

54

# Socialist OUTLOOK

THEORY +  
PRACTICE pull-out

No Compromise with  
Imperialism! p7-10

CHRISTMAS STORY:  
Practising the Splits - p11

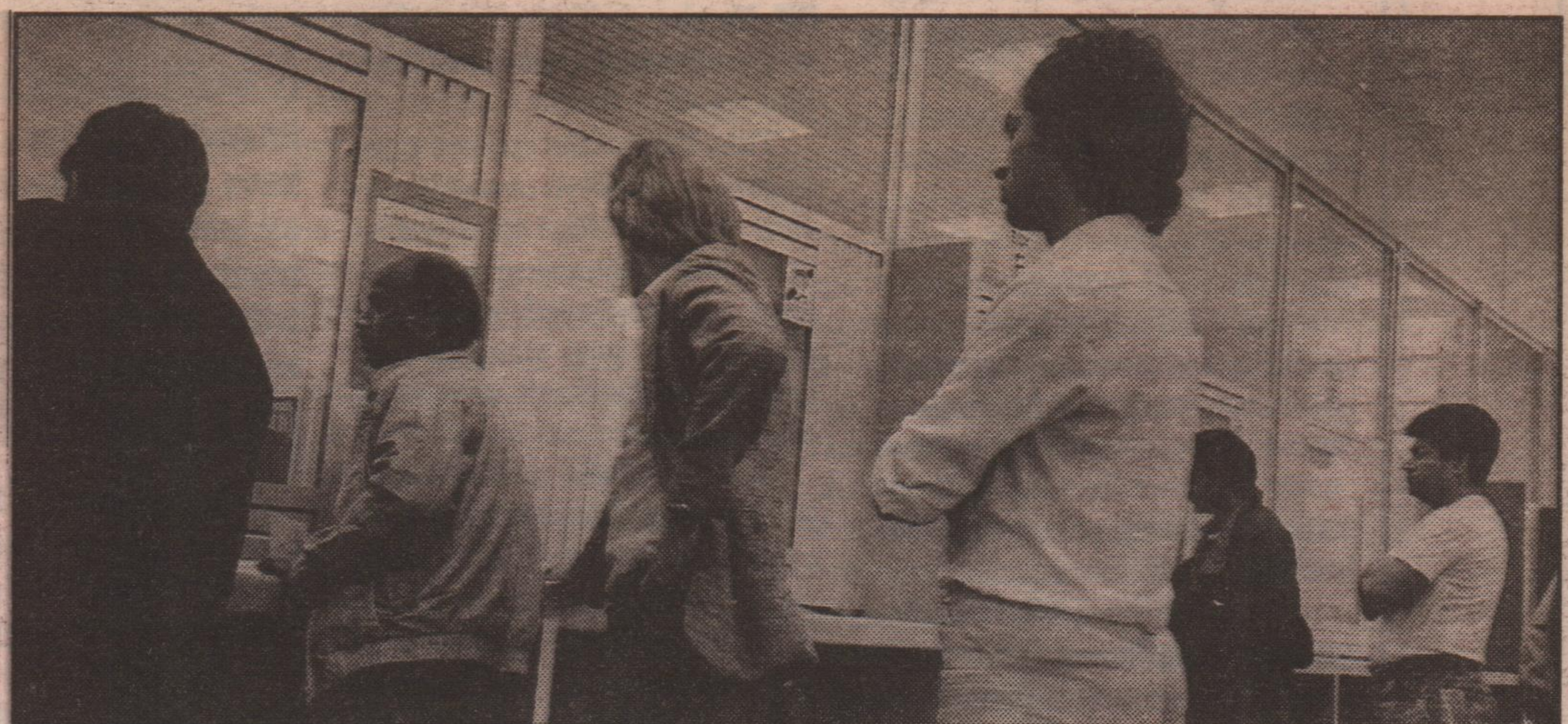
PLUS: Timex to Tuzla report p6

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# TORY CROOKS

# SMAASH

Welfare  
state



# & GRAB

benefits from poorest

Tory plans threaten mass poverty - Editorial p3.

# One law for the poor ...

By Helen Shaw

SICKNESS and Invalidation Benefit (IB) will be replaced with a new Incapacity Benefit in April 1995.

In Peter Lilley's words it will 'concentrate help on those genuinely unable to work' and will include a 'more objective test of whether people can work'.

Vince Gillespie from *Regard* (part of the British Council of Disabled Organisations) said,

'This is an appalling attack on disabled people. They are not

only making it harder to claim IB but are also proposing to tax it. This ignores the fact, which the government has always ignored, that living with a disability is expensive.

'Many people with disabilities have particular needs related to diet and living arrangements which impose an additional strain on their income.

'We are being told all the time that the government can't ask people earning £25 - 30,000 to pay more tax but they can do this to those on benefit.'

These changes are yet another

attack on one of the poorest sections of society. Poor because of the low level of benefit but also because many disabled people could work but employers won't give them jobs.

'The government keeps disabled people poor by condoning discrimination and then attacks them for being on benefits.

'We have already seen this sort of assessment procedure used for the Disability Living Allowance. It will particularly impact on those with crisis illnesses such as sickle cell, ME and mental health problems.

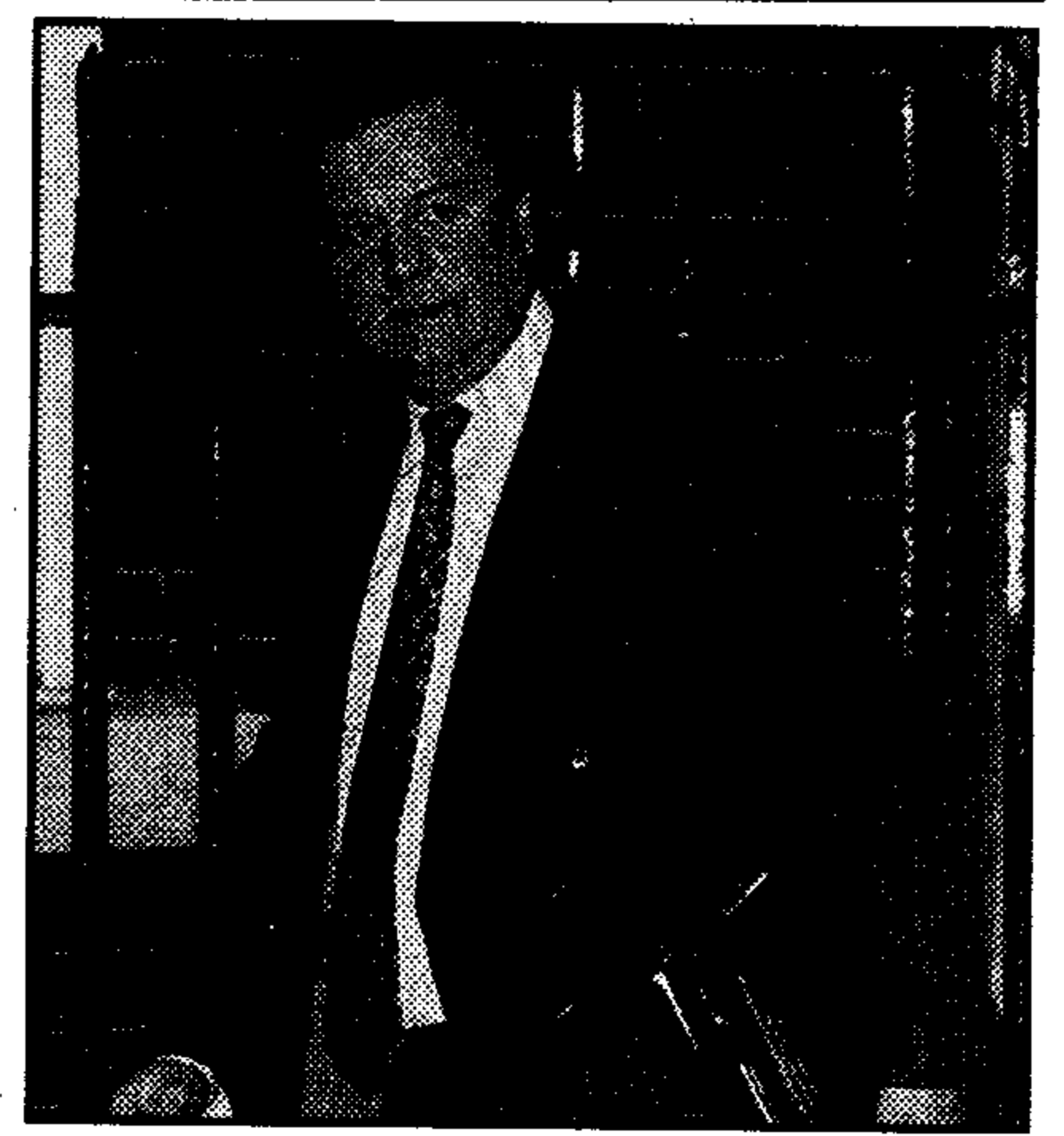
'I know someone with sickle

cell who was admitted to hospital 14 times in six months but was denied the allowance because she was not in crisis when she went before the assessment panel.

'The same sort of treatment will now be meted out to people claiming the new benefit.'

The attack on disabled people not only comes from the new benefit rules but also from the massive cuts expected in local government.

Local authorities are already



Rip-off merchant Clarke

struggling to implement Care in the Community and with further closures of day centres and reductions in social services disabled people will be forced into further isolation and dependence solely on totally inadequate benefits.

## Link up to defend the welfare state!

By Harry Sloan

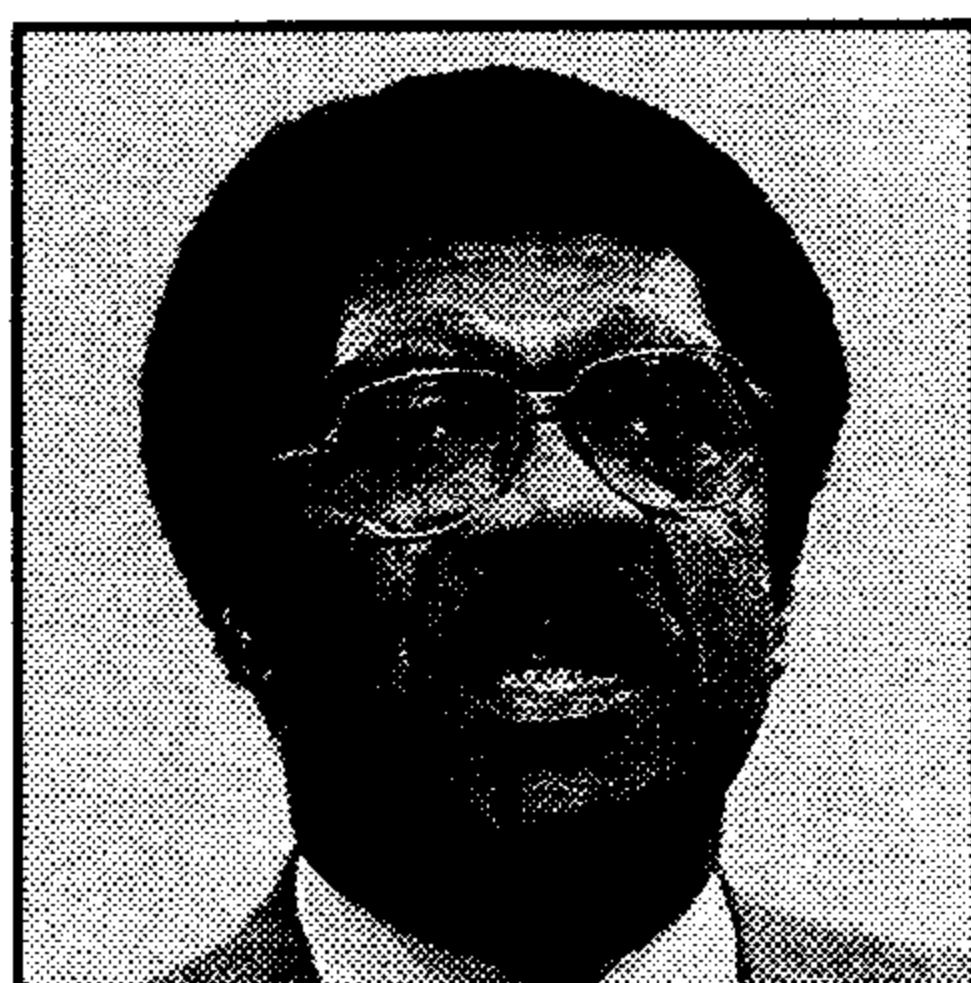
THE THREE biggest unions in Britain lent official support to a conference in defence of the Welfare State on December 3.

Leaders of the TGWU, GMB and UNISON gave speeches stressing the need for a coordinated fight back by the labour movement against the Tory onslaught on pensions, benefits, grants and vital public services.

This gathering of unions comprising almost half the affiliated TUC membership also included MPs Ken Livingstone and Bryan Gould, giving a taste of how powerful a labour movement alliance could be built to unite and mobilise the millions who stand to lose out from the new Tory offensive.

But while the conference discussed a fightback, back-room discussions among Labour leaders have been debating whether the Party should itself call for scrapping universal child benefit - one of the few benefits even the Tories have not yet attacked!

Any such concession to the Tory demolition of the welfare state must be categorically rejected. Instead the unions must force the Labour Party to lead a



Bill Morris

root and branch defence of welfare rights.

This means the unions conducting a massive campaign to alert and mobilise their members, and organising the millions of unemployed, especially the 200,000 who stand to lose benefits immediately as a result of the budget.

And it means Labour constituency parties getting out into every area to warn pensioners, single mothers and the public at large that crucial rights are at stake, making the welfare state a central issue at every local election.

Union members must not wait for the likes of Bill Morris or John Edmonds to take the initiative: resolutions to National Executives demanding a real campaign must be passed by every union and Labour Party branch.

## ...another for the rich!

# Fingers In the TILL

INSIDER DEALER considers the lessons of the Roger Levitt case, and concludes that white collar crime is wonderful.

IT MUST BE GREAT being a financial advisor. You now have a legal licence to rip off whoever you like for as much as you can get away with, with no chance whatsoever of doing time if you are stupid enough to get caught.

Take the case of Roger Levitt, a man who built one of the most successful financial services outfits of the eighties. With typical modesty he named it after himself - Levitt Group. Big names, including Commercial Union, Legal and General and General Accident, rushed to do business.

