

In fact, MSW were planning drastic cuts before anyone even heard of Mandy Allwood. Like many other health authorities, they are being starved of cash under the Tory funding formula, while demand for treatment continues to increase.

But even if this were not the case, Mandy Allwood should be given all the treatment she needs on the NHS. Half a million pounds may seem a heavy bill, but local health authorities quite frequently have to pay upwards of £100,000 or more at a time for intensive care treatment of new-born babies. For a woman caught in this unique situation, with up to eight more lives at stake, the money involved is not so big.

The National Health Service was established precisely to guarantee treatment to all, regardless of ability to pay, and funded collectively through taxation.

It is the special talent of the Tories to have devised a market system which now means that a single problem like this can potentially disrupt the finances of a health authority: the answer is not to exclude such 'special cases' from treatment, but to scrap the market system and establish a national-level contingency reserve to ensure that money (and treatment) is available when and where it is needed.

Any concession on this issue leads down a slippery slope. Once the principle of excluding individuals from NHS care is accepted, the concept of collective provision falls down, and the way is opened to privatisation and insurance schemes.

Brussels sprouts a Bonaparte

Duncan Chapple

BRITAIN'S Labour Party is attentively following the unprecedented seizure of economic powers by Belgium's coalition government last month.

Belgian MPs passed three laws giving Prime Minister Jean-Luc Dehaene executive power to raise taxes, cut social security budgets and set wage levels. These undemocratic laws remove the need for consultation, or parliamentary approval, for breakneck speed plans to force Belgium's economy to meet the harsh financial criteria set by the Maastricht Treaty for monetary union.

Britain's Guardian newspaper, which generally reflects the views of the Labour Party, suggested that the authoritarian laws could be an inspiration to Britain. "Belgium is showing how far EU member states other than Britain are prepared to go for economic and monetary union, even at the risk of social tension, as occurred in France last year" cooed the daily's Brussels correspondent, Stephen Bates.

The ruling classes in Belgium and Britain share similar historical roots and current tasks. Most favour sharp cuts in social spending by the state and want risky privatisations to reduce budget deficits and longer-term state debt. However, these two ruling classes are not strong enough to impose these policies to the full on the governing parties. Pressure had mounted on Belgium's coalition in the months before the emergency powers were given to Dehaene. The Christian Social Party (CVP), a rightist Christian party in the coalition, had exposed how a £200 million cuts package in health spending agreed in 1993, had been circumvented. Despite the formal policy, billions of francs had been spent on new technology, radiology, family health and other essential health projects.

The same day, national Social Security directors announced that spending was on course to be £800 million over budget in 1996. Increased claims for pensions, sickness benefits and aid for the unemployed were blamed.



A worried Finance minister Philippe Maystadt does his own bit to help reduce the EU wine-lake

The same month, EU chiefs had hauled the Belgian finance minister, Philippe Maystadt, over the coals for failing to cut the state spending enough. Maystadt emerged from the high-profile meeting committed to a new plan to reduce the state debt. New privatisations were top of the list.

Britain's government has also failed to bring the economy on line for monetary union. Indeed, the relative improvement of the economy is due to the Conservative government's abandonment of the project of European monetary harmonisation.

The failure of the British and Belgian states to implement fully the austerity policies favoured by their ruling class backers is part of a historical pattern. As these states had flourished in the period of imperial plunder, the working class tends to absorb the ideas of the ruling

class relatively easily. This allowed the development of "weaker" states for a short time in which the normal functioning of the capitalist market – and not an interventionist state – was usually the main tool of the ruling class.

Today, Belgium's politicians are taking strides along the road to a "stronger" state. The normal functioning of the capitalist market is not enough to impose the changes needed to allow monetary union. However, most pro-capitalist politicians are not committed enough to the austerity policies desired by the vast majority of capitalists.

Britain's Labour Party will study Belgium closely. Cutting even today's limited democracy out from the control of social spending, wage rates and taxes may be necessary for the capitalist class, and their Labour lieutenants, to build a united Europe.

