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socialist OUTLOOK

INSIDE: SPECIAL
PULL-OUT SUPPLEMENT



Don't scrap South Africa sanctions!

Another taste of Bush's post-Gulf War order. US sanctions against South Africa are lifted, the republic is back in the Olympics, and to cap it all they are back in international cricket. These are massive victories for FW De Clerk's campaign to convince the world that South Africa is really changing.

Change there is. Petty apartheid is being done away with. But the real structure of South Africa - racial capitalism - is not being changed. The overwhelming majority of the black population are in the worst jobs or unemployed, and living in the poverty-ridden

townships and 'homelands'.

Millions of blacks live in fear as Inkatha and the security force terrorise the townships, murdering thousands. Real equality in South Africa is light years away. Even 'one person, one vote' has not been achieved.

Sanctions hurt. The labour movement must demand no further retreat. The oppressed and exploited majority in South Africa still need to support and solidarity of the working class internationally.

Yugoslavia - pp2-3 BCCI - back page Europe - Centre pages

Federal tanks on the border of Slovenia and Croatia as Yugoslavia moves towards war



Tito's federal state required limiting the power of Serbia

Federal tanks crush the old Yugoslavia

YUGOSLAVIA is heading inexorably to war. Probably sooner than later, the drive by Serbian president Slobodan Milosevic for a 'Greater Serbia' will lead to a renewed attack on Slovenia and, especially, Croatia. What are the historical roots of this crisis? Socialist Outlook talked to MICHELE LEE about what lies behind the Serbian drive for domination.

SO: When Tito's Communists came to power in 1945, how was the national question dealt with?

ML: The Communist approach to the national question was determined before and during the war – already by 1943 it was clear that the new Yugoslavia would be a federation based on national equality. In other words, on this issue the Communists followed Lenin. The old Yugoslavia had come into existence in 1918 through the joint efforts of political representatives of three Yugoslav nations only – Slovenes, Croats, and Serbs. The idea was that Yugoslavia would ensure their common freedom from foreign domination, while allowing their individual national unification. The Communists went further and talked of national self-determination as a universal right, which should thus be granted also to the Macedonian, Moslem and Montenegrin populations.

Hence the partisan war was a triple war – for liberation from foreign invasion and fascism; for the overthrow of capitalism; and for the establishment of national states of the six South Slav nations, within the framework of the Yugoslav federation.

This in practice meant limiting the power of Serbia, which had dominated pre-war Yugoslavia. In the war, the Communists appealed directly to the Serb population, arguing that they had everything to gain by Yugoslavia becoming a state of equal nationalities. This policy was translated into the federal system. The borders of the partisan command-areas followed



Raising the Slovenian flag on the Austrian border

the borders of present-day republics and provinces. It should be said that the Albanian population wished from the start to be joined with Albania. After war there were plans to create a broader Balkan federation, within which there would be an Albanian federal unit. Once this plan had fallen through, the Yugoslav government had to solve the Albanian national question within Yugoslavia.

Despite this federal structure, for the first fifteen years or so political power remained centralised. However, during the 1960s and 1970s, there was a shift of power to the republics and provinces, resulting in the adoption of a new constitution in 1974. This constitution was revolutionary in the sense that it elevated the two provinces of Kosovo and Vojvodina to the status of full federal members. It is this arrangement of 1974 that Milosevic and co. destroyed, starting with its forced incorporation of Kosovo and Vojvodina into Serbia.

SO: What is your assessment of Yugoslavia under Tito – was it Stalinist?

ML: Yes and no. The revolu-

tion which brought the Communists to power was a genuine, popular revolution – communist rule in Yugoslavia (or Albania) was not imposed from outside, as in other countries of eastern Europe. But at the time of the revolution the working class was weak, amounting to less than ten percent of the total population. This meant that, in a sense, the Communist Party made the revolution on its behalf. Moreover, the party's need to build a base among the peasantry influenced also its political and cultural outlook.

On the other hand, Tito himself was a product of the Stalinised Comintern. He remained convinced that the revolutionary gains of 1941-5 could be preserved only by the party controlling all political and economic life. More generally, the authoritarian features of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (later League of Communists) were enhanced by the fact that the revolution took place in war-time conditions.

SO: What lay behind the split between Moscow and Belgrade during the late

1940s?

ML: Simply that Stalin wanted to control the Yugoslav party. He wanted the same relationship with Yugoslavia, one of total subordination, which existed with other East European countries. This was a matter of life and death for the Yugoslav party, and also for Yugoslavia. Domination by Moscow would have meant not only direct placement of Stalin's chosen people in power, but also an end to national equality within Yugoslavia, i.e. the return of Serbia to its pre-war dominant position.

It is worth mentioning in this context Tito's special relationship with the army. The army always had a strong party organisation: over 95 per cent of the officers were party members. The army came to political prominence in the early 1970s, when it backed Tito's decision to institute a mass purge of party leaders in Croatia and Serbia, and to a lesser extent in Slovenia and Macedonia. In the re-organisation of the party structure that followed, the army gained a place on the party presidency. After Tito's death, no Yugoslav politician had quite the same influence.

SO: How do you assess the Yugoslav experience with self-management?

ML: Yugoslavia's attempt to escape the problems of excessive economic centralisation through the introduction of self-management was also a very important social experiment in that it involved tens of thousands of blue and white-collar workers in the running of their enterprises. The experiment failed for essentially two reasons. The first reason is that one cannot have socialism, even self-managing socialism, in one country. In the 1960s, it became clear that Yugoslavia had to integrate itself more into the world economy, and this meant also accepting many of its rules. This strengthened the hand of management at the expense of the workers' councils. The second reason is that the introduction of self-management did not run in parallel with the extension of democracy: the party continued to take all the important economic decisions.

SO: If the form of the current crisis is the drive by the Milosevic leadership for domination, and the building of a 'Greater Serbia', what really lies behind it all? Why did Yugoslavia go into crisis?

ML: There are several reasons for this, of which perhaps the most important was the growing economic crisis. Once the first phase of industrialisation

had been completed (by the late 1950s), the next stage involved modernising the economy and creating new industrial branches. In the 1970s, much of the necessary investment came from heavy borrowing from abroad, which led to a huge national debt by the early 1980s. As the economy worsened, there was growing unemployment and general lowering of living standards. Also, the gap between the more and less developed parts of the country grew, intensifying the struggle over distribution of resources.