Directors of Levitt subsidiaries included Seb Coe, the Olympic 1500-metre champion turned Tory MP, and Adam Faith, the clapped-out pop star. As glorified sales reps, their lavishly rewarded role was to convince gormless fellow celebs to stump up streams of readies on the promise of sure-fire massive returns.

Maggie ruled OK and nothing was too good for the financial-advising classes. Roger went everywhere in a chauffeur driven Bentley, and propped up Castro by spending £900-a-month on Cuban cigars.

The company even sponsored Lennox Lewis, the world heavyweight boxing champion. Mind you, some of the money was wasted. Levitt had an executive box at Arsenal.

When the Lawson boom became the Lawson bust, clever Roger kept the show on the road by conning £22m out of the rich and famous. Some £1m came from his own Dad, and £900,000 from Frederick 'Day of the Jackal' Forsyth, supposedly one of his best mates.

At first, it was easy-peasy to disguise losses of £13m. But eventually the company collapsed in December 1990 with losses of £34m, taking the punters money down the plug-hole with it. Happily, Barclays Bank, Midland Bank and the Inland Revenue got stung for £6m between them.

A three year investigation by the Serious Fraud Office followed. The first part of what was to have been, because of its size and complexity, a two-part trial, was heard at Chancery Lane last month. The prosecution spoke of 'fraud and dishonesty on a massive scale'.

But the judge had ruled that much prosecution evidence related to the charges due to be heard at the second trial, and was thus inadmissible at the first trial. Panicking, the SFO offered a plea-bargain. Some 21 charges against Levitt and Mark Reed, the group's managing director, were dropped. These included obtaining property and services by deception, forgery, false accounting and making misleading statements.

In exchange, the two men pleaded guilty to a single charge of fraudulently misleading the Financial Intermediaries, Managers and Brokers Regulatory Association, supposedly the City 'self-regulatory' body that sees the small investor OK.

Fimbra is a standing joke in good wine bars everywhere. So disinterested is the indus-

try it is supposed to regulate that Fimbra has an uphill struggle to generate the membership income it needs to finance itself.

Reed's defence was a cracker, by the way. So he was managing director of this here vast financial empire, he admitted, but he didn't really understand anything and confined himself to writing mundane memos, forbidding Faith to buy expensive office blinds and ticking off Coe for failing to pay a parking ticket.

Mr Justice Laws came down heavy on the miscreants. The maximum penalty available was seven years imprisonment. But after taking the two men's loss of reputations and fortunes into account, Levitt got a 'commensurate' 180 hours of community service, and Reed just 120.

Note here that more than 40 per cent of people found guilty of theft of £200 or less get a custodial sentence. The whole charade of investigation and trial cost must have cost the taxpayer millions.

Levitt is now a bankrupt, although he still lives with his wife and five kiddies in a £1m mansion in London and owns a fabulous holiday home in Spain, jam-packed with valuable antiques. He apparently plans to become a vacuum cleaner salesman.

'The judge and the prosecution were marvellous. They are nice people and justice was seen to be done,' he told a reporter afterwards. 'I am not a conman. I am a very capable salesman. I was most unlucky to lose a £150m business.'

'I will do whatever is required of me. With a strong heart, I will endeavour to do my best and show my decency to society. I shall enjoy helping the youth of the country.' Alright, alright, we get the picture. No need to overdo it, my son.

Merry Christmas to you miserable paupers everywhere. I look forward to putting your working class noses out of joint throughout 1994.

HOME NEWS

# Liberation!

For a Red, Green and Feminist Youth Movement

Youth against the racist right  
**THEIR FUTURE OR OURS?**

Public Meeting - All Welcome

7pm Thursday 16 December

Davenant Centre Whitechapel High Street

Whitechapel tube

## 'Gordon Brown economics' no answer

# Tory plans threaten mass poverty society

**Socialist  
OUTLOOK**

CHANCELLOR Clarke's budget is one more step on the road of destroying the welfare state. It is also a ferocious attack on the living standards of employed workers. The sheer scale of what this means can be seen in the following list:

- Unemployment benefit will be cut to just six months within two years. Hundreds of thousands of long-term unemployed will be forced to rely on other benefits which pay less. The unemployed will have to sign a 'job seekers agreement' aimed at pushing workers into jobs with poverty wages.

- Through the new 'incapacity benefit' and stricter medical guidelines, tens of thousands of people with disabilities will have benefit totally withdrawn.

- A public sector wage freeze will be imposed for three years, in a period when inflation is bound to rise.

- Pensioners will get a derisory 50p a week, or 70p for couples, to cover the VAT on domestic fuel. Pensions will rise a spectacular £1.30 or £1.85 for a couple.

- Local authority cash will decline next year by 3 per cent in real terms - from what is already a catastrophic level. This means more redundancies, cuts and a pay freeze for local government workers. The council tax - the poll tax by stealth - will rise by at least 7 per cent on average next April.

- Because of the council cash freeze, money for primary and secondary education will decline 2-3 per cent in the next year: this means a worsening service and more teachers sacked, as well as a pay freeze.

- Money for housing will be cut by at least £150m: this means more homeless and a further decline in the already devastated construction industry.

- Raising women's retirement age to 65 by 2020 is a huge social step backwards, robbing workers of benefits they have paid for.

- Tax increases - on mortgages, insurance and through not raising personal allowances in line with inflation means worsening the living standards of every employed worker.

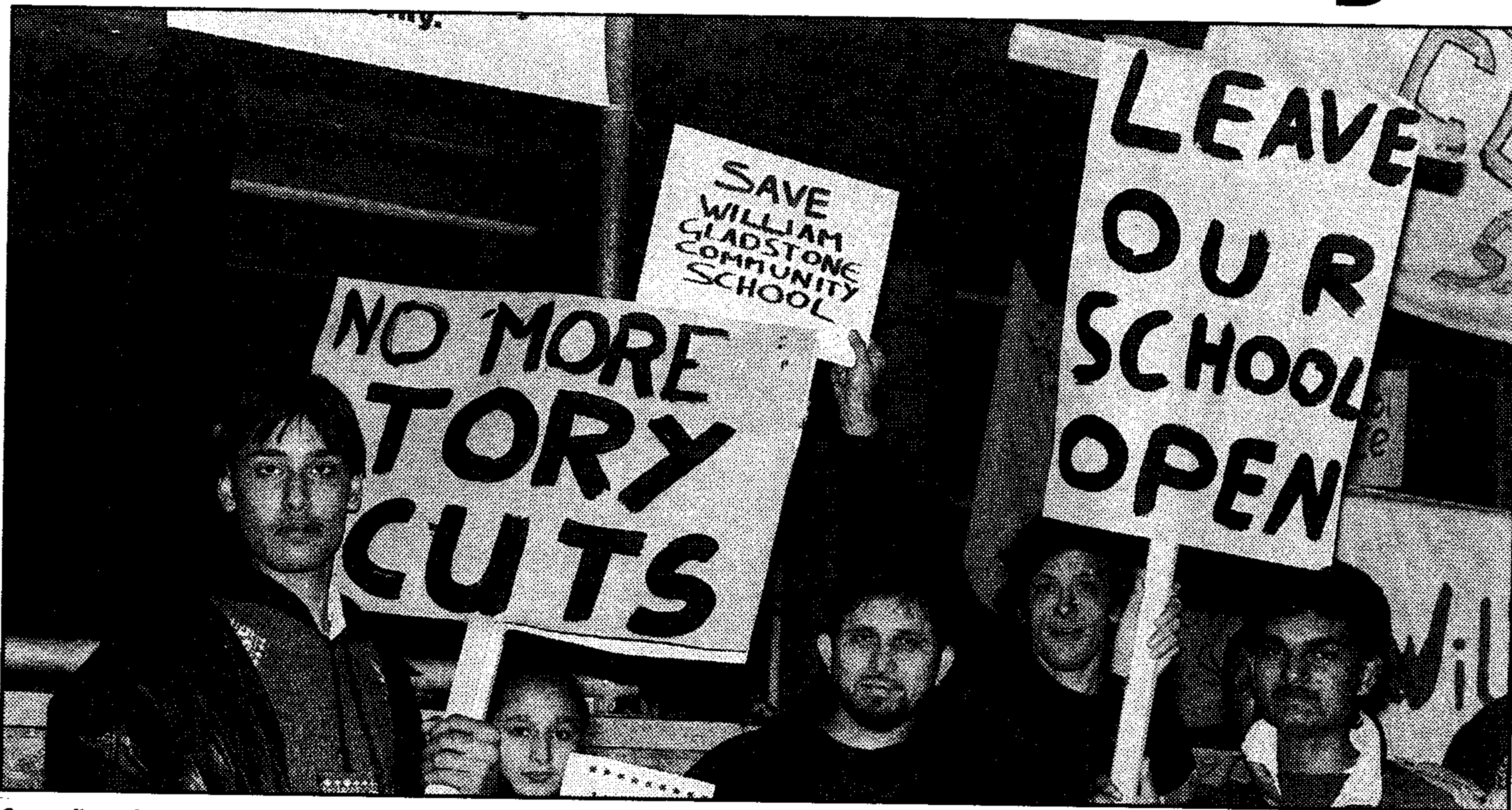
- Government spending will be reduced by billions in the next five years - meaning less investment in infrastructure and more attacks on the welfare state to come.

- To add vicious insult to injury, student grants are being reduced (!) by 10 per cent.

**The budget changes have to be put together with plans to abolish state sickness benefit and to phase out state pensions at any significant level.**

What does all this add up to? The Tories' aim is simply to destroy the welfare state in any recognisable form. This is a long-term process, but the speed of its implementation is drastically accelerating.

The privatisation of social welfare is proceeding apace. What will happen to



Council tax freeze will put new squeeze on education spending

those hundreds of thousands deprived of invalidity benefit or pushed off the dole? Their families will have to support them, or they will be totally impoverished. 'Impoverished' in this context means losing their homes and being pushed onto the street.

But more than that, Clarke's budget is a budget for slump. It is shot through with chronic social irrationality.

Take transport. It is just one example, but an instructive one. Cars owners have to pay more through petrol tax, motorway tolls and road tax. But public transport is in crisis because of lack of investment. People in rural areas are compelled to use cars or just not travel.

At the same time, existing public transport is collapsing. The London Tube is in appalling crisis, with tens of thousands stuck in tunnels for hours last week, and the Central Line at a standstill for six days

The response of the Labour leadership bleating about broken tax promises, is pathetic. Labour is hamstrung by its own 'Commission on Social Justice' which accepts the principle of abolishing universal social benefits in favour of means testing - in other words, concedes the principal Tory argument about 'self-help'.

Labour is also hamstrung by 'Gordon Brown economics', the chronic fear of being seen as the high tax, high spending party.

**There is only one way out of this crisis which serves social justice and the interests of the working class: tax the rich! Tory policies have handed tax concessions worth over £20 billion to top earners since 1988 - almost half the present public spending deficit.**

It is no accident that share prices shot up the day after the budget; big business

ership and control are taken from the hands of the capitalist class, can production be planned and geared to social need.

### Radical measures

There is an alternative to the Tory austerity drive, but it calls for radical socialist measures.

The following simple proposals would create millions of jobs, and change the face of Britain:

- A national programme of public works, concentrating on house building and renewal of the infrastructure, to create thousands of new jobs.

- A national minimum wage of £200 a week, with social security benefits and pensions based on this level.

- A huge programme of investment in industry, health and transport to regenerate economic growth.

- New investment in local government services, including education and social services.

- The reduction of the working week to 30 hours, without loss of pay, to create new jobs.

Unrealistic? It's a myth that the resources for such proposals don't exist. They exist in the huge profits of the financial institutions, in the vast unearned incomes from foreign investment, the monstrous wasted resources spent on arms programmes and 'defence'.

To carry them through would mean bringing the banks, financial institutions and major industry under social control; it would mean slashing the defence budget; it would mean huge taxes on the fortunes of the super-rich and the top 10 per cent of very wealthy people in Britain.

**Those who say that a radical socialist programme is impossible have to explain why it is an immutable fact of life that society has to have people with huge personal fortunes while thousands live in the streets.**

We only 'have to' have these things so long as we have a society which prioritises profits over social need.

**"Those who say that a radical socialist programme is impossible have to explain why it is an immutable fact of life that society has to have people with huge personal fortunes while thousands live in the streets. We only 'have to' have these things so long as we have a society which prioritises profits over social need."**

after 50-year old wiring failed.

So the net result of government policy is more, and hugely costly, car transport; with public transport becoming ever worse and more expensive.

At the root of the government spending crisis is economic recession and mass unemployment. The Tories accept these things as a fact of life and are adjusting the welfare state accordingly.

**What is being prepared is a society where employed workers struggle to keep their heads above water, under a permanent threat of unemployment; and where there is a mass of permanently unemployed, or occasionally employed, workers who are pauperised. In this society the old, the sick and those with disabilities will go to the wall.**

and the City know that workers are again being made to pay the price of the crisis, and that profiteers and speculators are still being protected.

But it's not just a question of sharing out the existing wealth more equally: the capitalist system is now clearly acting to obstruct the development of productive forces that could solve the problems of world hunger, homelessness and unemployment.

Austerity and unemployment for ordinary people are not fixed facts of life, they are manufactured by the system. Under capitalism, private profit is the only driving force: social need is at best a secondary factor in the key economic and financial decisions made by big business and capitalist governments.

Only under socialism, in which own-

EDITORIAL

No friends of Irish workers: Tory Mayhew with Dick Spring



## Ireland: no British solution

# Sinn Fein turns right

By Liam Mac Uaid

IN COMMON with most people in Ireland, the IRA wants peace. It is prepared to end its armed struggle against British imperialism within a matter of days so long as a suitable settlement is reached.

At the moment the British and their Official Unionist allies appear to be holding out for absolute surrender rather than peace. Nevertheless the Republicans are keen to be seen as making the running in the race for a settlement.

The present process in Ireland illuminates a number of political questions. Major's government has been revealed as a bunch of liars.

It is a fascinating quirk of parliamentary democracy that when Ian Paisley pointed this fact out he was suspended from parliament for telling the truth.

This fiasco will have been very instructive for millions of working class people who may be more sceptical about government statements from now on.