Australian austerity

Elkie Dee

A DEMONSTRATION of over 25,000 stormed the Australian Parliament in Canberra on August 19 to protest against the first budget of the new Liberal government.

This austerity budget makes huge cuts in public spending, coupled with a planned Workplace Relations Bill in a vicious assault on the Australian working class.

Social security cuts include tougher tests of actively seeking work, cuts in benefit, and hotlines for employers to report "jobseekers" with the wrong attitude.

State subsidies to nurseries are being removed.

Cuts in public health spending include reductions in hospital funding, increases in charges and means testing, and privatisation.

These cuts mean worse services and increased poverty for those on welfare and for many Aborigines, women, immigrants, youth and those in low-paid jobs. Many workers are also likely to lose their jobs.

The government has made it clear that they intend to create the optimal climate for business by minimising inflation, interest rates and "restrictive" labour conditions.

This requires cutting public spending, avoiding taxing profits and attacking trade unions. They will not have an easy ride.

Clinton the Barbarian axes welfare

John Lister

WHILE THE media alternate between the razzamatazz of the Democratic Party convention and latest sexual sleaze to hit President Bill Clinton's team of advisors, millions of Americans have more immediate reasons to reject his glib electioneering phrases about 'family values'.

In the run-up to the Chicago renomination jamboree, Clinton signed into law one of the most brutal attacks on social welfare ever imposed, scrapping over 60 years of welfare provision established by Roosevelt's New Deal. Nothing could more firmly underline the call for a new Labour Party in the US than this bipartisan attack on the poorest sections of the working class.

The cuts of \$16 billion in Federal welfare payments will leave each state to decide and fund its own level of welfare

support, throwing up to 2.6 million people, including 1.1 million children, into destitution. At the same time an extra \$13 billion has been allocated to the US military budget, and a massive \$85 billion assigned to 125 schemes benefiting big business.

Clinton's cuts actually go further than the Republican-led Congress had demanded. A \$3 billion jobs programme endorsed by the House has been wiped out.



security and food stamps, regardless of how long they have lived and paid taxes in the US.

Childless adults aged 18-50 will be allowed only 3 months of food stamps in their lifetime. And 300,000 disabled children will be lose their entitlement to welfare support.

These savage attacks on the most deprived sections of US society run alongside Clinton's boast of creating up to 1 million jobs, almost all of which, as in Britain, are low-paid, part-time and temporary.

For hundreds of thousands of poverty-stricken individuals there will be no escape other than crime. The drug trade beckons: but another master-stroke of Clinton's new cuts is to deny any welfare benefits to anyone convicted of drug felonies.

The burden will of course fall hardest on the black and Latino communities.

Already 50 per cent of black children and 40 per cent of Latino children live in poverty, compared with 24 per cent of white children. The most powerful capitalist country in the world has 14 million children eking out an existence below the poverty line.

The amount of cash saved is puny compared with the toll of misery created. The significance is a dramatic shift in ideology, opening the door to more dramatic cuts. As the Wall Street Journal leads the cheers of the business community, the next target in their sights is the scrapping of federal pensions, and abolition of state-funded education.

America's rabid right are celebrating their recruitment of Bill Clinton as their standard-bearer, pointing out that only he could have pushed through such cuts.

But the warning is clear to British and European socialists fighting what has become a global offensive on welfare rights. As Observer columnist Alexander Cockburn points out:

"Dole or Gingrich could never get away with it. To destroy a Democratic legacy it has to be an inside job. Translate Democratic into Labour and Clinton into Blair and you get the picture."

Celebrating 75 years of Inprekorr

SEVENTY FIVE years ago the Communist International published the first Inprekorr in Berlin, with English and French editions following one and two weeks later.

Inprekorr (International Press Correspondence) was a mouthpiece for international solidarity and the struggle for a world wide revolutionary socialist alternative.