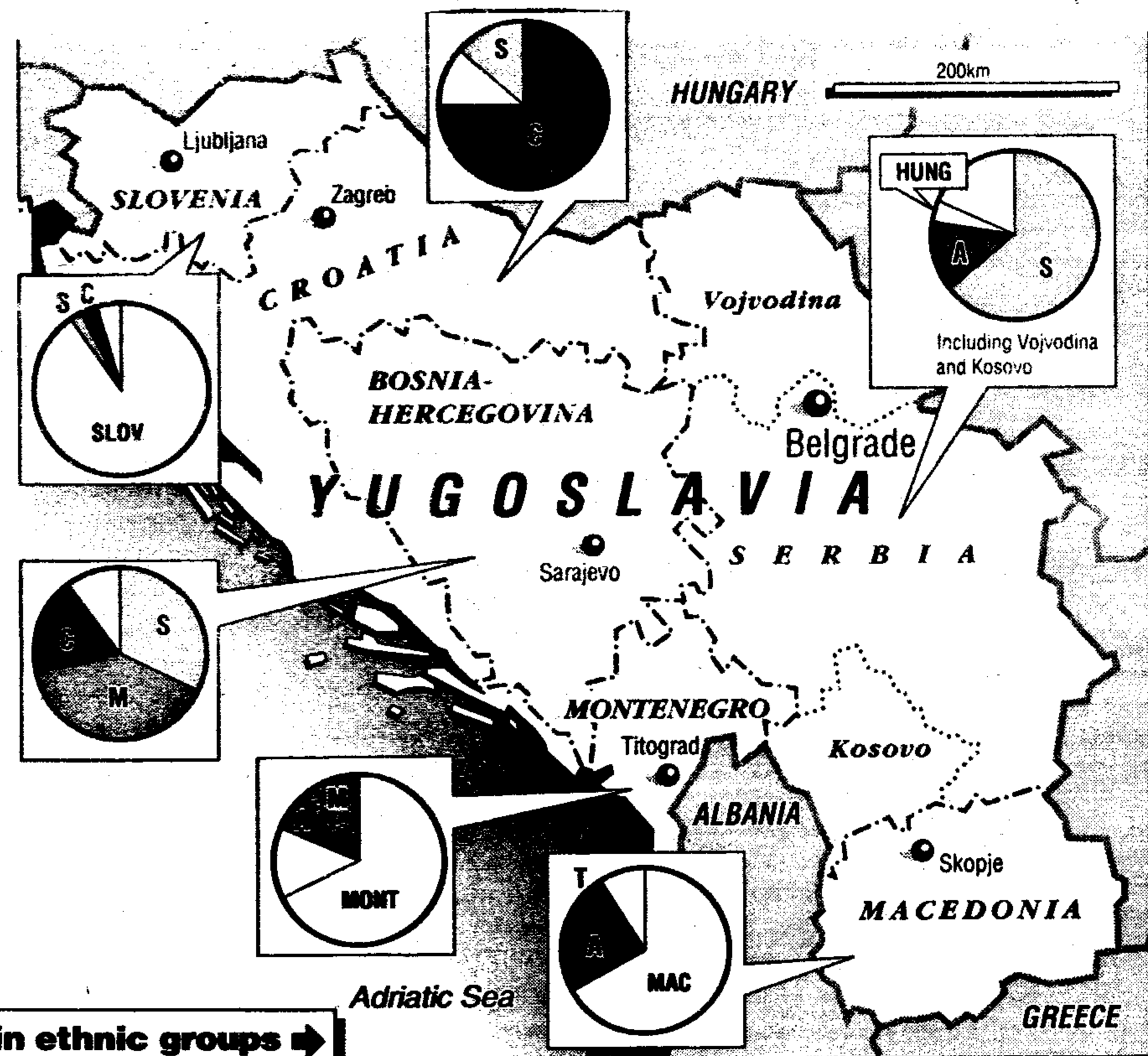
The economic problems were joined to political ones. When Tito died, in 1980, there was a political vacuum, leading to a power struggle among the federal units. As a part of this struggle, a coup took place within the Serbian Communist Party, organised by a group of generals and party state functionaries, bringing Milosevic to power.

The Yugoslav army (i.e. its high command) decided to back Milosevic, without surrendering any of its independence. The army did not like the introduction of the multi-party system, so was hostile both to the reformer in the Slovene and Croatian Communist Parties and to the governments that emerged out of the multi-party elections of April 1990. In these and subsequent elections, the Communists' loss of power everywhere except Serbia and Montenegro led to a political pact between Milosevic and the army. The generals were ready to back Milosevic partly because they favoured a recentralised Yugoslavia, partly because he was/is a Communist conservative, partly because they wanted to safeguard their material and political privileges and partly because most of them were Serb. We thus witnessed a complete turn around. The original Communist project was to safeguard the unity of Yugoslavia by limiting the power of Serbia; now, as far as the generals and Milosevic were concerned, the unity of Yugoslavia could be guaranteed only by Serbia's dominance.

Today, the process of 'Serbianisation' of the army is proceeding apace. Non-Serb officers are being replaced; any non-Serb is regarded with suspicion.

SO: What is Milosevic's programme for a Greater Serbia? Is he prepared to drive Slovenia out of the federation? Surely this would be irrational, given the concentration of wealth in the western part of the federation?

ML: There is an impression that Serbia wants to drive Slovenia out in order to be better



able to impose its domination on the others – particularly Croatia. You have to remember that in the original Yugoslav state after 1918 Slovenia was only added at the insistence of the Croats and the Slovenes; for the Serbs, Slovenia was an optional extra.

My guess is that the recent army attack on Slovenia was not motivated mainly by a drive to keep them in the federation, but to secure the borders temporarily in order that Croatia could not be supplied from the West. The key aim is to deal with and subordinate Croatia and with it the rest of Yugoslavia.

As far as the economic rationality of driving out Slovenia is concerned, well it is not economically rational – but then the Serbian leadership is not thinking in economically rational, but politically-rational terms.

SO: How have politics developed in the past period in Croatia and Slovenia?

ML: Slovenia and Croatia differ greatly. Unlike Croatia, Slovenia is ethnically homogeneous. Moreover, the 1972 party purge did not affect Slovenia as much as it did Croatia. Finally, Slovenia started to liberalise much earlier, in the mid-1980s, when the reforming wing of the local Communist party gained the upper hand over the conservatives. This led to the establishment of liberal regime, with the de facto freedom of expression and assembly.

In 1988 the army tried to put a stop to this process of political democratisation in Slovenia, contemplating at one point even outright intervention. They arrested three Mladina journalists (one of whom was Janez Jansa, Slovenia's current Minister of Defence) and an army sergeant, on the grounds that they had stolen a secret military document. The trial of the four led to a mass mobilisation of the Slovene population in defence

of national and democratic rights. Though in the elections of April 1990 the Communists were defeated, by a right-of-centre nationalist coalition DEMOS, they remained the largest party. Indeed Milan Kucan, their leader, was elected president of the republic. Despite the frequent complaints that the DEMOS government is authoritarian, Slovene political life is more open and democratic than Croatia. This is due, among other things, also to the fact that Slovenia adopted a proportional electoral system, giving a wide span of political groups and parties presence in the republican Parliament.

Things happened differently in Croatia. There, the decision to go for multi-party elections came at the last minute – barely four months before they actually took place. It involved an effective coup within the party, executed by reformed Communists. The electoral system which they adopted, however, was the British variety, i.e. first past the post. Finally, the elections were held against the background of an already mas-

sive while a minority turned to the Serb nationalists.

The CDU is not so much a party as a disparate coalition. To overcome internal conflicts and contradictions, the party is organised on a highly centralised basis, and run in an autocratic manner. Tudjman and his immediate advisers belong to the party's centre. The right wing are nationalist hawks and/or clericals, while the left shades into Social Democracy. Despite the efforts the CDU has made to win the confidence of Croatia's Serbs, the Serb minority remains fearful. It is being squeezed on both sides, by Croat and Serb extremists alike.

SU: Does Yugoslavia have a future? Could a restored federation exist after a stage of independence of the republics?

ML: We should be clear about what the position of Croatia and Slovenia actually is. Their official position until now has been that they want to be sovereign states – not secede. This means that federal laws should not apply unless they are accepted by the republics. This is really a programme for confederation.

They that want to be completely independent, but do not reject the possibility of some form of economic co-operation in that framework. Croatia and Slovenia have proposed two possible forms of confederation – with either a joint parliament with limited powers or a council made up of equal numbers of delegates from each of the federal units. things in its competence, or joint meetings of delegations from the different republics to do the same. Serbia rejected every proposal.