The 'peace process' also tells us a lot about the nature of Irish

Republicanism and the dead end it has run in to. Its military campaign has clearly failed. The armed struggle poses no real threat to either the British Army or its state.

Moreover, as grotesque adventures like the Shankill bomb show, is not without the potential to be sectarian. In the 26 counties its attempt to make alliances with the 'nationalist base' of Fianna Fail and its ambivalence on abortion and divorce have reduced it to an

and unemployed but as members of the 'nationalist family'.

They are desperate for political respectability, so desperate that they are on the brink of renouncing the anti-imperialist content of their own programme.

The examples they cite of political vision are no longer Connolly and Guevara but Arafat and Mandela, who have already negotiated their betrayals of the revolutionary masses.

Once again petty bourgeois nationalism has shown its limitations. In both the north and the south it has shown itself inadequate to the demands of the Irish revolution.

The conflict in Ireland is still be-

tween an imperialist power and the determination of the Irish people to achieve freedom. Neither militarism nor alliances with the bourgeoisie offer any solutions to the Irish working class.

Marxists still hold with James Connolly that imperialism will be defeated by the Irish working class.

This demands a revolutionary workers' party which fights for self determination and socialism.

# Ireland UNFREE

electoral rump.

Most members of Sinn Fein would describe themselves as socialist. The problem is that their idea of socialism is reformism.

So, like reformists the world over, they react to hard times by moving to the right. They are now willing to accept the unionist veto to a united Ireland.

They are meeting with the parties of the Irish ruling class, whom they regard not as mortal enemies of the Irish workers

EUROPEAN NEWS

## Break Berlusconi!

By David Thomas

SILVIO Berlusconi, Italian media mogul and owner of the world's richest football club, A.C. Milan, has declared his support for the fascist MSI in the second round of Rome's municipal elections.

Berlusconi currently controls three of the four top commercial TV networks in Italy, as well as its main newsweekly.

Two weeks ago in the first round elections the MSI gained huge electoral support emerging as the single biggest party in both Rome and Naples.

The MSI has secretly worked with individuals and organisations responsible for a series of atrocities, the

most infamous of which was the Bologna Railway bombing in 1980 where 85 people died.

Now anti-fascist groups including Campaign Against Fascism in Europe, Youth Against Racism in Europe, BO BI from Italy and Antifascistes Europeens have set up a Europe wide 'Break Berlusconi' campaign.

They aim to boycott Berlusconi's products and businesses, demanding he withdraws support for the MSI.

The boycott campaign in Italy has already gained popular support leading to Berlusconi losing 20% of his TV viewers. Anti-racists in Britain should back this initiative.

For details contact Campaign Against Facism In Europe - 071 252 5122.

## NCU retreats on job fight

The National Communications Union Broad Left led NEC has retreated from a confrontation with BT over jobs.

A fight was brewing over the company's Alignment/Reassignment plans to select staff for redeployment leading to inevitable compulsory redundancies.

BT wants to reduce its current workforce from 175,000 to under 100,000 by 1997, but has run out of volunteers for redundancy.

Alignment/Reassignment sought to cut operational staff by selecting people on the basis of a points system based on their Annual Performance Reviews (APRs) and their disciplinary and attendance record.

It became clear that managers were marking staff down on their APRs to meet their redeployment targets.

# Clarke snatches women's pensions

By Helen Shaw

The government plan to equalise the qualification age for the state pension to 65 will push older women into poverty.

The State Pension at 60 Alliance commented, 'women rely on the state pension as their main income in retirement as two-thirds have no occupational pension.'

The state pension provides the best cover for women who, because of career breaks and periods of low pay, are less likely than men to have a personal pension or to belong to an occupational scheme.

Due to be introduced in 2010 the scheme is a massive attack on women under 44, particularly those in their late 30s and early 40s.

According to one pension company, Skandia Life, a 30 year old woman would need to pay an extra £45 per month between now and age 60 to make up for the missing five years of state pension. A completely unrealistic option for the majority of women!

### Five years

Dorothy Robson, of the EOC, says 'Currently only 16 per cent of women get a full basic state pension anyway, and they are now being asked to wait an extra five years for the same benefits.'

The increase in the qualifying age for women is unrealistic given the current trend towards earlier retirement. And anyway where are the jobs that will allow women to work until they are 65? Currently over half of men between 60 and 65 are unemployed!



Homeless and hungry: a pensioner in Whitechapel

sory redundancy, however it is dressed up.

The stigmatised redeployees will now be forced, by the small carrot of marginally improved redundancy terms and the very large stick of being told they have no future with the company, into taking voluntary redundancy.

The NCU's London Council narrowly defeated a proposition calling on the NEC to withdraw from the new Identification of Redeployees agreement, but agreed to launch a campaign in defence of our jobs and against the looming threat of compulsory redundancy.

Each delay makes the terrain more difficult next time. Its time to fight now on jobs, and fight for the union policy of the 32 hour, four day week; for work-sharing without loss of pay, not job shedding.

A branch-led boycott of Appraisal interviews was widely supported by the membership, forcing the NEC belatedly to withdraw from the APR agreement.

BT management showed signs of strain with senior management openly arguing with each other in front of NCU negotiators in the company's City HQ.

Then along came a new agreement, unanimously recommended by the NEC, with all the main features of Alignment/Reassignment.

Leading Broad Left supporters on the NEC are claiming to have 'bought time' until the agreement runs out in March 1994.

The reality is that it is the company which has bought time by getting the union's agreement to the first steps to compul-

# Tories lead Euro-offensive on health care

By Harry Sloan

THE TORY crack-down on public spending and the welfare state is part of a Europe-wide austerity drive that has triggered general strikes in Spain, Italy and Belgium and growing militancy in Germany.

But fourteen years of Tory rule has put British capitalism far ahead of its European rivals in the attempts to contain health service spending. Their brutal market-style 'reforms' are undermining the unique strengths of the British NHS.

Of course the British health service has always had its highly-visible weaknesses.

As a result of the Tory squeeze, the share of national wealth (6.1%) spent on health care is lower in Britain than any of the established market economies, with the sole exception of Greece - where the 5.5% figure is growing as part of a late development of health services.

The lion's share of Britain's apparent 22% real terms increase in NHS spending since 1979 has been consumed by Family Health Services (General Practitioners).

British hospital budgets have grown by only 11.6% in 14 years, an average of just 0.8% a year - far short of the estimated 2% annual increase required to keep pace with growing numbers of elderly people, and rising costs of new medical technology.

## Waiting lists

Almost alone in Europe, British hospitals have traditionally coped with inadequate budgets by 'rationing' care through the use of lengthy waiting lists for treatment.

The one million-plus currently queuing for operations in British hospitals almost certainly exceeds the total in the rest of Europe put together.

But 14 years of cutbacks have also reduced Britain to the lowest bed provision in Europe, with just 5.63 beds per 1,000 population, below Greece at 5.7, Germany at 7.17, France at 9.9, Netherlands at 11.5, and way behind Finland's 13.

However there are real strengths in the British system which have not been copied elsewhere in Europe, and which the Tories are now putting at risk through their market reforms.

As a tax-funded system, delivering health care for the most



TUC march for the NHS: British spending is lowest of advanced economies

part free of charge at point of use, the British system is far more accessible for the poor (and more efficient) than the complex French system, for example, which insists that patients pay up front for any treatment they receive, claiming back part or all of it much later.

The French system is the most expensive in the EC (costing 9% of gross domestic product in 1991), but also levies the highest personal costs on patients. Individual charges on patients have increased from 15.6% of the health budget in 1980 to 19.2% in 1991.

Despite its relatively high costs, the standards of French health care are not noticeably high: a consumer magazine survey of French casualty units late in 1992 described 200 of them as 'dangerous'. Low pay and poor career structures for nurses - which triggered a wave of unofficial strikes in 1988 - have led to a chronic shortage.

French health workers look on incredulously when told of British waiting lists: so, too, to German health workers, whose insurance-based system tends to prolong and maximise medical treatment rather than ration it.

## Compulsory

The German system, one of the oldest in Europe, first established in 1883, is based on compulsory insurance, with contributions levied at the workplace, with state cover for the unemployed and pensioners.

1,100 separate insurance funds, many of them covering specific local districts, individual factories or particular categories of worker, act as 'purchasers' of care. While the care is generally free at point of use, it is not cheap for the



Boosting bureaucracy: Bottomley worker.

Insurance premium rates have increased from 5% of pay in 1950 to over 12% last year; this autumn has seen angry union protests at moves to increase it to 13.4% to pay for residential care for the frail elderly.

Another problem is that each fund has to balance its own books, bringing higher costs and higher premiums for members in poor localities, with greater ill-health. The huge poverty and unemployment in the former East Germany mean that the insurance funds now set up there are running at a permanent

**"In Italy, if a patient has to wait more than four days for out-patient care, they are entitled to use a contracted private hospital, and the health service will foot the bill"**

deficit, currently being bailed out by the Federal government.

The runaway costs of this, and a system where a powerful doctors' lobby has been able to drive up fees, are causing prob-

lems for the government, and there are moves to introduce 'co-payment' charges on patients for some treatment.

Meanwhile the system faces a serious shortage of nurses combined with a huge glut of doctors - with up to 15,000 of them unemployed.

The fragmented system of purchasing care in Germany finds a contrast in the Netherlands, where there is no NHS, and no profit-making hospitals. Dutch workers are obliged to buy medical insurance, and a large state bureaucracy oversees the complex system.

The government has powers to control hospital services, restrict investment in high-technology specialisms, and even order hospitals to make cuts and bed closures.

## State funding

State funding of services for the elderly and public health programmes, together with cover for long-term illness, mental health, child health and disabilities, account for 41% of health spending, with the remainder covered by private, non-profit insurance.

Although most health care is

delivered by privately-run organisations, they are dependent on public sector funding, which has more effect in holding down prices than in Germany.

With Maastricht Treaty in-

creasing pressure to contain public spending, a tightening of controls is looming in Spain, where the financing of the health service is most reminiscent of the British NHS before Labour imposed cash limits in 1976.

The Spanish health service is financed 70% from taxation and 30% from social security, with overspends covered by the general state budget.

It is generally recognised that initial budgets set for the year are inadequate and that more will be spent. On average the overspend amounts to some 10%: this would be the equivalent of a £3 billion annual overspend in the British NHS!

The result in Spain has been a cumulative health service deficit of £3.4 billion.

Perhaps the most open-ended commitment to spending on health is that in Italy, where the state-run health service was modelled on the structure of the 1974 NHS, and where the government is also aping Tory changes in hospital management, including the opting out of hospitals to form the equivalent of Trusts.

Budgets are allocated to regions by central government, but widely dismissed as 'unrealistic', giving regions a pretext for substantial over-spending.

## Private

In addition, the system stipulates that if a patient has to wait more than four days for out-patient care, they are entitled to use a contracted private hospital, and the health service will foot the bill.

In the case of high-tech medicine, patients forced to wait more than a 'reasonable time' can even travel abroad to find treatment, with the bill paid by the state. The longest 'reasonable time' is defined as 120 days.

It is clear that Britain's waiting lists, like unemployment, are not fixed facts of life, but the outcome of political decisions and a capitalist system that is in deep crisis.

As the Tory government sets about tightening the screws still further on NHS funding, forcing a new wave of hospital closures hitting almost every major city, their example will be closely watched by governments and employers throughout Europe.

A fightback that defeats this attack on the most popular of the public services would strengthen the fight against all austerity policies across the continent.

FEATURE

# Timex to Tuzla: first delivery of Workers Aid

The first International Workers Aid (IWA) convoy arrived in Tuzla on 8 November. TIM WISE, a member of the Bosnia convoy team which also included Fourth Internationalists Jenny Mees and Mick Woods, sends this report.

WE DROVE the last 8 km to Tuzla by ourselves, which was a great thing to do.

We were all extremely happy at seeing the sign 'Tuzla' - a long, dangerous journey had finally come to an end. We passed through one more Bosnian army checkpoint before the city. The guards were very thin all they wanted was food. They were not interested in cigarettes.

We drove into the centre of Tuzla and luckily found the UNHCR building. We were even luckier to run into Steve Tannick from the European Community Task Force who booked us into the Tuzla hotel. He was amazed that we had made it thinking we had turned back at Zagreb. IWA had arrived!

After a well deserved sleep we met Steve again and he introduced us to Mr Marinko Jak-



Tim Wise (centre) with Miners' Brigade on the front line

ovac of the Rudarski Institute of Tuzla. Many months before he had sent the first fax from the Tuzla miners asking for help. Marinko was translator and main organiser during our stay in Tuzla.

## Miners

Our first appointment was with the Trade Union delegation from the famous Kreka Miners Syndicate. After a formal introduction, we drank plum brandy (after 11 days in Tuzla we all got very used to it). We then discussed a joint plan for the distribution of the aid. Then the mayor of Tuzla came to meet us and gave a welcoming speech.

As we walked around the

town on that first day, we suddenly noticed the harsh living conditions of the people of Tuzla.

In the evening we met local miners, electricity plant workers, journalists, TV and local people.

The next day we unloaded the trucks at the main warehouse of the Kreka Miners. While unloading, damage caused by HVO border guards in Vites became apparent.

Many of the personal packages had been thrown around and items stolen. Water damage to parcels had also occurred and the names of people destroyed. This would prove to be a great problem later on and also sad as some people did not receive their parcels.

During the unloading many children helped out. I gave all of them a Timex T-shirt for their help. It was great to see these T-shirts being worn - Timex to Tuzla has officially occurred.

Terry and myself went for a press meeting with the mayor which was filmed by television Tuzla and shown that night. In the evening we all went to Radio Cameleon and were interviewed. This radio station has only been open for about one and a half years. It plays a lot of western music and is a very popular station for the cold and bored youth of Tuzla.

On Thursday we visited the Kreka mine below ground. I did an interview with a miner and filmed parts of the mine entrance, and also the meeting with the mine manager.

In the afternoon we visited the huge TE electricity power plant. Before the war it powered the whole of the Tuzla region and even exported electricity to other parts of the former Yugoslavia.

## Control room

I filmed the main control room which was a very depressing sight. On the wall was a large Megawatt output gauge. Before the war it registered 800MW and while I was filming it the total output measured 4MW.

During the fighting in Tuzla the Serbs had managed a direct hit from about 20km away into one of the smoke stacks. I filmed the men working shovelling coal onto belts to be put into the furnace. They earn 3.5DM a month (£1 = 2.56DM)!