Initially Inprekorr mainly published short reports of actual events or brief contributions to debates by well known authors. Thus it complemented the theoretical magazine Kommunistische Internationale which carried com-

prehensive analyses of up to 20 sides or more. The aim of the Communist International in producing Inprekorr was to promote discussion and provide information on events in different countries and to promote the cooperation of communist parties in different countries.

Inprekorr was aimed mainly at the editorial boards of newspapers, providing information and analysis they could use, but the demand went well beyond that. The initial run in each language was about 1000 and it appeared 2 or 3 times a week.

For a time a weekly edition appeared for a wider public. Occasional issues appeared in Spanish, Czech, Hungarian, Italian and Swedish. Correspondents were appointed in every country rather than everything being written centrally.

Although they did not dominate, Inprekorr had many famous contributors: Lenin, Zinoviev, Radek and Trotsky. Victor Serge edited the French edition for a time. Stalin's name did not appear at all in the first three years but then this changed dramatically in 1924 with the beginning of heavy handed attacks on Trotsky.

Even so Inprekorr remained for a long time a lively mirror of the international class struggle. In 1943 it was closed down by Stalin together with the Communist International.

In 1971 the Fourth International relaunched Inprekorr and pledged itself to revive the tradition in which it had stood. Today's monthly magazine of news and analysis had fewer big names to promote the cause of world wide revolutionary socialism but it is still an invaluable tool for internationalists. Subscribe today!

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Taking Lenin seriously

SIMON KENNEDY reviews Neil Harding's new book *Leninism*, published by Macmillan.

LENIN'S FIRST response was disbelief—the press must have made it up. But the truth soon became apparent. The leadership of socialist parties throughout Europe had voted for war credits.

Harding sees this as the defining moment of "Leninism". The treachery of social democracy in 1914 led Lenin to throw himself into the most important and politically formative period of his intellectual life.

From 1914 he dedicated himself to the study of philosophy—particularly the place of Hegel in Marx's thought—and the reworking of a number of basic Marxist categories.

He combined a dialectical philosophy with an analysis of the dissolution of capitalism and the end of a political epoch. The distinctiveness of Leninism was born in the libraries of Switzerland.

This response to the collapse of the Second "socialist" International Harding finds peculiar. He argues that it is responsible for Leninism's subsequent harshness and intolerance, showing "a deeply doctrinaire and scholastic disposition to the world"—unlike the sensibly pragmatic Bernstein, for example.

Harding's Lenin was also displayed in his Isaac Deutscher prize winning *Lenin's Political Thought*.

He argues that Lenin was much more than a skilful political schemer or opportunist politician with a nose for power—he was a faithful and orthodox disciple of Marx who built upon the doctrinaire thinking of his mentor. If you want to find the culprit for the sins of Leninism, look to Marx.

Harding is no friend of Lenin. But he has been important in asserting the intellectual strength of Leninism as a coherent ideology.

This enables him to explain well how the slogans of "all power to the soviets", "bread, peace and land", "freedom to the nationalities", all arose from a sophisticated analysis of the world.

Lenin's "doctrinaire" worldview gave him a unique standpoint, one which was to facilitate the revolution and transform the twentieth century.



Lenin reviews the troops in 1919

Arriving from the famous sealed train from Germany, Lenin's proclamation of his April Theses shocked his Bolshevik audience. No significant leader of the organisation gave support. *Pravda* disclaimed the contents, printing them as a personal position. How could Lenin be so far from his party?

Later the same year Lenin found himself in a minority of one on a scandalised Central Committee.

Alone he demanded the organisation of insurrection. His position could not have been more distinctive, and question of where state power should reside—with the bourgeois provisional government or the workers and peasants—could not have been more pivotal.

Harding allows us to understand how this came about. Lenin's writings on imperialism,

for example, were not particularly original. But he was able to translate the analysis into a political strategy with clear slogans, goals and a defined target audience.