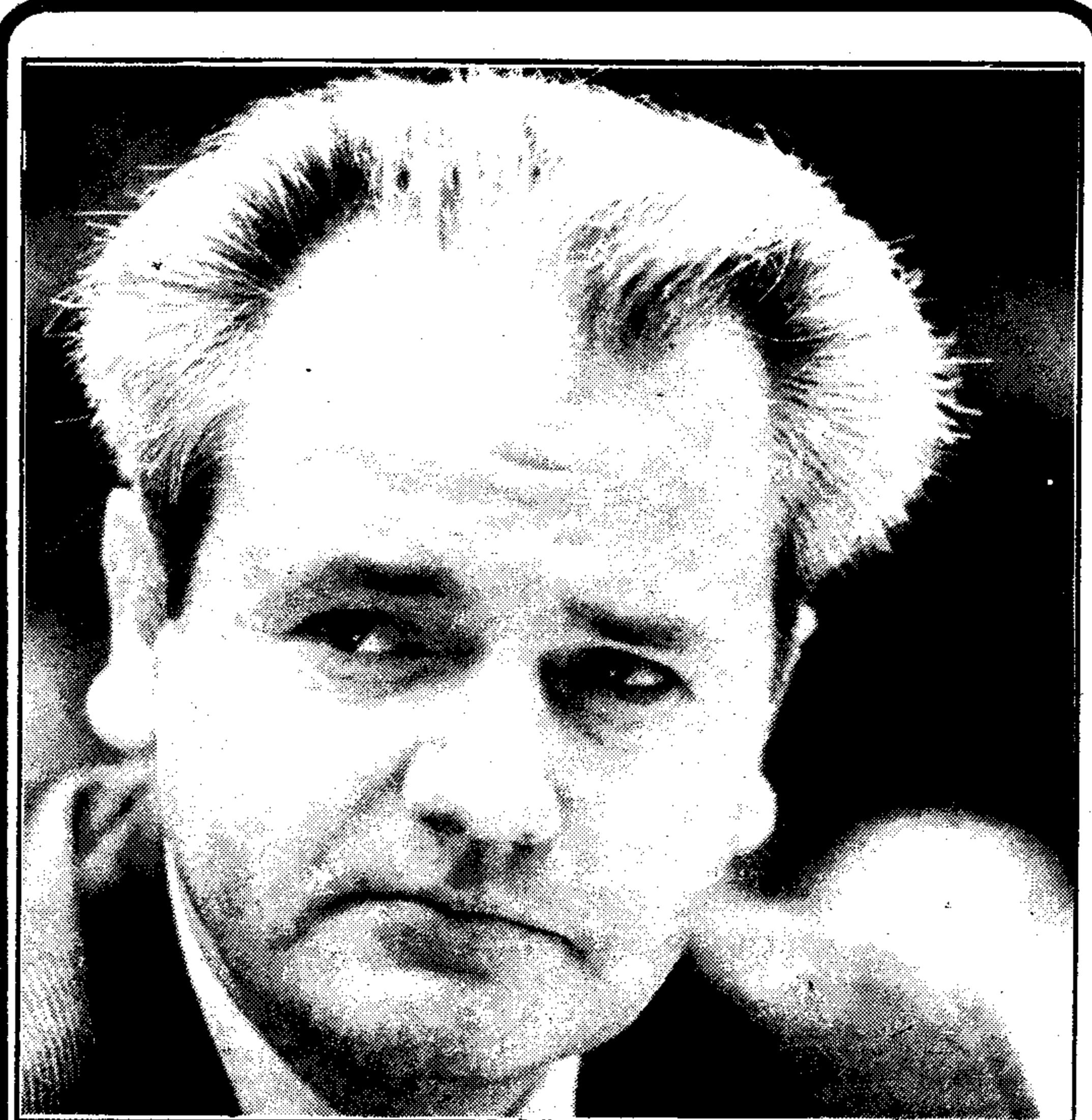
I think that Yugoslavia was a tremendously useful framework for developing the region economically, socially and politically. It could take resources from the richer areas to ensure a more even economic development of the poorer parts. But since the development of the economic crisis this material basis for the federation could not be sustained. On the other hand I think some form of confederation would be a rational option – a confederation of sovereign states. Yugoslavia, the old Yugoslavia, is dead.



Milosevic meets Germany's Genscher

sive campaign against Croatia by Serbia, part of which consisted in whipping up the Serb minority against the Croatian state. All these factors contributed to the electoral victory not of a coalition, as in Slovenia, but of a single nationalist party – the Croatian Democratic Union (CDU). The CDU won some 42 per cent of the vote, but gained nearly two-thirds of parliamentary seats.

In these elections, Croatia's Serb minority mostly voted for the Communists rather than for the nationalist Serb Democratic party. After the CDU victory, however, the majority of Serb voters became politically pas-



Driving force of the crisis Slobodan Milosevic

Yugoslavia: what position for socialists?

The political situation in Yugoslavia today is immensely complex. None of the major political forces at play want to resist capitalist restoration; none of them stand for democratic socialism. The failure of the Yugoslav model of 'socialism' has led to a struggle which takes the form of a battle between national groupings.

But this does not mean that socialists can be neutral in the conflicts taking place. The main feature of the situation is the drive by the Serbian leadership in Belgrade, under ex-Communist Slobodan Milosevic, to create a 'Greater Serbia' by subjugating the other nationalities.

Since he came to power in the Serbian CP in 1987 Milosevic has attempted to guard the position of the party elite by appealing to ethnic rivalries. The main target of this offensive is Croatia. Now, as Michele Lee explains on these pages, the federal army is in a de facto alliance with Milosevic. The army's attack on Slovenia is directly in line with Milosevic's plans to dominate the whole federation.

Every day there are new clashes in the Croatian territories bordering on Serbia. Groups of 'Chetniks' – Serbian irregulars – are fighting to drive Croats out of town of mixed Serb and Croat population.

No form of socialism is likely to come out of the present conflicts. What is at stake is the right of self-determination of the Croats and Slovenes. For socialists, their right to national sovereignty, and if they want it independence, must be absolute.

The prospect of any form of confederation has been sabotaged by the intransigence of the Serbian leadership. Socialists are never neutral on the right of self-determination for oppressed nationalities. The key aspect of the struggle today is the fight for Slovene and Croatian independence.

A particular responsibility now falls on the opposition inside Serbia itself. Milosevic is increasingly unpopular; in March there were mass strikes and demonstrations against him. However, unfortunately the opposition has not distanced itself from Milosevic's aggressive attitudes towards Croatia; indeed many key leaders explicitly support him on this.

The attitude of political leaders in the West, including the Labour Party, has been utterly cynical, defending the integrity of the Yugoslav federation against the rights of nationalities. While this may be changing under the pressure of public opinion, there is no doubt that their key objective is a stable political framework for the restoration of capitalism.

If the expected attack on Croatia comes during the summer the whole region could experience a devastating tragedy. There could be genocide against the Croats. The Albanian army is mobilised on the southern Yugoslav border to intervene in support of the Albanians in Kosovo, also victims of Milosevic's repression.

The key now to any social progress in the region is the fight for Slovene and Croat independence, and the revolutionary overthrow of the Milosevic regime.

Crisis in Yugoslavia

A socialist perspective

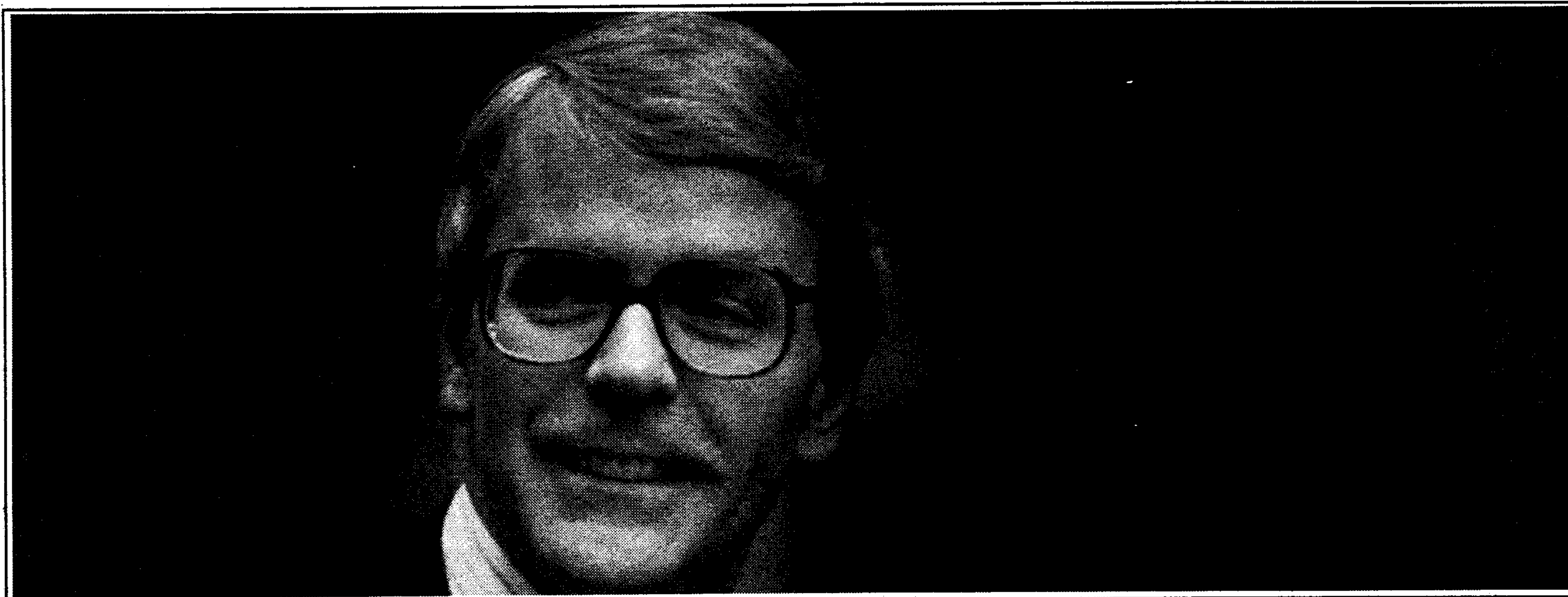
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Smiling at the possibility of a Labour foul-up? John Major

Will Kinnock's witch-hunt save Major's bacon?