On Friday we visited an open air mine 'Bamovic' about 20km from Tuzla. We had another meeting with the union and gifts were given to all of us. I filmed and interviewed local peasants digging for coal for the winter.

In the afternoon we visited the 2nd brigade - the Miners

Brigade - of the Bosnian Army. This brigade sums up the whole of Tuzla as it comprises of Tuzla miners of mixed ethnic backgrounds. Serbs, Croats and Muslims fighting for the same cause - the right to live together in a free peaceful world.

Soldiers in the Miners Brigade walk 35km to the front line, where they have minimum food, no coffee and no cigarettes. Fighters with the Brigade have a mixture of firearms - shot guns, rifles from world war two, AK47's - and just 10 bullets each. Aged between 18 and 55, they wear a mixture of different uniforms of very poor quality with holes in their boots.

When we got back to Hotel Tuzla we found out that Terry's truck had its fuel line cut. We'd lost most of the fuel. This is understandable - diesel in Tuzla on the black market costs between 25 and 40 DM per litre! Sugar costs about 35DM and coffee 80-90DM a kilo.

On Saturday I interviewed the mayor of Tuzla. He is of very strong character and an extremely modest man. The people of Tuzla love him and he walks around the town with no armed guards. We visited an orphanage where the children come mainly from the Srebrenica area. Many are between 3 and 9 and their parents have been killed. They are all very disturbed and hungry.

It had snowed for the first time in Tuzla. Winter was coming early as we had a large farewell dinner with the trade unionists and the Mayor.

From being in Tuzla for those 11 cold nights, I can honestly say that these people are fantastic. They say that we are heroes. But they are the real heroes.

They are fighting aggressors with sticks and stones and will be forced into the Dark Ages very soon.

The winter has arrived with force. It is up to us all to stop this hell. Time is running out - the United Nations don't care, the aggression continues. *What the hell - we are all in paradise!*



Jenny Mees meeting the Mayor of Tuzla (centre)

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# theory+practice

## No Historic Compromise with Imperialism

In the last three years a series of key liberation struggles have entered a phase of negotiations and even negotiated settlements - Palestine, South Africa, El Salvador and Ireland among others. These negotiations and peace deals have opened a widespread debate on the left internationally about whether this represents victory or defeat for the libera-

tion forces, and even in some sections of the left about whether a new *modus vivendi* with imperialism is possible. Here PAUL CLARKE opens the discussion with a personal contribution to the debate.

Each situation has to be analysed individually, but it is hard to deny that a pattern is emerging. Sinn Fein in Ireland, for ex-

ample, specifically refers to the peace processes in South Africa and Palestine as a model for what they are attempting.

No analysis of specific peace deals is thus possible without reference to the



overall balance of class forces internationally. Indeed this is precisely the context in which

the leaderships of national liberation movements place their own strategy and tactics.

### Imperialist victories

Since the late 1970s a tremendous international offensive of imperialism has been taking place, in response to the emergence of the long wave of economic crisis which became obvious to all during the 1974-5 economic recession.

This offensive combined a savage attack on the working class in the advanced capitalist countries, an attempt to restructure the global economy to the detriment of the working class and the oppressed, and the militarisation offensive under Reagan and Bush which targeted third world liberation struggles and the post-capitalist states.

The imperialist offensive threw the international working class movement and liberation struggles onto the defensive. And it succeeded, during the 1980s and early 1990s, in imposing some harsh defeats. But none of these victories for imperialism succeeded in stabilising its economy. World imperialism has a tremendous interest in trying to pacify 'unstable' sectors of the world in order to get out of its own crisis.

These processes can be illustrated in relation to the events in Central America and the Caribbean. The victory of the Nicaraguan revolution in 1979; the general offensive of the Salvadorean FMLN (Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front) in January 1980 and the emergence of the Maurice Bishop New Jewel movement government in Grenada posed immense dangers for imperialist stability in the region.

All of these countries are very small, but the political dynamic in the region, which included a revolutionary guerrilla struggle being waged in Guatemala, threatened to destabilise Latin America and the Caribbean.

The response of US imperialism was of course to unleash counter-revolutionary war: US advisors and military aid in El Salvador, the contra rebels in Nicaragua. These moves wrecked the Nicaraguan economy and fought the FMLN guerrillas to a standstill. There would be no easy repetition of the Cuban experience. The leaderships of both these revolutions were posed with immense new

problems about how to continue the revolutionary process.

The outcome, as we now know, was the defeat of the Sandinistas by the UNO coalition in the 1990 elections and the peace deal negotiated in 1992 in El Salvador.

The international context facing such struggles was a very different one to that which had existed in the 1959-60 period when the Cuban revolution was won and a workers state consolidated. Then, for its own reasons, and within a general framework of 'peaceful coexistence', the Soviet leadership had been prepared to underwrite Cuba and to militarily defend it. By the 1980s, and especially with the advent of Gorbachev, Soviet aid to liberation movements was radically curtailed. The advice given to Nicaragua was *not* to follow the Cuban example and make a radical break with capitalism.



Even as late as the mid-1970s the Soviet leadership was prepared to act differently. In 1976, when southern Angola was invaded by South African troops, Russian pilots flew thousands of Cuban troops and Russian military advisors to the country to drive the South Africans out. The US, traumatised by the recent defeat in Vietnam, dared not intervene.

But the militarisation offensive of Reagan and the rise of perestroika radically changed the international context in which such struggles were fought.

South Africa and Palestine do not however fit easily into such a picture of the worsening international balance of forces for liberation movements. The mid-1980s township insurgency in South Africa, and the Intifadah in Palestine in the late

1980s, threw reaction in both regions onto the defensive.

For both the apartheid regime and the Israeli leadership, a peace deal became urgent if the conditions for capitalist stability were to be maintained. In particular, the recession in the South African economy and the impatience of foreign investors represented an immense pressure on Pretoria to do a deal. And under Bush, Israel's Washington benefactor became increasingly politically embarrassed by perpetual crisis in a part of the world which it regards as crucial to its strategic interests.

Nonetheless, in both these arenas the liberation movements had taken a heavy toll in terms of repression and were themselves faced with great problems about how to continue the struggle.

### theory + practice

is an occasional supplement to *Socialist Outlook* which takes an in-depth look at key issues of socialist analysis and strategy. Each issue examines a subject of importance to socialists in greater depth - and a

greater length - than is possible in the paper itself.

The next issue - out in February - will be an examination by Livio Maitan, a long-standing central leader of the Fourth International, of the implosion of the post-war political system in Italy.

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## Negotiations & peace deals

**B**efore examining specific negotiations and peace deals under way, it is important to consider some of the general principles which guide revolutionaries in such situations.

There is nothing unprincipled about negotiations or peace deals as such. No trade unionist who refused to engage in negotiations with the bosses would be taken in the least bit seriously; but of course no trade unionist who agreed to disband the union in exchange for ending a strike would be taken seriously either.

This general point can be illustrated for example by reference to the 1972-3 Paris peace talks between the Vietnamese leadership and the United States.

Sectional forces denounced these peace talks as a 'sell-out'. This turned out to be absurd when just two years later the Vietnamese army marched into Saigon.

In fact, the peace talks were about creating a face-saving formula to enable the United States to withdraw the vast majority of its from the country. Whatever formal concessions were made

by the Vietnamese Communist Party to achieve this objective, a vital one for eventual victory, the peace deal did not amount to surrender. The crucial thing was that the Vietnamese insurgent forces kept their weapons, did not disband their forces, but held back the struggle for a short period to enable the Americans to withdraw and 'keep face'. Far from being a 'sell-out', the withdrawal of US forces put the seal on a military defeat that the US had suffered.

Indeed, every victorious liberation struggle has ended with negotiations. It is not the fact of negotiations but the real content of what is agreed that matters.

Neither is it wrong to make compromises if these are necessary to achieve the main goal. For example, the Evian agreement which ended the Algerian war imposed harsh economic conditions on the incoming FLN government: a big price was paid for French withdrawal. With historical hindsight, it is difficult to be sure that a better deal could have been achieved.

Moreover, no national liberation struggle and no revolution,

is guaranteed victory. Faced with insuperable obstacles to continuing armed struggle, a responsible leadership has to know when to retreat.

But in such cases, for the clarification of the masses and to create the basis for future struggle, it is important not to present defeats or setbacks as victories. It is one thing to declare that a certain phase of the struggle is over and can go no further - for example declaring an end to armed struggle. It is another thing to proclaim that this in itself amounts to 'victory' when everyone knows it does not. That is a prescription for undermining the revolutionary goals of the movement, demobilising the masses and demoralising the political cadres of the liberation movement.

The ending of armed struggle poses the question 'what next?'. It is one thing to end it to continue the struggle by other means. It is another thing to end it, as has happened in Colombia, and then for the former

guerrillas to collapse into right-wing social democratic politics.

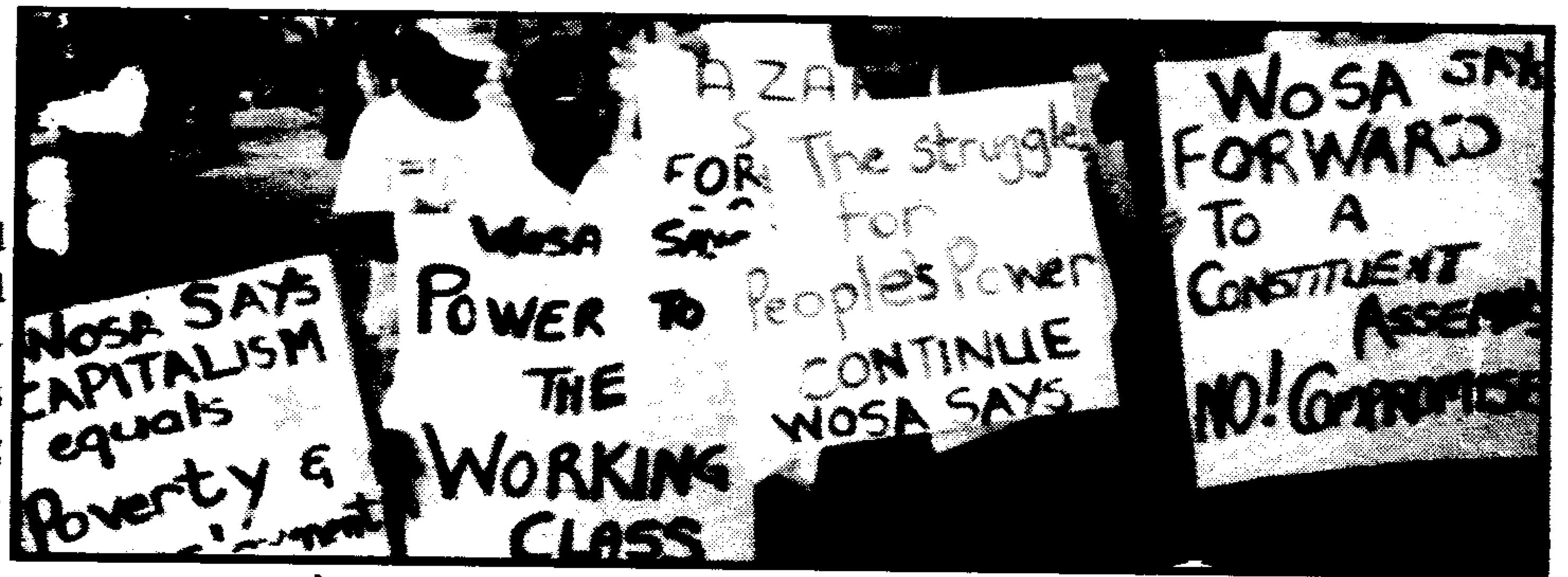
All negotiations with an enemy include bluff and deceit - on both sides. That is the art of negotiation. The 1973 Paris peace accords between the Vietnamese and the USA certainly included bluff and deceit from the Vietnamese: whether the US negotiators were aware of it is a moot point. So deals cannot be solely judged by their formal terms. The key question is what the revolutionary forces or liberation movements do in practice: but of course practice also involves what they say about them.

The classic case of a negotiated peace carried out by revolutionary forces was of course the Brest-Litovsk peace deal negotiated with the Germans by Trotsky, on behalf of the Soviet government. This deal involved huge concessions, including

territorial concessions, by the Bolsheviks. It was characterised as robbery and an imperialist diktat by the Russian government. It was furiously attacked by the 'left' in the Bolsheviks, notably Bukharin, who demanded a continuation of 'revolutionary war' against Germany and argued it was betraying the German workers.

But Lenin and Trotsky insisted that allowing the Bolshevik government to collapse would be betraying the German workers. After a fierce faction fight, the peace deal was sanctioned by the Bolsheviks. But the Soviet government never made any concession on their revolutionary objectives.

On the contrary, they used the peace negotiations to carry out revolutionary propaganda, and Trotsky even distributed revolutionary leaflets to German troops at the negotiation site.



## A new deal with imperialism?

**T**he debate in the international left on imperialism goes way beyond these questions of negotiated peace and deals. It involves the whole strategic question of how to confront imperialism today. This debate is skewed by a massive collapse to the right, under the impact of the collapse of the Berlin wall, the defeat in Nicaragua and the Gulf war.

Social democratic currents in the Brazilian Workers Party and other sectors of the Latin American left, for example, theorise that it is possible to do a 'new deal' with imperialism which avoids semi-colonial subjugation. From this perspective, the end of the cold war and super-power rivalry has created conditions for a new 'third way' between utopian models of so-

cialism or simply being the victims of imperialist exploitation.

This kind of theorisation underpinned the extraordinary declaration of the Salvadorean FMLN leader Jaouin Villalobos that El Salvador 'cannot be considered a capitalist country'.

The idea that, freed from the conflict with the Soviet Union, American imperialism can be made to see that it is in its interests to adopt a benevolent attitude to the 'third world', is actually the height of utopianism. For the simple fact is that it is *not* in the interests of US capitalism, in a period of crisis, to extend largess to the third world.

This kind of theory replaces a materialist economic-political theory of imperialism with an idealist geo-political one: that at

the heart of imperialism was the confrontation with the Soviet Union.