The internationalisation of capitalism made socialism an international doctrine, with relevance for those beyond the advanced capitalist countries. Understanding national exploitation made socialist revolution in-

Lenin was able to translate analysis into a political strategy, with clear slogans, goals and a defined target audience.

timately connected to national liberation—and so "Leninism introduced a wholly new geographical framework for ideological discourse".

There are some obvious omissions from Harding's account. In the discussion of what was to replace Russian capitalism—something other than capitalism, but not yet socialism—he ignores the debate in the communist international over the question of a *workers' state*: a concept that is invaluable if we are to understand how capitalism may be overthrown, but a state created that is not socialist.

Curiously absent too is the place of Lenin's *Capitalism in Russia*.

Most glaring however is any serious consideration of Lenin's

intellectual relationship with Trotsky. The author makes much of the April Theses, but fails to note how they represented a shift toward Trotsky's long-held position of permanent revolution.

Harding's focus on ideology leads him to underestimate the material roots of Stalinism in the backwardness of Russian society and the consequent growth of the bureaucracy. This is why he can say that Lenin was "complicit in all that made Stalin and Stalinism".

It is impossible to accept Harding's portrayal of Leninism as the true orthodox version of doctrinaire Marxism.

Putting aside his obvious social democratic prejudices, we have to ask of Harding why it was that Lenin was so isolated among Russian revolutionaries in 1917.

The answer to this question lies in understanding that the iron laws of Marxism are not so ferocious after all—they give us a number of principles and propositions, but in no way can be said to present a "philosophy of certainty".

Marxism gives guidance and explanation to the practical business of politics, but these are of the sort that can only be validated in practical activity—something Lenin knew all about.

Socialist Outlook's politics

WHAT WE FIGHT FOR

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

Socialist Outlook exists to build a new type of working class leadership, based on the class struggle and revolutionary socialism. The capitalist class, driven by its own crisis, and politically united by its need to maximise profits at the expense of the workers, has had determined, vanguard leadership by a brutal Tory high command. The Tory strategy has been to shackle the unions, and to fragment and weaken the resistance, allowing them to pick off isolated sections one at a time. In response, most TUC and Labour leaders have embraced the politics of "new realism", effectively total surrender, while ditching any pretence of being a socialist alternative. Every retreat encouraged the offensive against jobs, wages, conditions and union rights.

New realism is the latest form of reformism, seeking only improved conditions within capitalism. We reject reformism, not because we are against reforms, but because we know that full employment, decent living standards, a clean environment, peace and democracy can never be achieved under capitalism. Nor, as we argued long before the collapse of Stalinism, could these demands ever be achieved under the bureaucratically deformed workers states and degenerated USSR, whose regimes survived only by repressing the working class. We are a marxist current, based not on the brutish totalitarian parodies of state marxism nor on the tame, toothless version of "marxism" beloved by armchair academics, but on the revolutionary tradition of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky.

Our socialist alternative is not based on parliamentary elections or illusions of peaceful legislative change. We fight to mobilise and unleash the power of the working class to topple the corrupt and reactionary rule of capital and establish its own class rule. We struggle against fragmentation by building solidarity, to unite the various struggles of workers, the unemployed, of women, of pensioners, of the black communities, of lesbians and gay men, of students, of youth - and of those fighting imperialism in Ireland and worldwide.

Socialist Outlook is above all an internationalist current, in solidarity with the Trotskyist Fourth International, which organises in over 40 countries. Unlike some other groups on the British left, we do not believe a mass revolutionary party can be built simply by proclaiming ourselves to be one. This degenerates into sectarian posturing and abstention from struggles in the labour movement, playing into right wing hands.