HARRY SLOAN weighs up the political impasse facing John Major as the media begins speculation on a November election

NOBODY will have been longing for Parliament's summer recess more than John Major. His months as Tory leader have been an almost unmitigated failure, with the grim wreckage of a decade of Thatcherism hung like an albatross around his neck.

The run-up to the MPs' holidays has been littered with disasters and embarrassments—soaring unemployment and bankruptcy statistics, bank collapses, jail breaks and outrage at sky-high pay-offs to privatised industry bosses.

Final solution

Major's only light relief has been afforded by the Labour leadership embarking on a new witch-hunt as they seek the 'final solution' to the problem of Militant—though the Tory Party's share of votes in the Walton by-election, their lowest

since World War One, was far from comforting.

Gone are those crazy halcyon days after he took over from Thatcher, in which cynical media hype about a 'change' in line and style produced a temporary, unreal Tory revival in the polls.

Gone are his giddy days of great power statesmanship during the Gulf War, when Major could bask in the reflected glory of the US military effort and victory. Now the dark threats of renewed US air strikes against Saddam Hussein simply underline how little was achieved from the slaughter, while the grim toll of human misery facing the masses of Iraq and Kurdistan remains as a reminder of imperialist savagery.

Balmy

Long gone, even before Major took over, are the balmy heyday years of ascendant Thatcherism, with the giveaway privatisations, rocketing house prices

and a booming service sector diverting attention from the collapse of manufacturing industry.

Major has inherited only the hugely unpopular Poll Tax and NHS reforms, the scandals, the astronomical mortgage costs, the housing crisis, and the collapse of developers and retail chains as the recession wipes out much of this superficial 'growth'—to reveal a desperately weak economy, now locked into the European Monetary System.

Even the victories of Thatcherism—her imposition of brutal anti-union laws and the succession of bruising defeats inflicted on the working class—offer little consolation to John Major.

The Tories may be able to kick around a servile TUC leadership, and management may feel stronger than ever in confronting workers on the shop floor, but the economy is in the deepest, most damaging recession for many years.

Dashed

Hopes of an early June general election were dashed by a string of by-election failures and dismal results in May's council elections. Since then Labour has been consistently ahead in the polls—though their margin has varied.

Now, like the captain of a rudderless ship, Major is drifting inexorably towards a decision on when to play his last, desperate card, and drop anchor by calling an election.

Major's choice has been made harder by divisions in his own party. Thatcher may have eventually announced that she will quit at the next election, but she has spent much of the summer piling on pressure, stirring the pot of internal Tory factionalism.

Her more rabid supporters—notably Nicholas Ridley—continue to harry Major's men, especially on Europe, where the wounds opened up in the ousting of Thatcher continue to fester.

Failure

Not least of his problems is Major's failure to convince anyone inside or outside Tory ranks that he offers any seriously different or coherent policy or approach that can create an identity distinct from Thatcherism.

Many of the key Thatcher policies—in particular the Poll Tax (and Major's nebulous,

dithering 'alternative', the Council Tax), the NHS 'reforms', education and housing policies—have created crisis situations which can only worsen as time goes on.

This is why Major and co are now glumly weighing up their prospects if they go for a November Election, in which they would hope to trade primarily on the weakness of Labour's threadbare and politically conservative manifesto, but also exploit the divisions arising from Kinnock's new post-Walton witch-hunt against Militant.

Preview

A glance at the antics of Liverpool's Kinnockite Labour council—turning viciously against its workforce, and shamelessly using redundancies and privatisation to implement Tory-imposed spending cuts—offers a mini-preview of a re-elected Labour government, which would come to office pledged to capitalist policies.

Yet the bitter truth of the present situation is that the working class desperately needs to get rid of the Tories in order to regain its fighting strength. Twelve years of Thatcherite onslaught, of redundancies, closures and a barrage of anti-union laws, together with the emergence of the most spineless, defeatist union leaderships for decades have ground down workers' resistance, and brought a disastrous fall in the combativity of the trade union movement.

Strikes

1990 figures show numbers of strikes down to the lowest for over 50 years; days lost in strikes are down to 1963 levels; and numbers of workers involved in disputes are down to less than a third of the average for the 1980s.

Many of the industries—mining, docks, print and engineering—which provided the leading edge of trade union organisation have been decimated. And the destruction of much of the militant 1960s and 1970s shop stewards' movement that had been based on manufacturing industry has weakened the position of the rank and file while strengthening the increasingly right-wing officials, who have reinforced the impact of Tory anti-union laws by refusing either to challenge them or to support any action that might possibly run up against the law.

A change of government—even to elect Labour under Kinnock—would create the best opportunity to change this situation. Despite Kinnock, a Labour government would generate raised expectations while workers' confidence would be boosted by a Tory defeat.

Though we should not predict strikes immediately, it is clear that Kinnock's government would quickly run into conflict with the unions over pay, jobs and many of those issues where the Tories have already created a crisis—notably the NHS, convulsed in crisis by Thatcher's 'market-style' reforms, and education.

As struggles emerge, Kinnock and the union leaders who support him will also find themselves at loggerheads with a mobilising union rank and file, creating fresh opportunities to build a fighting left in the trade unions.

This is why the task of ousting the Tories is central in strengthening the left and building a class struggle opposition to Kinnock. For this reason socialists should be campaigning for a Labour government and a Labour vote not only in England, but also in Wales and Scotland where the demand for national assemblies must also be fought for.

The most favourable terrain for the left is one where the working class is mobilised in defence of its own interests, and can learn political lessons in the struggle with the class enemy and its own leadership.

Socialist policies

In this context alternative, socialist policies can find the most receptive audience, and the best chance of becoming a practical guide to action rather than remaining abstract propaganda and point-scoring against the right wing.

Major has now scented a hope that Kinnock's vicious new witch-hunt—which will be exploited to the full by the Tory press and mass media—could offer the Tories an unexpected chance of knocking back Labour's lead in the polls, to clinch a shock fourth term.

That's why for socialists the fight against the witch hunt, the fight to kick out the Tories and elect a Labour government, and the fight to regroup a class struggle left wing in the unions and Labour Party must now run hand in hand.

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Broad Left defeat in Liverpool

THE OUTCOME of the Walton by-election confirmed what many of the left said on this issue - that the candidature of 'Real Labour' Lesley Mahmood was a tactical mistake. It was a mistake because the Broad Left took on Kinnockism in a by-election, under the national spotlight, where the demonstration of opposition to Kinnockite policies could only be *minimised*, rather than maximised.

Of course, in a normal by-election 6.6 per cent for a far left candidate would be considered very good. But this was not a normal by-election. It was set up, both by the Kinnockites and the Broad Left, as a test of strength inside the Liverpool working class.

Mahmood's supporters claimed they would show really mass support for their policies of resistance to cuts and redundancies, rather than for those of witchfinder general Kilfoyle. But they chose a terrain where such a demonstration was *impossible*.

But it was worse than that. Militant and the Broad Left, by claiming Mahmood's campaign was that of the council workers and all those opposing cuts and redundancies, have effectively delivered a defeat to the council workers' struggle. Kilfoyle's victory was also a victory for the Harry Rimmer cuts and redundancies leadership of the council.