In fact the notion of a 'third way' for the third world had

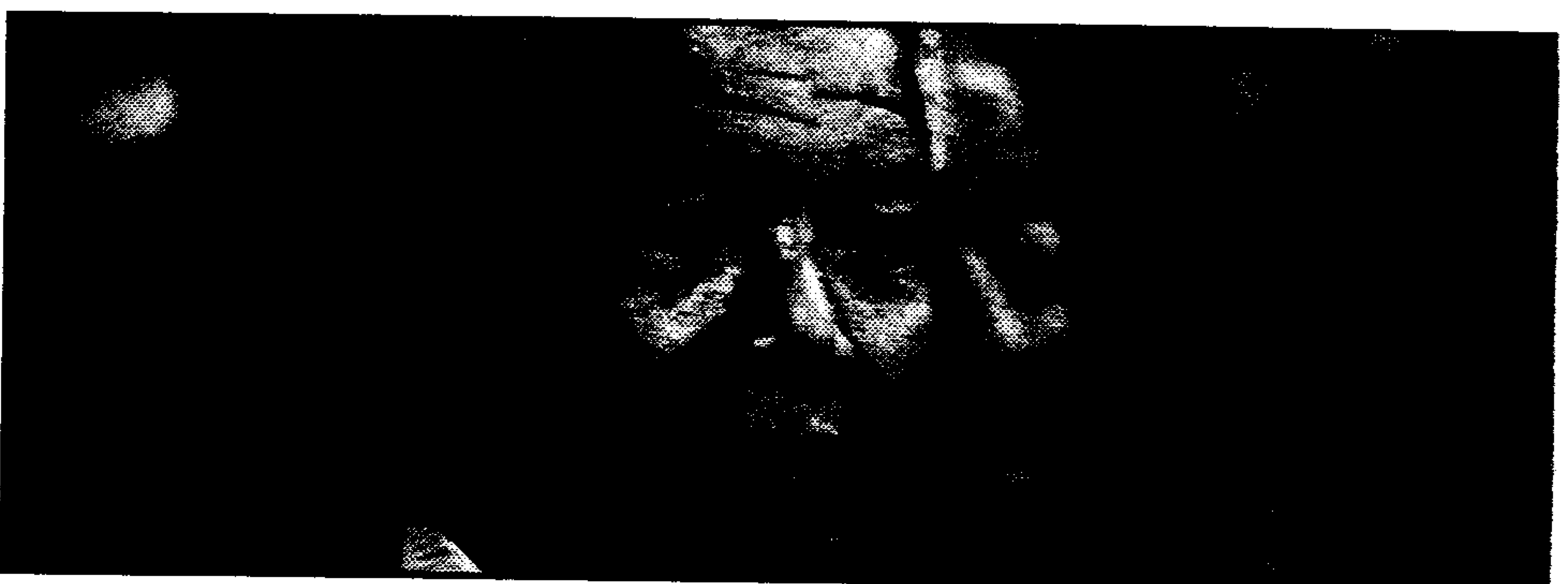
much more going for it in the 1950s and 1960s. Then, bourgeois nationalism in the third world was much stronger. It was possible for the ruling layers in some third world states (for example the oil exporting states) to negotiate a new arrangement with imperialism, which gave the indigenous ruling classes a greater share of imperialist super-profits. Naturally, the benefits of these new arrangements stayed largely in the pockets and Swiss

banks accounts of domestic rulers. But the living standards in many third world countries did improve. Some more radical nationalist governments did develop the material infrastructure of their country with some benefits for the masses - although this was never a 'non-capitalist' model of development.

This relationship of forces has now totally collapsed, under the weight of the world eco-

nomics crisis. A new third way is thus dead in the water.

This debate has great relevance, for example, to the discussion about what kind of measures should be implemented if the PT (Workers Party) should come to power in the 1994 elections in Brazil. Indeed this discussion concentrates the whole debate about the way forward against imperialism today.



## The question of power

**A** revolutionary movement can only become the government party, or take part in government, with the perspective of a more-or-less rapid mobilisation of the masses to take power. This is not because of some doctrinaire imperative learned from textbooks or a line-by-line study of Lenin and Trotsky; neither is it because of an abstract sectarian

model. It is because of the dynamics of the class struggle.

A revolutionary movement in the government signals alarm for the bourgeoisie and the mobilisation of counter-revolution to overthrow that government. It means a race between the mobilisation of revolution and the mobilisation of counter-revolution.

For revolution to win this race, a revolutionary government has

to take immediate measures to answer the concrete material needs of the masses,

and that means challenging the economic power of the bourgeoisie. It means acting in a way to deepen the self-organisation and mobilisation of the masses, including measures of workers control, and, for elementary

self-defence of the masses and their social gains, arming the working class.

The precise timetable of socialisation of major industries is not the issue here. The Bolsheviks carried out their major na-

tionalisations in 1918, far too 'early' in the opinion of Lenin, under the impact of working class mobilisations and seizures of bosses' property. The dynamic of the class struggle demanded it. For Lenin, it was





either repression of the mass movement or going ahead with the nationalisations.

But he never hid the fact that he considered that the revolutionary forces had too little expertise to run industry themselves and a more gradual transition would have been preferable. In this case politics - the dynamics of the class struggle - overrode strictly 'economic' considerations.

To many, including in Latin America, this kind of discussion seems totally unrealistic in the concrete conditions of Brazil to-

day. There are two arguments used for saying it is unrealistic: first, the international balance of class forces, second the state of domestic politics in that country. If either of these arguments were valid it would be necessary to say that it would be irresponsible for the Workers Party to take the government under such conditions. And it would be necessary to ask what kind of political profile and practice had enabled the PT to take the government when a real workers' government were not on the agenda.

In any case, the assumption of government by the PT in the most populous country of Latin America would profoundly modify the international relationship of forces. It would electrify Latin America and be an important element for the remobilisation of mass movements of the oppressed. Brazilian domestic politics would be totally re-cast.

A PT government would immediately be on trial: either it would progressively take measures in the interests of the workers, or it would capitulate to

imperialism and domestic reaction. If it did the former, it would face a tremendous campaign of destabilisation by imperialism and the domestic bourgeoisie. Its only answer would be the revolutionary mobilisation of the workers.

*An historic compromise with the domestic ruling class is even less likely than a compromise with imperialism.* Imperialism has had to tolerate post-capitalist states for a long period; the domestic ruling class will tolerate nothing which challenges its power and privileges.

An attempt at marginal reforms would totally discredit a PT government: it would be forced to administer the austerity dictated by the crisis of the world capitalist economy. Most likely in this case the forces involved in the PT would split into class struggle and class collaborationist components. But a split implies a sector of the mass movement going into opposition to 'their' government. A reformist solution would crash against the anti-capitalist dynamics of the mass movement.

## A democratic stage?

Discussing in one category movements as diverse as the Central American revolutionary movements, the PLO, the ANC and Sinn Fein conceals important differences between them. The PLO is a bourgeois nationalist movement whose radical sectors have declined over 20 years. It has no goal of socialism, but simply that of a Palestinian homeland. The Salvadorean FMLN and the Sandinistas were very different, posing revolution and socialism as goals as well as 'national liberation' from imperialism. Sectors of the FMLN and FSLN made explicit reference to Marxism and even Leninism in a way that the leadership of the dominant Fateh wing of the PLO would never consider.

But for all these movements the question of a solution to democratic and national questions was posed centre-stage. In every country dominated by imperialism, national and democratic questions come to the fore. These include questions such as the creation of genuine national unity and independence, the solution of the land question, the dismantling of the old reactionary oligarchy

to create political democracy and so on.

When posed in that way, the *all round* solution of national and democratic tasks requires a break from imperialism and local reaction. It is a *revolutionary* task. How could you solve the land question in El Salvador without crushing the local oligarchy which dominates the latifundia? And, obviously, crushing the oligarchy requires revolution - whatever term is used to describe it.

How can there be a real, lasting solution to the Palestinian national question without the defeat of imperialism's local agency - the Zionist state? And that requires a revolutionary mobilisation not only of the Palestinians, but of Arab and Jewish workers in the whole region.

There is no artificial dividing line between national and democratic questions and the 'social' question - the question of power. That is why Marxists reject the old Menshevik-Stalinist idea of two strictly divided 'stages' of the revolution in oppressed countries. But this should not be interpreted as implying the impossibility of national or democratic gains as part of the ongoing struggle.

For example, the post-second world war upsurge of the colonial revolution created a rash of newly independent states as the imperialist occupying powers withdrew. No one could deny that these were real gains for the national struggle. Marxists argued, however, that this process created semi-colonies - countries still dominated by imperialism. Moreover, while arguing that the democratic tasks remained unsolved, it would be foolish to deny that in some dependent countries, Brazil is an example, that there are democratic gains for the masses - ie real steps towards formal political democracy, however partial or fragile.

The inter-twining of democratic and revolutionary tasks was at the heart of Trotsky's theory of 'permanent revolution'. The essence of that theory is *not* the idea that without socialist revolution real gains for the masses are impossible. It is the idea that securing and extending these gains requires a continuation of revolutionary

struggle, otherwise they will go backwards. It is moreover the idea that partial gains in the national liberation struggle, for example the establishing of a formally independent state, crystallises a new relationship of class forces which itself involves exploitation of the masses and subordination to imperialism.

Take India. Who could deny that the driving out of the British was a victory? But then who could deny that this victory incarnated the rule of the domestic Indian bourgeoisie which cruelly exploits its own masses? Or that India was still dominated by imperialism?

Thus while rejecting the idea that there is an inseparable divide between 'democratic' and 'socialist' stages of anti-imperialist struggles, or that the *solution* of the democratic and national tasks can be separated from the solution of the 'social'

question, the question of working class power, Marxists should not fall into the trap of denying the possibility of partial democratic and national gains. These gains however re-cast the struggle in a different way: they do not conclude it.

Moreover, insofar as such partial victories are secured by negotiations and peace deals, there is an overwhelming criterion by which Marxists judge: what is the effect on the dynamic of the mass movement? Is it mobilising or de-mobilising? Does it enable the revolutionary or national liberation forces to regroup their strength for a new stage of the struggle, while securing partial gains? Or does it amount to calling off the struggle and conceding victory to reaction?

It is by these criteria that the current rash of peace negotiations has to be judged.



## Fallout in Central America

In the last three weeks two leading members of the Salvadorean FMLN have been assassinated by the reactionary death squads which still exist. This is symbolic of the failed promises given to the insurgent forces which ended with the 1992 peace deal. Land reform has hardly begun. Former FMLN guerrillas have not been given the jobs promised. Murders and torturers in the army have not been punished. The oligarchy is still in place.

It is true that the FMLN leaders faced an impasse of the military struggle when the peace deal was concluded. The masses were war weary and demanded peace; the guerrilla war had been fought into the ground by the military aid provided by the

US. A transition to a different form of struggle - one based on the neglected mass organisations, especially in the towns - was on the agenda.

But the peace deal itself, and the reception given to it in sectors of the left internationally, mystified the process underway and gave crucial concessions to reaction which are unacceptable from a revolutionary standpoint.

In particular, the decision to integrate sectors of the FMLN fighters into the national army was profoundly wrong. This either hands over insurgent fighters to be used by the class enemy, or submits these same fighters to the tyranny of bourgeois military discipline.

The issue here is not armed struggle versus other forms of struggle: the issue is the class character of the state and the political independence of the popular masses under the leadership of the working class.

Typical of the response of the left internationally was the widely read, but now defunct US *Guardian* 'non-aligned' left magazine which characterised the deal as a 'negotiated victory'. Even if it were necessary to accept everything in the peace deal, then socialists would have to characterise it as

a diktat imposed by imperialism and reaction, not a 'victory'.

In order to portray this as a victory it is necessary to radically redefine the goals of the movement to the right.

In Nicaragua the 1990 electoral defeat of the FSLN unleashed a sharp process of political differentiation in the Sandinistas. Theories of 'co-government from below' created an impossible tension - between those who wanted to defend the gains of the revolution, particularly the mass or-

ganisations, 'from below'; and those who put the stress on 'co-government'. The result has been the growing social democratisation of the right wing of the FSLN, in particular those grouped around Sergio Rodriguez. These people openly defend a market economy and a close, albeit 'new', relationship with the United States.

What we are seeing in the Central America is a situation where defeats are leading to a terrible political collapse in left wing forces.



## South Africa & Palestine

The mid-1980s upsurge in South Africa was the culmination of a twenty-year struggle of the black masses which made old-style apartheid unworkable. The National Party leadership under de Klerk has moved radically to destroy this old system. Parliamentary democracy on a universal franchise is being introduced. If this process is carried through successfully against the resistance of the

right wing and Inkatha, however, the central core of the system - racial capitalism - will survive intact. When ANC leaders say that expectations among the masses are 'too high', they understand the reality of the situation. Formal democracy will not meet the needs of the masses for jobs and houses and the township system will remain intact.

The debate between revolutionary and non-revolutionary

sectors of the mass movement revolves around the *goals of the struggle*. From this perspective there is nothing necessarily unprincipled in negotiations with the government to introduce formal democracy. The real debate is not negotiations versus non-negotiations: the crucial issue is whether or not to make an 'historic compromise' with racial capitalism - ie to call off the struggle. It is this question which has led sectors of the

popular movement to refuse to participate in *these* negotiations.

The peace deal underway in Palestine poses parallel problems. Rabin's Labour Party government has produced minimal concessions not to dismantle the national oppression of the Palestinian people, but to guarantee it. The object of the exercise is to demobilise and call off the Intifadah struggle. Even if the deal is imposed, there is no question of evicting the Zionist

settlers who have taken 60 per cent of the land in the West Bank. There is no question of bringing back the majority of Palestinians who live outside Gaza and the West Bank. There is no question of any change in the status of the Palestinians as subordinate to the Zionist state.

Once again the issue is not for or against negotiations; the issue is whether or not to make an 'historic compromise' and call off the struggle.

## New Era of Democracy?

A central mystification of the post-Gulf war 'new world order' is that we are in an epoch of the peaceful resolution of disputes to bring about 'democracy'. The 'forward march of democracy' thesis is based on the idea that democracy is making ten-league strides in eastern Europe and in the so-called 'third world', all this propelled by the good offices of the United States.

It is true that the US sees stability being ensured in some countries by toppling old dictatorships - for example in Zaire, Malawi and Haiti. But this

is entirely contingent and tactical. It does not apply, for example, to the army dictatorship in Indonesia, the world's fourth most populous country; nor does it apply for the people of Kurdistan, whose democratic right to have their own state is fiercely opposed by the US. Dozens of similar examples could be given.