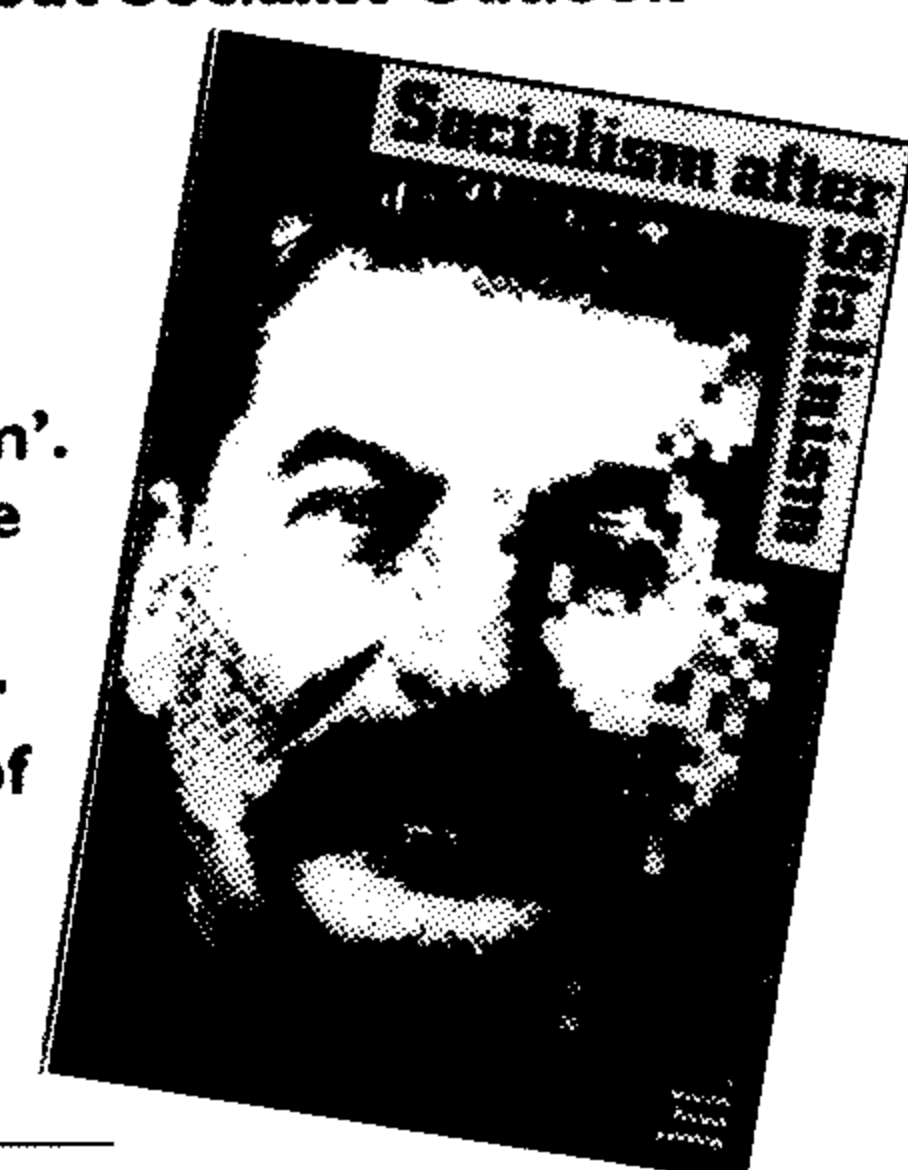
Nor do we believe that the demands of women, black people, lesbians and gays or the national demands of people in Scotland, Ireland and Wales should be left to await revolution. The oppressed must organise themselves and fight now for their demands, which are part of the struggle for socialism. But propaganda alone, however good, will not bring socialism. The fight for policies which can mobilise and politically educate workers in struggle, must be taken into the unions, the Labour Party and every campaign and struggle in which workers and the oppressed fight for their rights.

To strengthen this fight we press for united front campaigns on key issues such as racism and fascism - in which various left currents can work together for common objectives while remaining free to debate differences. If you agree with what you see in *Socialist Outlook*, and want to join us in the struggle for socialism, readers' groups meet in cities across the country.

Contact us now, get organised, and get active!

Get organised, get active!