In a by-election in a pre-election period many workers want to vote for a 'credible' candidate - in other words one from a party which has the possibility of *forming the government*. Many workers who hate Kinnockism and all its works vote Labour to keep out the Tories and Liberals. The Broad Left is not a nationally credible alternative.



'First time around the course'? Mahmood

Standing against the official Labour candidate would have made sense if there had been a real chance of winning. But despite the Militant hype, joined by a chorus from the SWP and other far left groups, there was none. If there had been a chance of winning it would have shown a completely different relation of forces inside the labour movement nationally.

In their explanation to their Liverpool supporters, the Broad Left leadership held out the perspective of Liverpool 'Real Labour' soon being joined by similar developments around the country. This would have meant that the time was right for a split from Labour, a new party, with a significant base in the working class. But that is absurd in the present political situation.

Walton is an area of particular strength for Militant, in the most politically radical city in Britain. 2000-odd votes in this highly special

situation does not, and cannot, translate into the base for a new party to the left of Labour.

Socialist Worker explicitly draws the conclusion that the result of the election justifies the decision to stand, and is a 'good basis' for the building of a new party. That new party turns out to be the SWP itself! Yet the intentions of Real Labour and Militant are by no means clear; Lesley Mahmood claimed in a radio interview to have 'recruited' some 300 supporters during the campaign, and suggested that Walton was just 'first time around the course' in their electoral campaigning.

By standing against Labour when the situation was far from ready for this type of challenge, the Broad Left have handed the Labour leadership witch hunters a gigantic opportunity for a purge - on a plate. Terry Fields is sure to be de-selected. Socialists from all over the country who canvassed for Mahmood were photographed and will be expelled. Now the left is faced with a massive defensive struggle against this witch hunt.

The real relationship of forces is shown by the many workers who turned away from Kinnockism and voted for the Liberals. The pathetic Tory vote showed the utter rejection of what Thatcherism has done to Liverpool.

It goes without saying that we in no way share the sickening gloating of the Labour leadership and their sidekicks in *Tribune* that they have 'smashed' Militant. But the lessons have to be drawn about the real tasks in defeating the attacks on the workforce and the community.

Above all it required building *unity in action*, especially strike action, against the attacks. That unity has to reach deep among those workers who have not yet drawn firm conclusions about Kinnockism, or the need to build an alternative party to Labour. By making that task

PHOTO: Paul Herrmann (Profile)

Mahmood in Walton: a diversion for the left

by Mike Picken,
Liverpool Mossley
Hill CLP

The Walton by-election may have been a victory for Labour candidate Peter Kilfoyle, though the real winners were arguably the Liberal Democrats who increased their vote by 15%. But the real story of the by-election was the defeat of the Broad Left and Militant supporter, Lesley Mahmood.

Many Labour voters stayed away, disillusioned with Labour's lack of challenge to the Tories. If the result were repeated across the country, Labour would fail to win many of its target marginal seats, including in Liverpool.

But many thousands of workers did vote Labour, seeing it as a class vote against the Tories in a city ravaged by Tory policies. The Broad Left had been hoping for at least 10% of the vote and were claiming 10,000 to 12,000 promises in the run-up to polling day.

But Mahmood got only 2,600 votes, showing the folly of standing against Labour in parliamentary elections at the present time. During times of crisis, the working class always turns to its traditional organisations first. The fact that Labour has such right wing policies will disillusion many, but will not now lead to a fundamental break by the mass of the working class.

While Mahmood's vote may be creditable as a far left vote, it does nothing to build opposition in the Labour Party and the unions to the Kinnockite move to the right. By allowing the Labour Party the excuse of 'standing against the party' to witch-hunt and expel socialists, the Broad Left candidacy played into the hands of Kinnock and council leader Harry Rimmer.

Mahmood's vote was little more than that gained in one ward in the constituency by the Broad Left candidate in the May council elections. The by-election was largely a single issue campaign, focusing exclusively on the council redundancies. In a parliamentary election, this was far too parochial a response.

By attempting to turn the by-election into a referendum on council redundancies, Mahmood did a disservice to the continuing union battle.

But as we go to press, the GMB and NALGO are considering stepping up the campaign and the possibility of all out action exists. On 12 July, 150 more workers lost their jobs, and the battle to prevent sackings continues.

For the Broad Left, there will have to be a full post mortem of the campaign. Many are complaining about the association of Mahmood with Militant, and the way they took over the campaign.

Militant supporters will have to have a total rethink. Despite the brazen face put on the result by Mahmood and Militant editor Peter Taafe,

there are reports that many of their supporters are having second thoughts about the tactic of standing and splitting from the Labour Party.

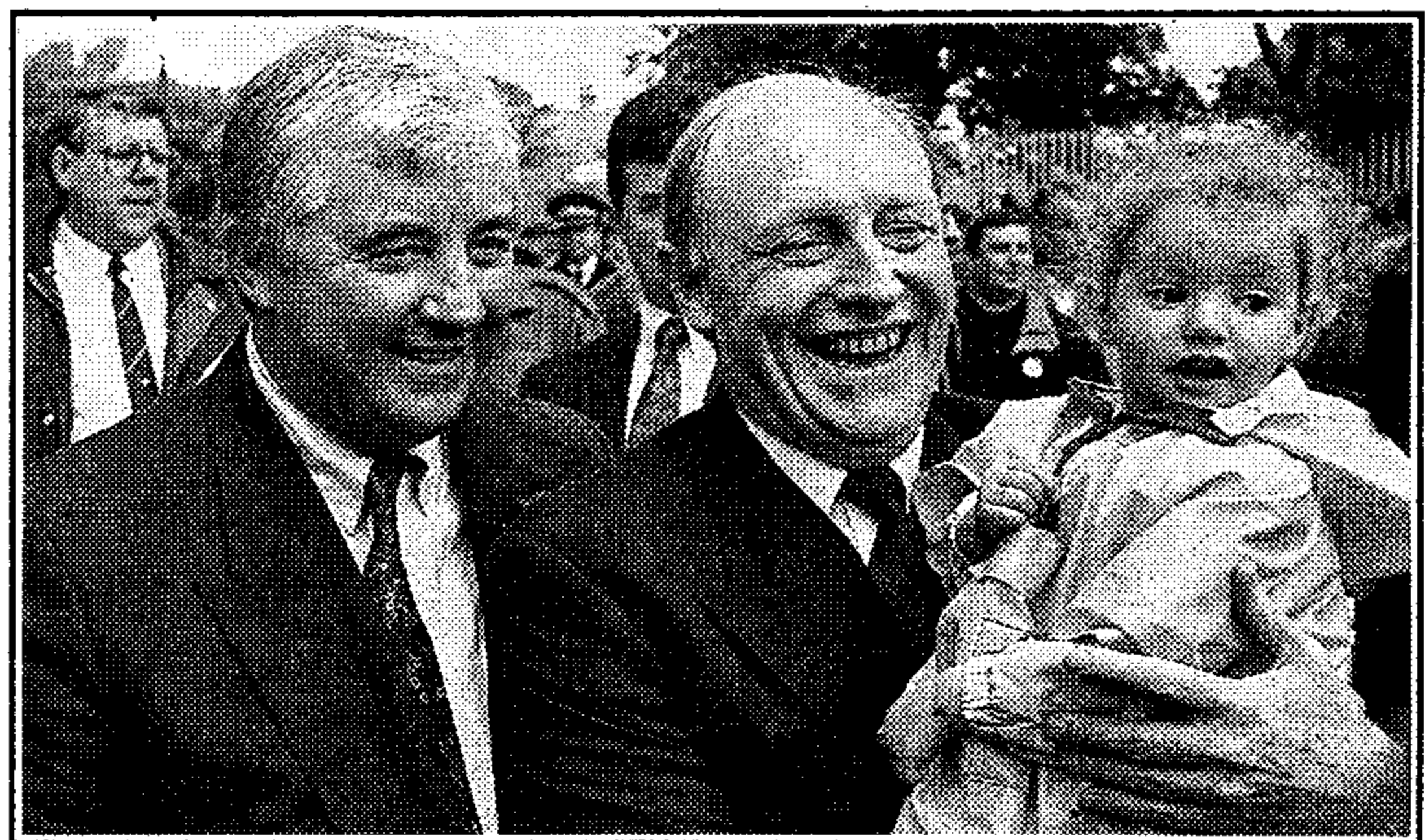
During the round of expulsions that will inevitably follow, socialists should be opposing the witch-hunt, while at the same time arguing that the tactics pursued by the Broad Left and Militant make it easier for the right to grab control of the Party.