We are not living in a new hey-day of bourgeois democracy, we are living in a world of deepening crisis, of militarisation, of growing racism and xenophobia and widespread attacks on democracy and democratic rights. And we are living

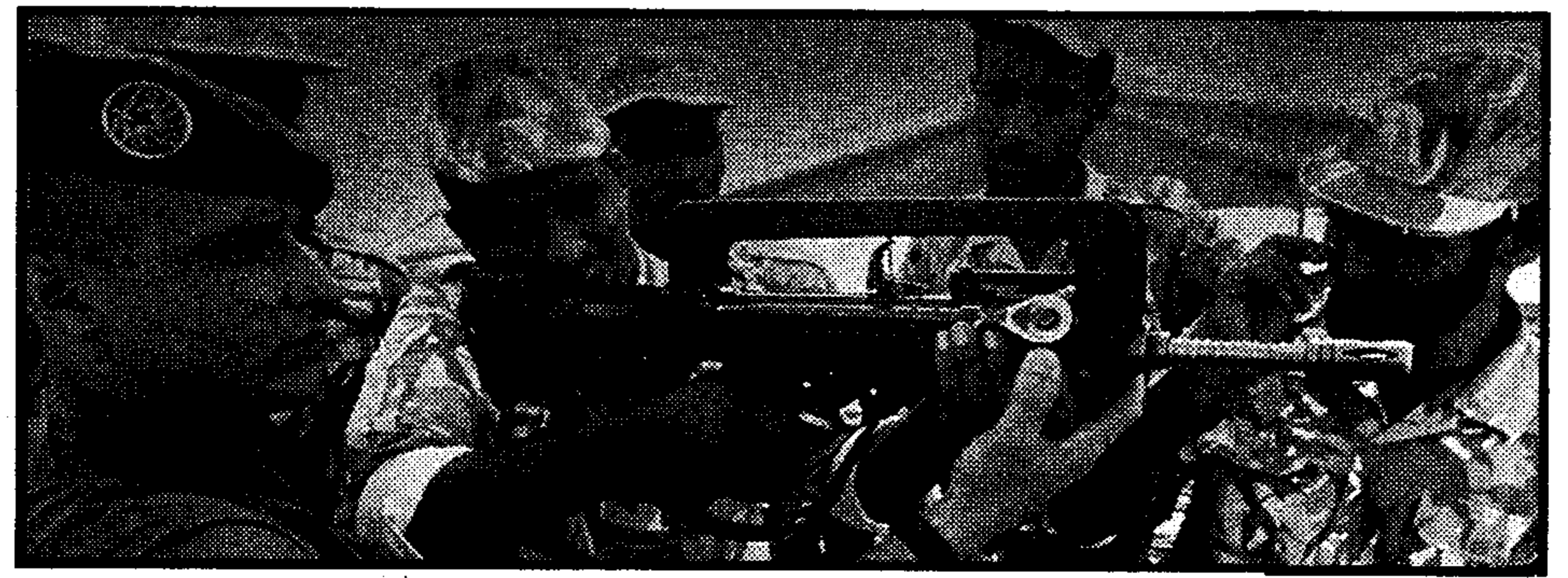
in a world where the harshness of the international class struggle is deepening, precisely because of the depth of the economic crisis of world imperialism, now in the grips of its longest-ever economic crisis.

The tactics of the imperialist rulers in this period are varied and experimental: they are in uncharted waters. Every form of capitalist rule combines repression and concessions with an ideology designed to secure the

'consent' of the oppressed. 'Democracy' and the 'peaceful resolution of conflicts' are key weapons in the ideological arsenal of imperialism because they correspond to key needs and demands of ordinary people - freedom and peace. Socialists of course are partisans of peace and democracy. It is precisely for this reason that we are opposed to any historic com-

promise with imperialism which is inimical to both.

But the assertion of this point in propaganda is inadequate. The slogans of peace and democracy have to be appropriated by the working class and the oppressed in action. And this involves fundamental ideas about forms of struggle and alliances.



## Permanent revolution

The present wave of negotiations and peace deals involves not just profound strategic debates, but a shake-up and recomposition of the political forces involved. In each situation a right and a left wing will emerge, a conflict between class struggle and class compromise.

This represents, in a certain way, the political wearing out of a series of leaderships of liberation struggles, not only because of defeats but also because of the inherent limitations in their strategies, goals and alliances.

For example, no analysis of the Middle East peace process can be abstracted from an analysis of the Arafat Fateh leadership, which has always been a bourgeois nationalist movement, which has always been authoritarian and bureaucratic and which has never had a strategy based on the self-organisa-

tion and mobilisation of Arab workers in the whole region.

In today's conditions of economic crisis and imperialist offensive, the political space for a series of former strategies and alliances is eroding - for example strategies based on alliance with the Soviet Union or support from radical bourgeois nationalist regimes have largely collapsed.

For revolutionary and liberation forces in many parts of the world this means a profound strategic reassessment. A good example is the process now underway in the different wings of the Philippines Communist Party.

Marxists have every interest in intervening in these debates and addressing those forces who reject an historic compromise with imperialism. Every such discussion involves concrete elements based on the

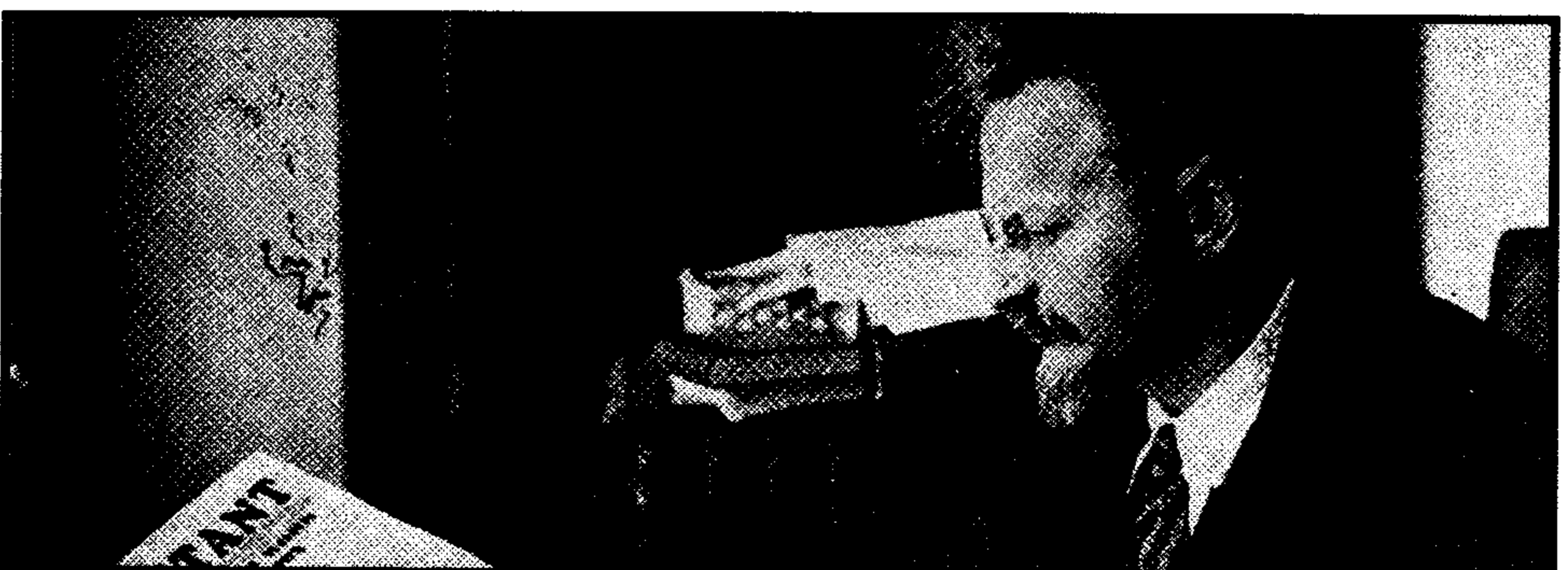
specificities of particular struggles.

But there are common guidelines, which can only be briefly outlined here.

The first is the understanding that the struggle for democracy is an anti-capitalist struggle. This directly implies the impossibility of a long-term strategic alliance with the 'national' bourgeoisie or a 'stagist' conception of revolution. It also implies the necessity for the class independence and self-organisation of the working class and oppressed.

The second crucial issue is the democratic self-organisation of the masses in struggle, and thus a rejection of bureaucratic militarism.

Armed struggle, or armed self-defence, is a frequently neces-



sary tactic in anti-imperialist struggle. But the effects of fetishisation of armed struggle, or its elevation outside any democratic control, are always corrosive and result in bureaucratic degeneration and substitutionism.

Rejection of an alliance with the 'national' bourgeoisie implies an alliance centred on the

working class, uniting the oppressed. That cannot be done without the self-organisation, and championing, of struggles of women; and also by victims of national and racial oppression.

But that in itself requires democratic forms of struggle and mass organisation, not bureaucratic or militarist ones.

## International solidarity

When those fighting imperialism go down to defeats, this represents not something 'local', but a crystallisation of elements of the world situation. *The key force responsible for defeats is that which has made the*

*biggest compromise with imperialism - the labour bureaucracy in the advanced capitalist countries.*

Imperialism's world-wide offensive is facilitated by every capitulation which they make. It is normal for socialists to have

their own strategic views about the international struggle. But such views are entirely worthless without the fight against capitalism and the bureaucracy at home and the struggle to rebuild movements of international solidarity.

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Xmas Special Feature: Lest we forget ...

# Practising the splits

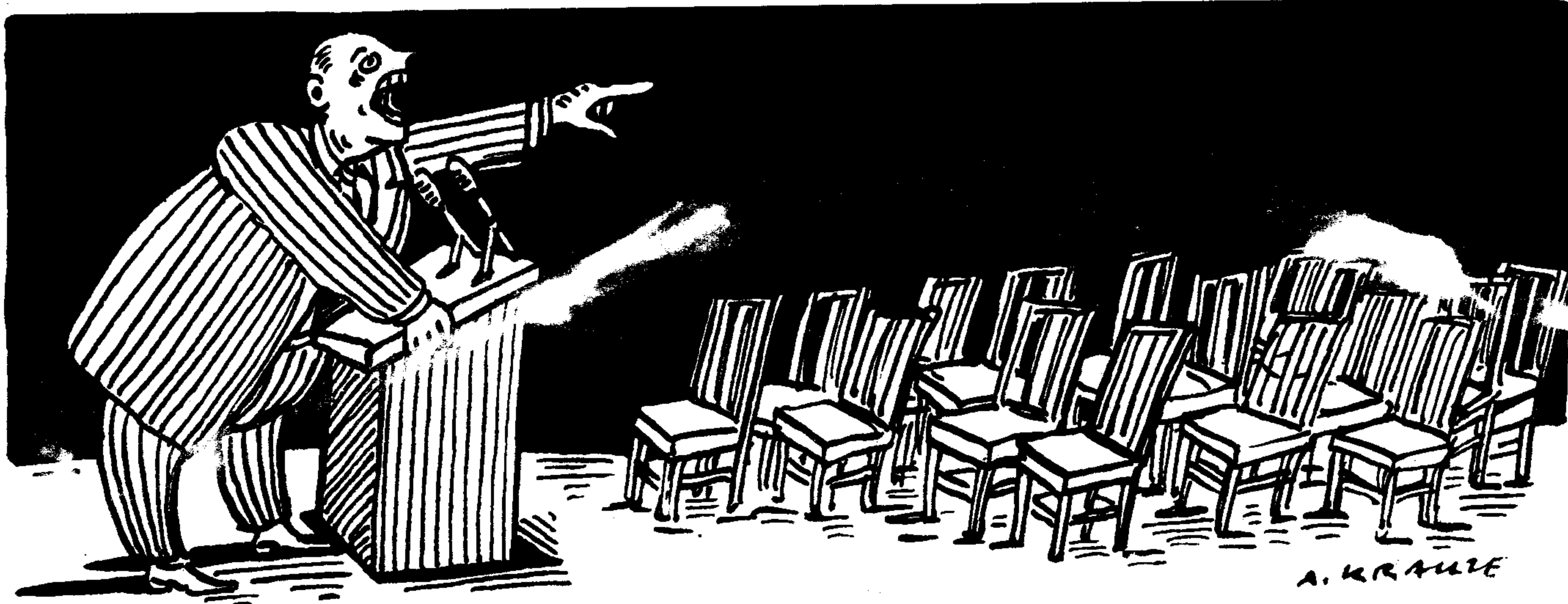
WHERE WOULD we be without the good old British sectarian? Who can imagine a public meeting without an irrelevant, rambling, point-scoring 'intervention' from at least one headbanger with staring eyes and a carrier bag full of unreadable literature?

These unsung heroes and heroines have been a constant factor on the left – while campaigns, issues and organisations have come, split, and gone.

But where do they come from? Are sectarians born or made?

Our correspondent JACK DOBERMANN sniffed out the secretive, exclusive Academy which for decades has turned out some of our leading sectarians.

"BUSINESS is booming," grinned a smug Professor 'Lefty' Garble, head teacher at the privately-run Academy. "With so little happening in the unions or the Labour Party,



we are signing up new students almost every day."

Walking into Professor Garble's Academy – just a few streets from the main road through Hampstead, it is immediately clear that the new influx of students spans the social spectrum. The undergraduates' car-park is filled by vehicles ranging from Porsches and Scorpions to clapped-out Skodas.

How are the students grouped and streamed? "We have no problem dividing them into small groups," said Professor Garble. "They do it almost instinctively. The hard thing is to get them to talk to each other at all, and not walk out shouting abuse."

"Our worst mistake was trying to run a new Teambuilding course, a few years ago," adds his colleague Eamonn Oover, who lectures in Denunciation and Schismatics.

"It was a fiasco. We began with ten people – but within twenty minutes we were down to two feuding pairs. By the end of the first session all of these had fallen out, leaving just me and the last of the blokes who thought he was Lenin. Never again."

So how does the Academy

manage to impart basic training? I was told that all students do a foundation course in Dogmatics. They study 'Labour Party – a Step Backwards' along with 'Unions – Who Needs Them?' and there are compulsory streams teaching Jargon and Nitpicking.