- I want to know more about Socialist Outlook
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- Please send me your introductory pamphlet: 'Socialism after Stalinism'. I enclose a PO or cheque for £1.00 payable to 'Socialist Outlook Fund'.
- Please send me details of the Socialist Outlook Fourth International Supporters Association



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Socialist OUTLOOK

SCRAP THE JSA!

A YOUNG MOTHER seeking work in a Humberside village is offered a job – at a pitiful £2.50 an hour. Not wanting to turn it down out of hand, she investigates the cost of local childcare. The minimum is £3 per hour.

But when she turns down the job, because it would cost her 50p per hour to go to work, she is told that her unemployment benefit will be stopped, because she is refusing to work.

She appeals against this brutal judgement: and after due consideration the social security adjudicator rules that her benefit should be stopped. Apparently it is incumbent on a claimant to take any work they

are offered, no matter how much it may cost them.

This may appear to be one isolated case of an unfortunate victim of the system: but similar outrageous decisions are likely to fall on tens of thousands of desperately poor and unemployed workers this autumn.

The *Jobseekers Allowance* (JSA) is the Tories New Danger to the

According to the Tories up to 90,000 claimants will lose their benefit

working class. It will replace the present unemployment benefit, and is designed to save the government money.

The Tories estimate up to 90,000 claimants will lose their benefit altogether and another 150,000 will have their benefit reduced in the next year as a result of the JSA. Many claimants will be left penniless by refusing to sign an "agreement" allowing benefit staff the power to force them into slave labour.

From October the JSA will force the unemployed to make a choice between accepting dead end jobs on poverty pay or being robbed of their benefits. By producing a conscript army of cheap labour the Tories hope to further drive down the wages of all workers and rebuild Britain as a sweatshop economy.

Some will be robbed of benefits for failing to comply with ridiculous directives including that they should cut their hair to become more employable.

Young people and women will bear the brunt of the new benefit regime. All youth will suffer a cut in benefits – up to 60% in some cases. Carers will find it almost impossible to claim as they need to prove they can work 40 hours per week.

Furthermore new claimants will receive non means tested benefit for only six months instead of a year. Adult dependents of claimants will lose their additional benefit altogether.

60,000 more claimants will lose their right to sign on by post.

Unions fear with its introduction a rise in assaults on their members by

desperate claimants whom they have had to turn down for benefit.

The CPSA has reacted with a series of strikes against the JSA, mainly demanding safety screens. So far they have not received enough support from other unions and the unemployed.

Benefits staff could also be joining the unemployed due to the JSA could

Anti-JSA groups can play a decisive role in convincing CPSA members to step up their fight.

be as high as 30% in some areas.

However the range of sponsors for the anti-JSA demonstration in London on the 7th September shows the potential for this campaign.

CPSA activists should fight to escalate the current action and widen its demands. Pressure should be put on the union bureaucracy to prevent them ditching the JSA dispute in favour of a planned campaign against privatisation. The blossoming anti-JSA groups can play a decisive role in convincing CPSA members to step up their fight.

The JSA is a threat to all workers. Unions should be backing local campaigns against the JSA.

The need for full employment and a minimum wage should be re-stated. The TUC should be made to respond to the spark the campaigns will give to the organisation of the unemployed.

The unemployed join a long list of claimant groups attacked by the Tories, including single parents through the Child Support Act, disabled people through the scrapping of Invalidity Benefit, and Asylum Seekers through the Asylum and Immigration Bill.

The Tories have felt confident to pursue these attacks because New Labour has turned its back on these groups and failed to offer them any defence.

Blair's team has refused to promise the scrapping of the JSA because they too want to introduce Workfare schemes. Blair's team are adamant that there will be no increase in taxation, no extra public spending and therefore no more money for benefits under a Labour government.

Resolutions to Labour Conference (including one from Jarrow - a JSA pilot area) shows the hostility of many party activists to Workfare. JSA campaigns must not ignore this support: they must fight for Labour Councils to boycott JSA.