The Socialist Workers Party (SWP) argue that Mahmood's 2,600 votes were a positive sign of how many support an alternative to Kinnock. Unfortunately (but inevitably) they have now called for all socialists to leave the Labour Party in Liverpool and join...the SWP!

But such an approach plays into the hands of the Labour right wing. If the left were to follow their advice, the result would be more of Rimmer's policies and more MPs like Kilfoyle! The answer lies not with the SWP, but a principled fight inside the Party.

The national 'Campaign Against the Witch-hunt' needs to be built, and links need to be made across the left in the Party. In Liverpool, Labour Party Socialists (LPS) had a highly successful meeting after the by-election. While these are difficult times for socialists in Liverpool, LPS offers the possibility of building a fightback in the party.

The witch-hunt may widen beyond the core of Militant and the Broad Left, and it will be important to organise to defend anyone threatened. Two councillors who are not in the



Many disillusioned Labour voters stayed away

Broad Left group, Keith Hackett and Frank O'Donohue, are still suspended.

There is a real threat of action against former council leader Keva Coombes and three other councillors for voting against redundancies on June 19. If LPS can build out of this situation and show that there is a way

of fighting for principled socialist policies in the Party, there is still hope that members of the Broad Left may embrace that approach.

Inevitably, all eyes will be focused on the General Election and building 'Socialists for Labour' also gives an opportunity to continue the fightback.

PHOTO: Paul Herrmann (Profile)

Defend Terry Fields MP!

by Mike Picken

Terry Fields, Labour MP for Liverpool Broadgreen, has been jailed for 60 days by Bootle magistrates for non-payment of the Poll Tax. By standing up against the Tories and refusing to pay, he has shown solidarity with the poor and challenged the pathetic line of the Labour leadership.

Because he refused to endorse the Labour candidate in the Walton by-election, Fields was under investigation by Walworth Road. His stand against the Poll Tax will now be used to justify his removal as a parliamentary candidate in the next general election. All sections of the left, whatever their view on Walton, must now unite in his defence.

Trade union and Labour Party branches should pass resolutions of solidarity. Fellow Labour MPs refusing to pay the Poll Tax should publicise his case and continue to support his stand. Broadgreen CLP and all Labour party members should demand that Fields remain an endorsed candidate (he was reselected by a huge majority).

By highlighting his case and that of other Poll Tax prisoners, the campaign should be strengthened in the Labour Party for an immediate repeal of the Poll Tax and an amnesty for all non-payers by a Labour government.

Ireland Staying on ... a cautionary tale for horse lovers

By David Coen

Once upon a time in Ireland when the sun always shone and Fianna Fail always had a comfortable majority, the then Finance Minister Charles J. Haughey was unable to turn up to the Dail on Budget Day because he had fallen off his horse. As ever, there were those begrudgers who attributed his 'shoulder' injury to something else entirely, but this is not that kind of paper.

Charley's principal mortal sin is that he has never managed to win a majority in the Dail since he became leader of Fianna Fail in 1979. In the recent local elections the Fianna Fail share of the vote fell to 38 per cent. A party which has dominated politics in the South since de Valera formed his first government in 1932 finds this unforgivable.

His government only survives with the support of Des O'Malley's Progressive Democrats. Then there is the on-going problem with his friend Larry Goodman.

Goodman is Europe's biggest beef trader and dominates a large slice of 26 county agriculture. He was given millions of pounds in state-subsidised loans to develop the Irish beef industry. But the money seems to have been diverted to other purposes such as funding Goodman's take-over bids. Following the World in Action programme on alleged fraud in the

Goodman Group, Haughey has been forced to set up a public inquiry.

To cap it all, he had to sack his deputy Brian Lenihan because Lenihan was caught lying, trying, as it happens, to cover up for what is assumed to be an earlier indiscretion by his leader. Lenihan went on to lose the Presidency (a Fianna Fail retirement home) to Mary Robinson.

The main reason for Fianna Fail's declining share of the vote is the IMF inspired financial strait jacket which means fewer goodies to sweeten the voters. Without such incentives Fianna Fail's working class support steadily ebbs away.

Despite fulsome praise for their economic progress in the British press, the economy is in poor shape. Unemployment is stuck at 18% even with high emigration. It is estimated that a third of the population live on or below the poverty line. If present trends continue it is estimated that 500,000 people will leave the country in the period 1980 to 2000, half the number who left during the Great Famine of the 1840's.

Haughey needs a deal with the British not just to distract attention from the crisis, to bolster his position in Fianna Fail or to win himself something in the history books.

'Security' spending is a drain on the 26-County economy and affects every area including tourism. Then there is the economic cost of the border itself, recently estimated at £3 billion over 5

years in lost output and about 45,000 jobs.

This is the basis of 'revisionism' which has sprouted amongst the southern intelligentsia over the past few years. The recent celebration (if that's not too strong a word) of the 75th anniversary of the 1916 Rising show the scale of such self-doubt among the Dublin ruling class.

In the face of the previous crisis Fianna Fail abandoned their self-sufficiency policy and opened the economy to foreign investment.

That worked for about 20 years, especially following entry to the EEC in 1972. Haughey took over the leadership of Fianna Fail in 1979 just as Irish taxpayers began to revolt against the tax levels needed to subsidise foreign investment. His attempts to square the circle ended in a massive government debt.

Given Haughey's appalling record in government on everything from the Birmingham 6 to extradition, and his understandable need to keep his traditional base intact at a time when the traditional instrument, government spending, was running into a debt crisis, the vehemence of the ruling class attack on him seems surprising. But that is to leave out of account the



Charles Haughey

blind panic, almost despair, of the southern ruling class in the early 1980s.

It is against this background that we must assess the prospects for the so-called Brooke Initiative. The ending of the talks should not be taken to mean the end of the process which began with the 1985 Anglo Irish Agreement. The Agreement is de facto recognition of the six-county state - what Haughey in 1983 called 'that failed political entity' - in return for the right to be consulted on matters such as security.

Yet of all the parties, except perhaps the SDLP, Haughey was the most anxious to deal and was being urged to do so, at almost any cost, by the southern ruling class. They have

no strategic interest in unity. What they most fear is a return of the nightmare scenario of the early 1980s when an economic crisis coincided with mass upsurges a round the national question. They hope the British, led by Major instead of the unionist Thatcher, can persuade the Unionists into some kind of arrangement which will defuse 'the North' as an issue.

Hence new moods are constantly being discovered. The election of Mary Robinson is taken as the end of 'civil war politics' and of course, the demand for unity. History is revised. Nationalism is dead and the new Europe beckons, especially regional aid. In the midst of this rodeo Charley hangs on. But only just.