Professor Garble urges all to study 'Democratic Centralism and Ways Around It', with specialist options on alternative internal regimes for smaller and larger sectarian groups: students can choose from Cliques, Clubs, Bureaucracy for Beginners, and Despotism.

The 'Principles and other Pitfalls' course warns against any fixation on politics, which can sometimes divert from important organisational wrangles and splits.

The popular 'Allegations and Insinuations' stream examines techniques of avoiding head-to-head political debate while maximising discontent on both sides, drawing on a vast library of examples used successfully by Academy graduates in 40 years of wrangles.

Many students opt for 'Build Your Own International':

"At the last count we had seven students each claiming to lead their own Fourth International, one leading a Fifth, while his friend, having split from him, is already leading a Sixth International, with headquarters in East Finchley," said Prof. Garble proudly.

"But of course many British sectarians are very keen to avoid any international links. We have a busy 'Keep Out' class for those looking for reasons to keep foreign co-thinkers at arm's length – or split from any that have got too close."

Attitude is all-important for the sectarian, and the Academy offers specialist support groups.

"We recognise that many students come to us suffering from severe communication difficulties," said Eva Mout, who also lectures in Expulsion Theory and runs an Exasperation class.

"Many are held back by their awareness that they have so little to offer. They shrink instinctively from repeating the trite and mundane, leaving themselves gagged. We call them Banal Retentives. And we tackle the problem through our 'Banal is Beautiful' workshops, which encourage students to latch on to unexciting issues, work them to death, and fashion them into a point of split."

How does the Academy measure its success or failure?

"Success? Just look at our track record," boasts Prof. Garble. "When I set up the first 'Wierd is Wonderful' discussion group in the 1950s there was really only one far-left group of any size in Britain to the left of the CP. Now there

mittees of campaigns consult us – on ways of keeping out left wing political opponents. We help them draft their denunciations. Of course I couldn't name names ..."

As I walked back towards the exit, I noticed the impressive collection of portraits of great sectarians lining the wall. There were several images of the now almost legendary Gerry Healy, who founded the WRP, and whose political methods live on long after his death.

"He was a giant, a real guru of British sectarianism," sighed Prof. Garble. "He gave guest lectures here for years. After his death we ran classes in Healyism including role-play with suitcases of Libyan currency, intimidation practice and mock expulsions."

Healy's consistent rejection of any form of women's liberation lives on in Academy workshops on 'Positive Discrimination and How to Fight It' and 'Feminism: a Bourgeois Plot'.

As I left, I passed a large group of recruits wearing lumberjackets and carrying flight bags; many had American accents. Apparently they jet over regularly for special training. Prof. Garble beamed with pride.

"The Spartacists have an instinctive flair for crazy slogans. Who else would have run a left candidate on a slogan of 'Smokers' Rights', or picketed the Duke of Edinburgh with placards calling for 'a Scottish Republic as part of the USSR'? Their pro-Concorde campaign 'Let it Land' was a classic of its type."

While Tory cuts slash regular education to the bone, the Academy is clearly coining it in. At least this ensures that whenever a meeting opens up for discussion from the floor there will be plenty of contenders to use up the time available.

Since filing this report Jack Dobermann has left Socialist Outlook to form a new Croydon-based Seventh International with his friend Martin.



are several dozen – depending on how small you define a 'group'. Most of them have our graduates in the leadership."

The Prof. was also excited at a new influx of right-wing sectarians.

"Right wing?" I asked, puzzled. "Surely all sectarians are ultra-left?"

"Oh, no, the most important thing is that, like Greta Garbo, they must 'want to be alone', or at least to be in charge. Some of our most successful graduates have right-wing, taking top union jobs, for example. We teach them how to block inter-union links and rank and file control, even while we run courses urging left sectarians to denounce them!"

"And lots of steering com-

## Sectarian Bookshelf

Some of Prof Garble's best-sellers are still in print! Choose from:

- Keeping Left
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- Way Out Left
- Left Wing Communism: a Promising Start
- United Front – Crap or What?
- 100 Trotsky Quotations You Hadn't Heard Of
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- Through What Group Are We Passing?
- Why we are not Marching (3 vols)
- Waar is de oude wijk van de Workers' Socialist League? (available in Flemish only)

For more details, send a £5 note to Sectarian Bookshelf, PO Box 1109, London N4 2UU.

CHRISTMAS STORY

## Turkey's dirty war – British union delegates detained

by Ann Wood

A BRITISH trade union delegation and two Kurdish journalists were detained after witnessing the Turkish state's scorched earth policy in Kurdistan.

'When we arrived in the village of Birik, the houses were in flames', said Mary Brodwin of the NUJ. 'A Kurdish woman screamed *Run away or the soldiers will shoot you too!*'

Surrounded by hooded soldiers waving loaded machine guns, they were marched out of the village into a field and held at rifle point for two hours. They were interrogated for 26 hours.

### Torture

Necmiye Arslanoglu (20) and Nalan Alici (26), journalists for Ozgur Gundem (Free Agenda) newspaper in Diyarbakir, were separated from the delegation. Both were subject to psychological torture and accused of being members of the Kurdish guerrilla group, the PKK.

One of them was badly beaten. The Turkish security forces tried to force them to sign documents confessing their membership of the PKK. They resisted despite tremendous pressure.

After being denied sleep the delegation were sent to Diyarbakir Gendarmerie headquarters, where they were held for three hours in a minibus in freezing conditions before facing further interrogation. They were denied access to the British consul.

Humberston Councillor Sarah Dally (UNISON) said, 'Our treatment was nothing compared to the routine torture, beatings and murder meted out by the Turkish state to the Kurdish population every day.'

After their release a uniformed policeman fired at Mary Brodwin's feet at Diyarbakir airport. 'Although I feared for my life, if I'd been a Kurd, the bullet would have been aimed at my head.'

The delegation refused to leave Turkey until the journalists were released.

During their five day stay in Diyarbakir, 13 people were killed by government sponsored death squads in broad daylight.

The delegation are convinced the Turkish state is waging a war of genocide against its 20 million strong Kurdish population.

Guy Cheverton (MSF) said, 'No British person for the sake of their own safety or conscience should holiday in Turkey. Tourist revenue directly funds Turkey's ethnic cleansing.'

### Killed

Ozgun Gundem is the only newspaper in Turkey which reports the war in Kurdistan. Fifteen of its journalists have been killed in less than two years.

Any further attacks on these journalists will be added proof that the Turkish authorities massively abuse human rights in Kurdistan and silence opposition with death.

Further information from the Kurdistan Information Centre, 071 250 1315 and from the Ozgun Gundem Support Group 071 586 5892.



Gendarmerie at Diyarbakir, where the union delegation was held.

## British guns back repression

IN 1992 Turkey was the second largest arms importer in the industrialised world. Its defence spending over the last seven years has reached US\$10.5 billion.

The sales potential was thought to be so great that in 1988 Turkey became the sixth country where an overseas office of the Defence Export Services Organisation (DESO) was established. The DESO is the part of the Ministry of Defence responsible for promoting British arms exports.

The build up is linked both to territorial disputes with Greece and the strategic importance ascribed to Turkey by the US and its NATO allies in relation to the Middle East. Turkish airfields were extensively used by western forces during the Gulf War.

The British American Security Information Council report 'Fuelling Balkan Fires – the Arms Race between Greece and Turkey' states:

'Such is the value the west is attaching to Turkey's importance that it is prepared to ignore Ankara's well documented record of human rights abuses...the struggle against the Kurd separatists is on the verge of degenerating into a full-scale civil war...one-third of the 600,000 Turkish army is deployed in the south eastern part of the country to fight the Kurdish guerrillas'.

### Secrecy

British arms sales are shrouded in secrecy. An MP enquiring about military hardware sales to Turkey was told: 'It has been the practice of successive Administrations not to give details of defence sales business with other countries.'

The Campaign Against the Arms Trade (CAAT) lists reported arms sales since 1983, including British Aerospace surface-to-air missiles worth £150 million, 7,000 Marconi

high frequency hopping vehicle and backpack radio systems worth £200 million and chemical agent monitors and spares worth £200,000 from Graseby Ionics Ltd.

The Parliamentary Human Rights Group visited Kurdistan in 1992 and subsequently called on the British Government and the EC to stop arms sales to Turkey. The predictable response from Foreign Office Minister Tristram-Garell Jones was,

'We are not considering an embargo on arms sales to Turkey. Turkey is a NATO ally...Arms sales to Turkey are subject to the standard export licence procedure...all applications are scrutinized in accordance with stringent criteria. These include an assessment of the recipient country's human rights record.'

Further information from: CAAT, 11 Goodwin St, London, N4 3HQ. Tel: 071-281 0927

## Nigeria faces the return of the Generals

By Bala Kumar

'WE WILL NOT condone or tolerate any act of indiscipline. Any attempt to test our will will be decisively dealt with'.

It was with these words that General Sani Abacha ended his broadcast to the nation on November 18 informing the Nigerian people of his military take-over.

The interim civilian administration of Ernest Shonekan, appointed by the former military dictator, General Ibrahim Babangida, was dissolved as were all national and state assemblies.

Nigeria's two legal political parties, were also dissolved, undoing the carefully planned democratic transition thrown into confusion by Babangida's repudiation of the June 12 elec-

toral result. (See SO 45)

Abacha's takeover came as little surprise. He was seen as the real power behind the 83 day long civilian government.

In its place he has appointed a Provisional Ruling Council (PRC) which has a few civilians but is largely composed of Abacha loyalists.

The back-drop to the take-over was the upsurge in labour militancy over the astronomical price increase of oil and a Lagos High Court ruling on November 10 which declared the Shonekan regime as being illegal.

### Oil prices

Oil prices were increased by 700% to increase the revenue of the State and to satisfy IMF and World Bank demands to make Nigerian state owned corporations profitable in preparation for their privatisation.

The High Court ruling was

**'The strike virtually paralysed activities. Workers took to the streets and erected barricades on major highways'**

the last nail in the coffin of the Shonekan regime removing any residual fig-leaf of legitimacy.

The 3.5 million strong Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC) began an indefinite strike for a reduction in the oil price hike.

Though Frank Kokori of the National Union of Petroleum and Gas Workers was speaking for many when he said, 'The issue is June 12 and we are ready to do anything to restore it'.

West Africa magazine cap-

tured the atmosphere. 'The strike virtually paralysed activities as workers stayed away from work. Banks closed, with business activities coming to a halt. Workers took to the streets, lit bonfires, erected barricades on major highways generally disturbing the flow of traffic...'

'In most southern parts of the country, the cities became ghost towns while in some parts of the northern states workers were yet to join, either because the state labour unions did not have enough time to mobilise or because they did not believe in the strike'.

### Consolidate

Abacha had to move fast before the country became ungovernable in the interests of the capitalist class. He has been quick to consolidate his authority on the military high command, by transferring out

Babangida loyalists and moving his own men in.

The bourgeois politicians are split over their next step. Some have welcomed the take-over and are now ingratiating themselves with Abacha.

Other civilian politicians are holding out for fresh elections in the New Year when they hope that their allies and themselves are returned.

At present the Campaign for Democracy (CD) which groups about 40 human rights organisations has been giving political direction to the pro-democracy protests.

Their demands have only gone so far as the restoration of the June 12 decision. A much more ambitious program of genuine multi-party democracy, opposition to austerity programs and a call for a workers and poor peasants party is needed.

# Belgian battle against austerity

By Rod Marshall in Antwerp

THE STREETS of Antwerp in northern Belgium erupted in passionate anger on Sunday 28 in an energetic demonstration of 10,000 against racism and fascism. This demonstration capped a week which saw the biggest wave of mass action since the general strike of 1961.

## Combination

What is unique to the Belgian movement is its combination of workers strikes against the government's austerity 'crisis plan', and youth mobilisations directed at the far right Vlaams Blok

(Flemish Bloc).

The week beginning 22 November saw a one-day general strike which brought the whole country to a standstill, regional strikes and a school students strike against racism, which itself led to a 10,000 strong demonstration against racism.

The Antwerp demonstration not only protested against the Vlaams Blok, which has been making electoral gains with its calls for immigration controls and repatriations, but also against the growing wave of attacks on Turkish and Moroccan workers.

The rise of racism has to be seen in the context of the coalition government of the Christian Democrat and Social Democrat parties. This government has been tailing

the Vlaams Blok in restricting immigration and asylum rights.

This state racism has to be seen alongside government attacks such as cuts in unemployment pay, a pay freeze and higher taxes.

There is an obvious similarity to the situation in Britain, both in government attacks and the link between mass poverty, unemployment and the rise of racism.

## Unemployment

A central call of the Antwerp demonstration was for full employment, showing a clear understanding between mass unemployment and the rise of the far right.

It is clear there is a tremendous growth in the confi-

dence of people to protest in Belgium. The general strike was an awakening of union militancy after years of relative slumber. Workers forced the two union federations, one Christian and the other Socialist, to call the strike despite initial resistance from the Socialist union leadership.

Plans are being made for a nation-wide demonstration on 27 March 1994 to stamp out racism.

The network of school student committees formed out of the high school strike will play a crucial part in building this action, which is part of Europe-wide day of action which will link up workers and student across the continent.



AJOKAR school-students committee had leading role in demo

## Belgian school youth fight the far right

10,000 school students marched against racism and fascism on 24 November as schools and colleges were hit by a one day strike. Many more took part in the strike which was organised nationally by school students to commemorate the 2nd anniversary of the far right Flemish-Block party winning seats in the local elections.

Nadine Peeters, a co-ordinator of the strike in Antwerp said, 'the strike took place in many different schools, including catholic schools and state schools all over Belgium'.

## Leaflets

She added, 'we distributed leaflets for the strike in schools and colleges and many students came forward asking for more and then set up student committees'.

The strike was based on five key slogans, 'for tolerance and democracy, anti racism/anti fascism, for equal rights, asylum rights are a human right!' and 'Stop the Flemish Block!' Nadine commented it showed that 'young people want a multi-cultural country'.

## Suspension

School students have been supported by teachers from the socialist teachers' union but some schools have imposed repressive sanctions including detentions and even suspensions for taking part in the strike.

Young people are now organising for the national demonstration in 27 March that is being co-ordinated across Europe.

'The school committees are planning this further action together with the national Hand-in-Hand anti-racist organisation' said Nadine.