The opposition of Hull City Council to 'Project Work', another Tory workfare scheme, shows this is not impossible. JSA campaigns can expose an achilles heel of the Tories, their record on unemployment.

By the labour movement linking up with unemployed workers rather than bending over backwards to the bosses, it can build up its own strength to really challenge the bosses. United we can never be defeated.

No slave labour No benefit cuts

DEMONSTRATE

Saturday 7 September
Assemble at 12 noon Shepherds Bush Green.

Rally at 2.30 Labour and Trades Council Hall, 16 Church Street, Acton.

No Tory workfare

All out to stop education cuts

Roy Leach, NUT National Executive member (personal capacity).

SATURDAY October 19 is the date now set for what should be the biggest-ever march against cuts in education.

Unlike most recent national protests, organised by the unofficial Fight Against Education Cuts (FACE), the October demonstration has been called by the biggest teaching union, the National Union of Teachers. This represents a huge political advance.

A little over a year ago NUT leaders were expending seemingly limitless energy and union resources on sabotaging their own conference's call to ballot for a one-day national strike against the underfunding of state education.

Now they appear to be fully behind this year's annual conference decision to organise in conjunction with as many as possible of... CASE [the Campaign for State Education], FACE, teacher unions, the TUC and education cam-

paign groups, a major public demonstration before the Chancellor's Autumn Statement 1996".

Support has already been promised by the TUC, the GMB, TGWU, UNISON and FACE, whilst both the Association of County Councils and Association of Metropolitan Authorities will be circulating details.

Education has been centre stage for over a year and both Labour and the Tories have sought to benefit from declaring it their number one priority.

The Tories have been trying to turn the battle around the issue of selection, whilst the central problem - the chronic underfunding of state education - remains unaddressed by the two main parties. Only the Liberal Democrats with their '1p on income tax for education see additional resources as a decisive vote winner.

The Tories clearly recognise that education cuts are a vote loser. Last Autumn they sought to defuse the anger of 'middle England, which FACE had so adeptly focused, by tweaking the Standard Spending Assessments (SSAS)

to make it look as if they had given more money to Education.

The reality is that they actually cut the amount of money they gave to Local Government, and only sharp increases in this year's council tax have avoided a repetition of the 10,000 teacher redundancies seen last year.

But a survey by the non-TUC affiliated ATL (Association of Teachers and Lecturers) suggests that as many as 4,000 teachers may still lose their jobs this year. And more cuts are already on the horizon next year.

The key to making the demonstration a major success lies in mobilising the tens of thousands of parents, teachers, governors and students who've had enough of cuts.

While the NUT leadership, in common with most of the current trade union leaders, has had little recent experience of organising mass protests, there are many lay activists who seem to have done little else over the past year or two!

It is essential that all those who want additional money for public services

(and not just education) see the Autumn demonstration as *their* demonstration.

October 19 must be built as the most high profile assertion of the defence of public services against the onslaught of private profit.

With schools having only just re-opened after the summer holiday, there are only about six weeks left to build the demonstration.

Local campaigns should be linking up with the NUT and other teacher/public sector unions to publicise the event by leafletting town centres and outside schools.

If FACE could call and organise an 'unofficial demonstration of 15,000 in under 4 weeks (as they did in March 1995), an 'official event called by the largest teachers' union should mobilise many times this number.

If the demonstration is a success it will put massive pressure on the government to release additional resources for Education and other public services.

It will also *defacto* be a challenge to the logic of Maastricht, with its huge cuts in public spending, which have trig-

Demonstrate

October 19
ASSEMBLE:

12pm - 1pm
VICTORIA
EMBANKMENT

COACH SET-DOWN
at WATERLOO
BRIDGE

RALLY
in HYDE PARK 3pm -
4pm

COACH PICK-UP
at PARK LANE.

gered mass protests in Italy, France and, most recently, Germany.

October 19 1996 could be the day that the tide turns here: it is up to every one of us to make sure that it does!