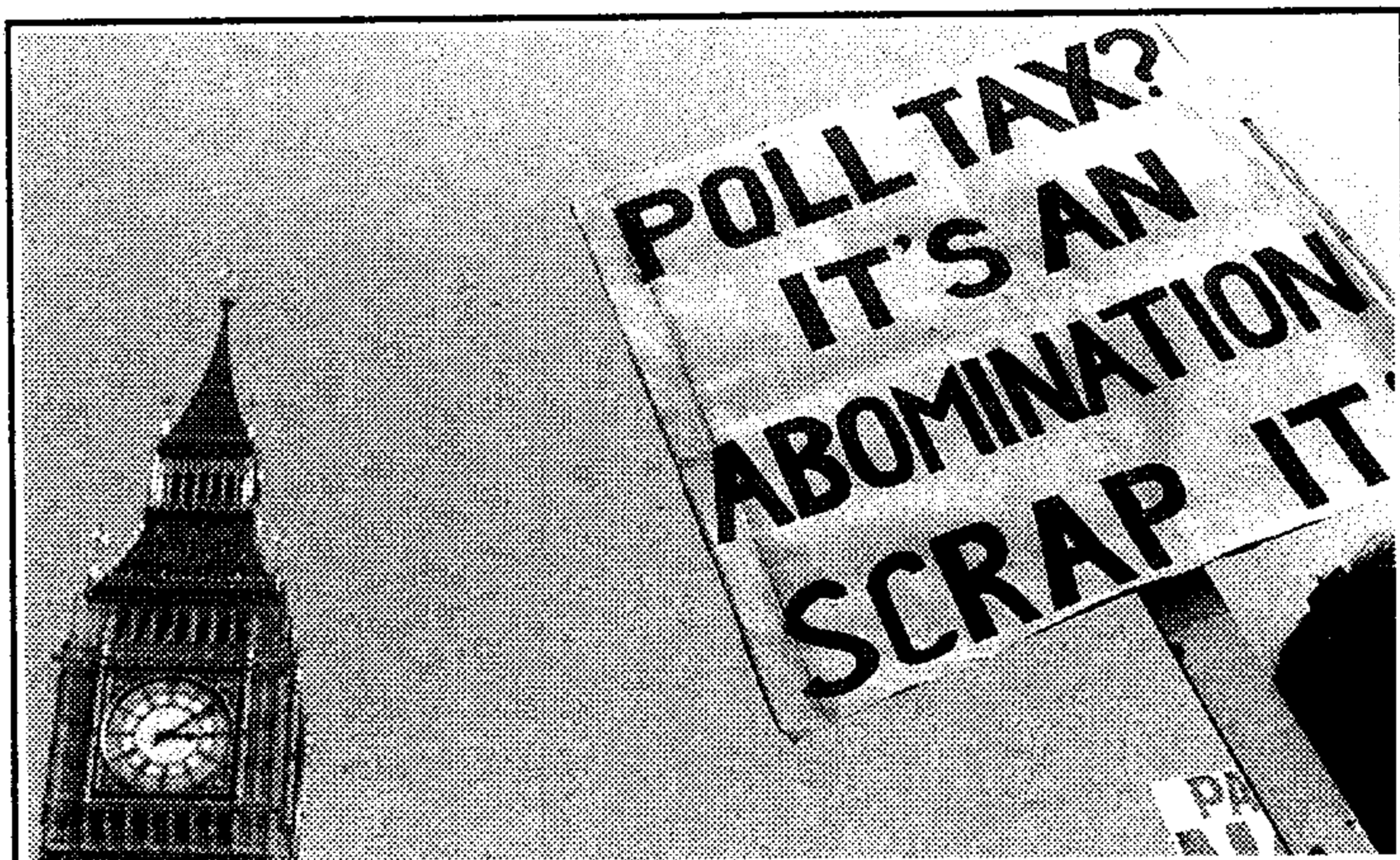
Amnesty for all Poll Tax prisoners!

by Nigel Fisher

THE POLL Tax is so discredited that even the Tories want to get rid of it. However this undoubted victory has been won at some huge cost to many individual non-payers and protestors.

The ruling class wish to punish those who dare defy their unjust laws. They have wherever possible, made people pay heavily for any resistance to the Poll Tax. People are being committed to prison for non-payment on a now regular basis. Also the courts have handed down savage sentences to those who were arrested and dragged through the courts because they fought back against police brutalization of APT demonstrations.

In order to maintain the non-payment campaign, it is vital that those victimized by the state are given the utmost solidarity. Along with the demand that the Poll Tax be scrapped now, the APTM should have as its main demand that there should be an amnesty for all those who are defendants or prisoners as a result of the Poll Tax. No protester should be in prison for standing up to the Poll Tax or police attacks upon



anti-Poll Tax demonstrations.

Practical steps

Every APT group should be making it their main priority to support those facing the bailiffs or imprisonment. People need both practical help and political solidarity. Practical help ranges from legal advice to fundraising for prisoners and their dependants.

Political solidarity is more important. It helps to know that there is a strong movement behind you if you are defying the state. It is also political solidarity that can stop the victimization of individuals. The savage sentences imposed on people arrested after the Battle of Trafalgar are the result of the attacks upon them in the media by Hattersley and by the 'leaders' of the APTM, Steve Nally and Tommy Sheridan. If the APTM and the Labour Movement had been quick to defend these people, they would have received completely different treatment by the courts.

All the people arrested and imprisoned as a result of the APT demonstrations need the full unconditional support of the movement. The APTM has

challenged the Law with the non-payment campaigns. Large, militant demonstrations calling for defiance of the Law are always going to be in danger of attack from the cops.

The APTM needs to swing its whole weight behind the Trafalgar Square Defendants' Campaign and the various Poll Tax prisoners' support groups. It is these organizations that provide the example of how to organize solidarity for Poll Tax prisoners. It is vital that the work of these organizations is sustained over the next few years, while people are in prison because of the Poll Tax.

Matt Lee, a Socialist Outlook supporter and Poll Tax prisoner has been moved. Please write to him.

Matthew James Lee
MW1054
HM Featherstone,
New Road,
Wolverhampton,
WV10 7PU

Take the fight for choice into the unions!

by Leonora Lloyd

SINCE the 1930s when Labour and Cooperative women first called for the legalisation of abortion, it has remained a campaigning issue.

In 1975 the Working Women's Charter Campaign was one of the groups which formed the National Abortion Campaign (NAC). Since then, most of the major trade unions have affiliated to NAC and a number of special conferences directed to the labour movement have been held.

The next such conference takes place on July 27, focusing on taking the struggle for abortion rights into the unions.

In the last year, there have been changes in the abortion law, drastic cut-backs in family planning provision, the establishment of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority, and the announcement that the abortion pill, RU486, has been approved for use in this country by the Safety of Medicines Committee.

The coming conference will be looking at these issues, with a number of expert speakers as well as trade union speakers to

look at the campaigns that arise from them.

The conference will also be addressed by Jolanta Plakwicz of the Polish Women's Association, which has been leading the fight against attempts to make abortion illegal orchestrated by the Catholic church.

The last two years have been unique in NAC's history. After major campaigns - such as the Campaign against Corrie - support usually declines. But in the



aftermath of the Fight Alton's Bill (FAB) campaign, and the Stop the Amendment Campaign, membership has steadily

risen. A number of new unions, such as USDAW and the RMT, have affiliated.

This increased support has come because we have not been content to simply oppose anti-abortion propaganda - but have actively promoted pro-choice policies.

The conference is a part of this process. It will highlight the major issues in the politics of reproductive rights that face women and the labour movement over the next period. We aim both to map out our campaigning priorities and also to underline the importance of international solidarity as a part of our work.