# Growing menace of Europe's far right

By Steve Babbage

THE CENTRE parties collapsed in Italy's local elections two weeks ago. The PSI (Socialist Party) has all but disappeared as a significant political force and the formerly dominant Christian Democrats were

reduced to fifth place.

Gainers on the left were the two wings of the now split Communist Party - the PDS (Party of the Democratic Left) and the PCR (Party of Communist Refoundation).

But big gains were recorded by the rightist Northern League in northern cities, and the MSI (Italian Social Movement), the openly fascist party, in the south.

The surge of the Northern League just consolidates the gains made by this party over 18 months, in response to the corruption scandals which have led to 60 per cent of Italian MPs being under investigation for corruption.

But the new upswing in the fortunes of the MSI comes as a direct result of the semi-collapse of the Christian Democracy, always the dominant party in the south.

## Corruption

Italy's deep economic crisis and the corruption scandals have thus opened a new opportunity for far-right and fascist forces. Euphoria over Italy's 'democratic revolution' has to be tempered by this fact.

The pattern of far right gains is not restricted to Italy. While Jean Marie Le-Pen's Front National in France gained no seats in this year's general election, this was because of the electoral system. In fact it got over 10 per cent of the vote, and continues to build a substantial political base, including in some sections of the working class.

In Germany the far-right Re-

publicaner party is set to enter the Bundestag (parliament) for the first time in 1994. To do this the party has to gain more than 5 per cent of the votes, a total which they are expected to surpass easily.

In addition to the October 16 demonstration in Britain, important anti-fascist mobilisations of youth and school students have taken place in Belgium and Holland in recent months.

But far-right and fascist political gains continue because the social conditions for reactionary advance are deepening - in particular the rise of mass unemployment.

## Problems

This poses important questions for the anti-fascist and anti-racist movements, which have big difficulties in several countries. The French anti-fascist movement is at a low ebb; in Germany there is no national co-ordination of anti-racist groups, an absolute disaster for an effective fightback.

Future issues of Socialist Outlook will look at the European anti-fascist struggle in detail.



Defeated fascist candidate Alessandra Mussolini of the MSI polled 44 per cent of the vote in the second round of the local elections in Naples on December 5.

Victorious candidate Antonio Bassolino received 56 per cent. The PDS repeated this victory in 149 towns and cities across the country gaining control of Venice, Trieste and Genoa.

The elections are considered a key test of strength in the run up to the national elections due in March 1994.

WORLD NEWS

## Who's afraid of the Japanese dinosaurs?

Paul Clarke reviews *Rising Sun* by Michael Crichton, Arrow Books, £4.99

MICHAEL Crichton is the author of *Jurassic Park*, and true to form his latest book is now also a movie with Sean Connery and Wesley Snipes. It's a detective story. It's also an outburst of rampant anti-Japanese hysteria, apparently toned down in the movie.

Central police characters John Connor and Peter Smith (Connery and Snipes in the movie) investigate a murder on the 45th floor on the Nakamoto building in LA.

But an unending campaign of obstruction and non-cooperation from the Japanese corporate types frustrates them.

It's not just that the Japanese have something to hide. They are protected by US politicians, judges and other officials who are in their pockets. That's how powerful Japanese business has become. They're

buying 'our' industry, 'our' real estate, even 'our' movie industry.

### Heavy-handed

Top politicians who aren't directly in Japan's pay are blind. So wake up America! And if the heavy-handed message isn't quite clear, Crichton adds his own Afterword calling for a national crusade against the yellow peril.

There's a deeper argument. If America is being bought-up by Japan, it's because 'we' have become weak, flabby and lazy. The Japanese are succeeding because they are industrious, clever and determined.

### Deficit

And they have a right to buy our industries - weren't they the ones who financed the budget deficit in the Reagan years?

American anti-Japanese outrage isn't new. What gives Crichton's version its clout is that he puts his finger on real aspects of Japanese business culture - ruthlessness, chronic obedience and respect for authority, fierce company loyalty, overweening sex-

ism and rigid hierarchies. Things you couldn't say about Microsoft or Exxon, right?

Crichton's book is part and parcel of the campaign for trade war and import controls against Japan. This ideology is a danger to American workers who can be made to think that the solution to their problems is to attack the Japanese.

Despite its own protestations that it is not racist, deep down the book really is. They're industrious and clever these Japs, but don't you just hate their cunning and secrecy? And you know why they're like that?

Well they went straight from the farms to high-tech without paying their dues: it's really *feudalism* they've got out there!

Japan is in the worst recession since world war 2. Clinton's government has already declared economic war. Unemployment is rising and living standards are under attack. The last thing Japanese or American workers need to fight their respective bosses is an upsurge of national chauvinism and racism.

## WHERE WE STAND

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Engels, Lenin and Trotsky.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Feminist faces Fatwa

By K.Govindan

ONCE AGAIN last week Muslim fundamentalists took to the streets of the Bangladeshi capital, Dhaka, demanding the death of the feminist writer Taslima Nasreen.

On 24 September a group of clerics known as the 'Soldiers of Islam' passed a fatwa (verdict) of death and offered a reward of 50,000 takas for execution of sentence.

Nasreen's offence was to pen a novella called *Lajja* ('Shame') which addresses the discrimination faced by the Hindu minority in Bangladesh.

Following the demolition of the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya, India, on December 6 1992 and the anti-muslim rioting that followed, many Hindu temples and Hindus in Pakistan and Bangladesh were attacked.

Outraged by this fundamentalist backlash, Nasreen wrote a story revolving around a Hindu family in Dhaka which was part reportage and part fiction highlighting the traumas they underwent.

This book sold 60,000 copies in a six-month period before it was banned by the Government. This in a country with a literacy rate of only



Exploited: Bengali women

32% was remarkable.

The anger these Muslim clerics felt arose as well from the themes that Nasreen tackles in her journalism as well as the books.

### Exploitation

She has exposed the sexual exploitation of women in Bangladeshi society tracing it to both patriarchalism and the gender bias of religious laws. As a trained gynaecologist she has not shied away from making explicit references to sex and sexual organs in her writings.

While many accuse her of being anti-men Nasreen defends herself saying, 'I am not against any individual, but against a system that teaches men to treat women as commodities, as mere objects of enjoyment'.

Unfortunately the contents

of her book were used by the right-wing Hindu Bharatiya Janata Party to press their case for their chauvinist anti-muslim ideology in India. They justify the Hinduization of India and the oppression of its religious minorities using the plight of Hindus in Bangladesh and Pakistan.

In response to this, Nasreen has expanded her book making clear her opposition to religious bigotry of any kind. This book is to be published in neighbouring West Bengal where she is widely read.

The Bangladeshi government headed by a woman, Khaleda Zia, has denied Taslima Nasreen any police protection.

Students and left intellectuals have organised many protests condemning the fatwa and writers in West Bengal have organised a signature campaign to raise public awareness of her situation.

Nasreen remains defiant, 'I am not afraid. I am only sick of the captive life I'm leading now. If I die, I die. I don't fear death. But I want to die only after writing more'.

Further Information, *Alliance Against Communalism and for Democracy In South Asia*, 6A South Road, Southall, Middlesex, UBI 1RT

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

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# What's HAPPENING

**WANT YOUR event included? Send details by 8 January to What's Happening?, P.O. Box 1109, London N4 2UU.**

## DECEMBER

### Friday 10

Leicester AFA fundraiser at The Mag with Cornershop and Mambo Taxi

### Saturday 11

OPEN TUZLA AIRPORT! International Day of Action. Details page 6.

Centre for Alternative Industrial and Technological

Systems AGM with Jeremy Corbyn and Carole Tonge 11am-3.30pm London details 404 Camden Road N7 0SJ

### Monday 13

Globo-cop: the New World Order *Socialist Outlook* discussion Speaker: Bala Kumar 7.30pm Stationers' Park Community Centre Mayfield Road off Weston Park N8

Picket trial of 4 BNP thugs Leicester details 0533 550433

### Wednesday 15

*Socialist Outlook* Xmas party special showing of film on Burnsalls Strike 7.30pm Union Club 723 Pershore Rd Birmingham

### Wed 15 - Fri 17

*Liberation!* supporters' course

## Thursday 16

Their Future or Ours? *Liberation!* public forum 7pm Davenant Centre Whitechapel High Street Whitechapel tube

## Sat 18 & Sun 19

*Liberation!* editorial meeting

## JANUARY

### Monday 10

A New World Depression? *Socialist Outlook* discussion Speaker: Duncan Chapple 7.30pm Stationers' Park Community Centre Mayfield Road off Weston Park N8

### Wednesday 26

Ireland: which way for a just peace? *Socialist Outlook* forum 7.45pm Queens Head pub 66 Acton St WC1

## Saturday 29

Bloody Sunday demo London

## FEBRUARY

### Monday 14

Anti-imperialist Strategy Today *Socialist Outlook* discussion Speaker: Sarah Parker 7.30pm Stationers' Park Community Centre Mayfield Road off Weston Park N8

### Fri 18 & Sat 19

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

## MARCH

### Saturday 19

TUC National demonstration against racism

# FeedBACK

## Bosnia: should socialists urge UN to use force?

Dear Socialist Outlook

Alan Thornett is wrong to claim (SO November 13) that the call for the UN to open the northern route to Tuzla amounts to a call for western intervention.

Western intervention against Tuzla has taken the form of UN support for the Serbian blockade. In demanding that the UN open the northern route, we are demanding an end to what is effectively a Western blockade of Tuzla.

If this involves UNPROFOR killing some of their Chetnik allies, so much the better (though since it was the UN, and not the Chetniks, who prevented the Workers Aid convoy from reaching Tuzla, the issue of UNPROFOR using force is anyway secondary).

Of course we demand that the UN withdraw immediately from Bosnia, but as long as the UN is there, they should be forced to mitigate the abuses of their occupation. This is similar to calling for the British in Ireland to arrest soldiers guilty of violence against Catholics, while still calling for an immediate withdrawal. Finally, if the UN is forced to open the northern route under pressure from the European working-class, then

it is the working class, and not the leadership of the West, which is intervening to lift the blockade of Tuzla.

Yours  
Attila Hoare

Alan Thornett replies:

Attila Hoare demands the withdrawal of UN troops from ex-Yugoslavia whilst calling for them to use more force whilst they are still there. There's a fair amount of confusion in that.

Just how many pro-Serb forces does he want the UN troops to kill?

I am in favour of the opening of all routes into Bosnia, including, most importantly, Tuzla airport. But it is not so simple. Tuzla airport remains closed by a political decision of the UN - they could open it tomorrow but keep it closed to try to force (i.e. starve) the Bosnians into a settlement.

This is not the case with the Northern land route through Zupanja and Orasje. This sector is one of the most active and disputed parts of the front line straddling the only neck of Serbian held territory which links Serbia with Serbian occupied central Bosnia and the Krajina. It is not controlled by the UN (as Tuzla air-



port is) but by Serbia. Consequently unless the Serbs agree to open the route, which is extremely unlikely, the only way to open it up is by force of arms, and given its strategic importance the Serbs would fiercely resist such a move.

For this reason we have to oppose the use of military force by the UN, which would inevitably pull them into the conflict as open par-

ticipants.

Massive force would be necessary to take and hold such a corridor and how this could be done without a new level of western intervention and a change in the current UNPROFOR mandate is hard to understand.

It is not surprising that the Bosnian government, and the authorities in the Tuzla region, prioritise the opening of this route (and

Tuzla airport by the way) since it is the most direct land route from Croatia and they are positively in favour of massive western intervention.

How someone opposed to western intervention, however, can have such a one-dimensional concentration on this difficult route is much more of a puzzle.

● Bosnia campaign: see page 6

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DEBATE

# Socialist OUTLOOK



THE NEXT issue of Socialist Outlook will be on JANUARY 15, 1994. Happy New Year to all readers.

## Grants slashed, fees imposed

# Students fight Tory rip-off

By Kathryn Marshall,  
University of Kent at Canterbury

In a shocking government leak as we went to press, it has been revealed that ministers plan to charge tuition fees for college and university students from 1995.

The recent budget will cut student grants by a third. The expansion of higher education is to be stopped.

Anger at the grant cuts has produced a wave of student protest; even though the university term soon ends.

400 students protesting against grant cuts at the University of Kent at Canterbury occupied the university registry after a march to the local Tory Party offices.

Tuition fees paid by local authorities will be cut by 45 per cent, to just £750 for classroom-based courses. In the past the government has been increasing student numbers in order to take young people away from the expensive dole queue.

Now leaked government papers show that Education Secretary John Patten and Treasury Secretary Michael Portillo disagree only over what form fees should take. Patten favours charging fees only for the third year - in order to encourage low-quality two year degrees. Por-

tillo's more hard-line approach suggests that students should incur the full financial cost themselves.

Already more students than ever before take part-time jobs. Now students must borrow even larger sums in order to study.

With fees, the average student will graduate owing £7,000.

Next year 10,000 university places will be cut. 'Efficiency gains' - funding cuts -

mean that resources will have fallen 40 per cent in just six years. Already the government encourages colleges to consider charging students top-up fees.

The National Union of Students has been almost silent. Students' unions must call an emergency national conference to organise the resistance. On their own however, students can't stop these attacks.



Students can re-establish tradition of mass struggle

The deepening working class fight against the recession does have the power to stop the government.

Unless students' and education workers' unions are able to build a united campaign, the deepening economic depression will turn higher education back to a preserve of the children of the rich.

## SMTUC conference boosts fightback

PLANS ARE well advanced for the next conference of the Socialist Movement Trades Union Committee on February 5 & 6 at London's Conway Hall.

The conference entitled 'Build the Fightback - Unshackle the Unions' will be addressed by Tony Benn. Arthur Scargill has also been invited as has John Hensley OC to talk about the latest round

of anti-trade union legislation.

Speakers are also being invited from disputes such as Bencalls, Tintex, Middlebrook, Misbourne, Arrowsmith, Tando and Drax, the GPSA and other current disputes.

There will be a major session on the role of the left in the unions, and broad left type formations are being invited to sponsor

the conference.

There will be an international rally and concert on the Saturday evening. The conference will also elect delegates onto the incoming steering committee.

Get your union branch to support the conference and send delegates. Make it a fighting start to 1994 by building the working class movement we need.



Defending union rights: Tony Benn

Details and registration: contact Carolyn Sikorski, 53a Geere Road, London, E15