see page 13

Algeria - fundamentalists fail in bid for power

by Patrick Baker

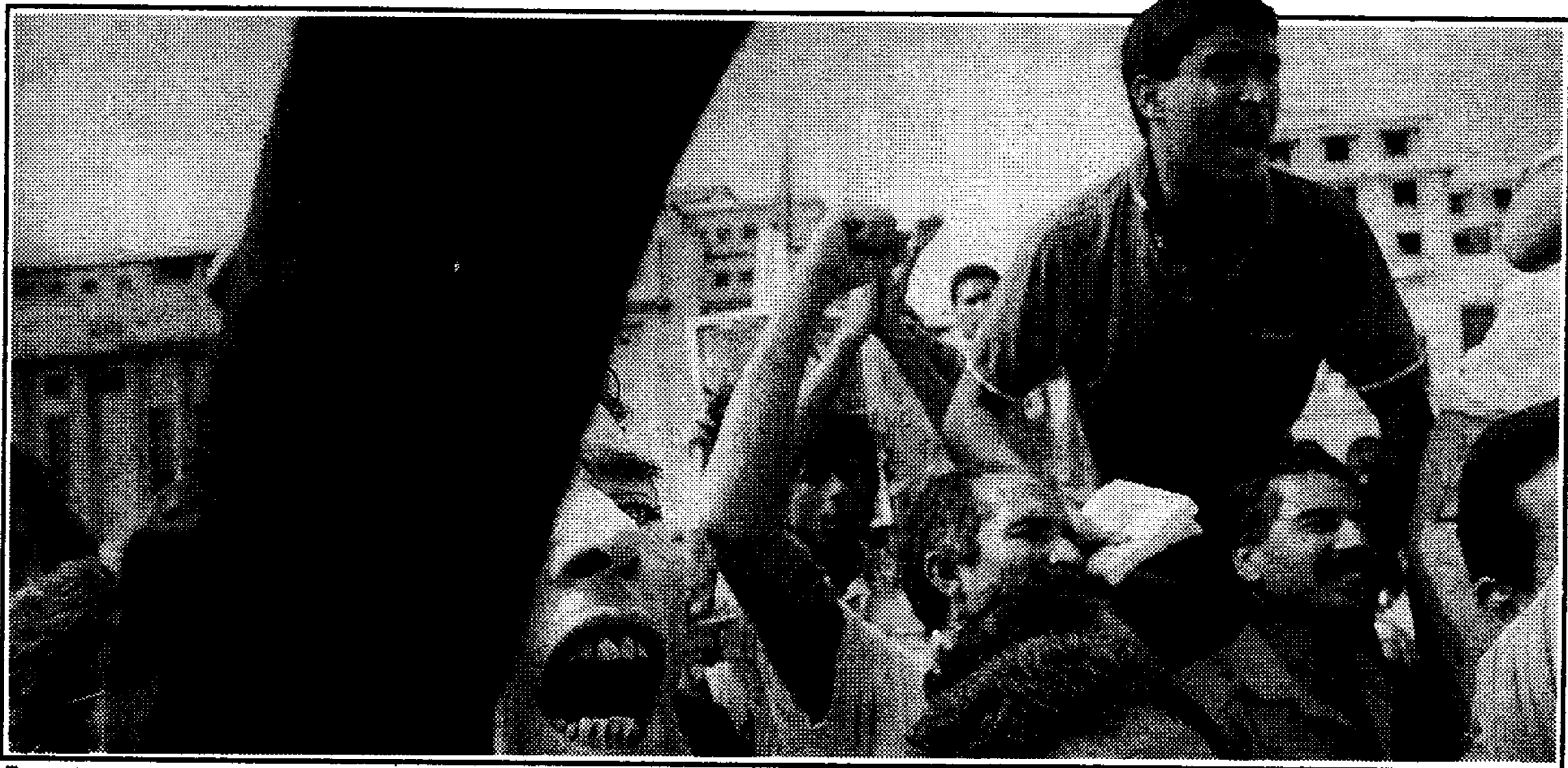
THE BID FOR POWER launched by the fundamentalist Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) in Algeria now appears defeated. Though the FIS, led by Ali Belhadj and Abassi Madani, succeeded in its aim of toppling the Chadli regime, it too has now met with defeat. Both main leaders have been arrested and the Front's apparatus smashed.

Though the fundamentalists were able to win support for gung-ho militarism during the Gulf war, they have found it difficult to overcome the machine of the ruling FLN, which has had a solid grip on the reins of state power in Algeria for nearly 30 years. The FIS were able to take advantage of popular discontent at falling living standards, taking control of the majority of local councils.

But once in power, they found themselves in no position to alter the economic status quo. In addition, gerrymandering of the political system by the FLN meant that for any other party to win a majority of deputies required a massive majority. Though the FIS won double the FLN's vote in the June 1990 elections, the FLN could still win double the number of seats if this were to be repeated in a general election.

In addition, the fundamentalists have contributed to their own problems. When the main Algerian union federation, UGTA, called a general strike in defence of living standards, the FIS issued instructions to ignore it. But it was the fundamentalists who were ignored - the action won overwhelming support. And the FIS were discredited.

PHOTO: Jez Coulson (Insight)



Demonstrators on the streets of Algiers

With Madani and co on the defensive, premier Chadli decided to go for a general election on 27 June. The fundamentalists' loss of credibility was reflected when they tried, in turn, to call a general strike in protest at the electoral system. Large factories were unaffected - only Islamic markets and town halls were shut down.

It was in this context that the state of emergency was announced. With tension already high, police assaults on working class areas of Algiers set off an explosion. The FIS were pushed to prominence in the absence of any alternative leadership for popular discon-

tent. But also, the new Ghazali regime chose to ban political activity by all other forces, while negotiating with the FIS.

The reaction of the left was mixed: while the main far left party, the PST, called unambiguously for an end to the emergency, others supported actions called by the FIS. The Workers Party, followers of Pierre Lambert, argued that the fundamentalist strike should be supported due to the call for Chadli's resignation. The fact that it also demanded an Islamic republic was apparently regarded as unimportant.

The outcome of the state of emergency appears very similar to the previous status quo, but with a new FLN figurehead. With both main fundamentalist leaders imprisoned and implicated in illegal arms imports, the FIS are seriously weakened. But there is still no workers' party capable of organising popular discontent in a positive direction. Building one is the task faced by the Socialist Workers Party and other left organisations, recently unbanned.

Based on an interview with Chawki Sahli, a prominent PST leader.

Mandela's pragmatism dominates ANC congress

by Charlie van Gelderen

It is too early for a definitive analysis of the national congress of the ANC in Durban. But it is clear that the 'pragmatist' line predominated. This will go down as the congress that marked the end of sanctions.

The ANC confessed on July 4 that it was losing support among South Africa's blacks, thwarting its aspirations to form the country's first post-apartheid government. Secretary General Alfred Nzo bemoaned the fact that the ruling National Party was gaining support from non-white communities. This was taken up by Mac Maharaj: 'The National Party has the strategy for winning over the fellow-oppressed. Can we counter this with other strategies?' he asked.

This was the big issue that the congress had to address. In the run-up to the congress, there had been consistent criticism of the 'elitism' of the outgoing leadership and disillusionment with the way that it was constantly over-shadowed by President De Klerk. He has maintained the initiative since he announced 'the end of apartheid' in February 1990.

There was also some criticism of the ANC's relationship with the South African Communist Party (SACP). ANC spokesperson, Saki Mocoza, said the movement's relationship with the SACP was one of several factors identified as a block to recruitment in 'other race groups' (ie non-African).

But these criticisms do not ap-

pear to have led to any breach between the two organisations. Joe Slovo and other prominent SACP members were elected to the new ANC executive.

This election was expected to bring to a head the factional struggle between the 'pragmatists' associated with Thabo Mbeki and the 'radicals' under the leadership of Chris Hani. It was expected that the outcome would emerge in the election of the Deputy President, seen as the heir apparent to Nelson Mandela.

Mandela's election to the Presidency, in succession to Oliver Tambo, was endorsed unanimously. But a compromise candidate for his Deputy, avoiding any conflict, was found in veteran leader Albert Sisulu.

Grass roots victory

The election of the new executive was a victory for the grass roots branches and regions, which had become dissatisfied with outgoing leadership, dominated by exiles. The new executive will be dominated by leaders of the United Democratic Front (UDF) and the Broad Democratic Movement - those who continued the struggle inside the country in the teeth of the State of Emergency regulations.

The biggest cheer when the election results were announced greeted the name of 'Terror' Lekota, former number two in the UDF. During the conference he denounced Mandela from the floor for his authoritarian tendency to impose his will on the internal decision-making process. But there was big dis-



Winnie Mandela: Congress said 'Hands off'

appointment among women delegates when the proposal fell that at least 15 per cent of executive members should be women.

Perhaps surprisingly, Winnie Mandela attracted a large vote. This came mainly from the youth and more militant delegates, who admire her revolutionary ardour, whatever her faults. It was also a signal to the government - watch out, Winnie belongs to us. Hands off!

But in general the 'pragmatic' course set by Nelson Mandela will continue to be followed. This is most clearly expressed in the soft line put forward on sanctions. While calling for sanctions to be maintained in the meantime, he added 'We are calling for flexibility and imagination, for an approach which is realistic'. These words mark

a clear recognition that, for all practical purposes, sanctions are dead.

Boycotts

The ANC's agreement to the ending of the sports boycotts, which were psychologically more effective than trade sanctions, gives the green light to those - like the Tories - who want a rapid return to normal trade relations with South Africa.

George Bush and Douglas Hurd were quick to jump into this opening. Bush's statement that he was satisfied that demands made on South Africa had been met and that commercial links could be restored will be hailed as another victory for De Klerk.

The ANC is now trapped in its own rhetoric. It has nowhere to go, except to carry on negotiations with the regime, with the initiative still firmly in De Klerk's hands.

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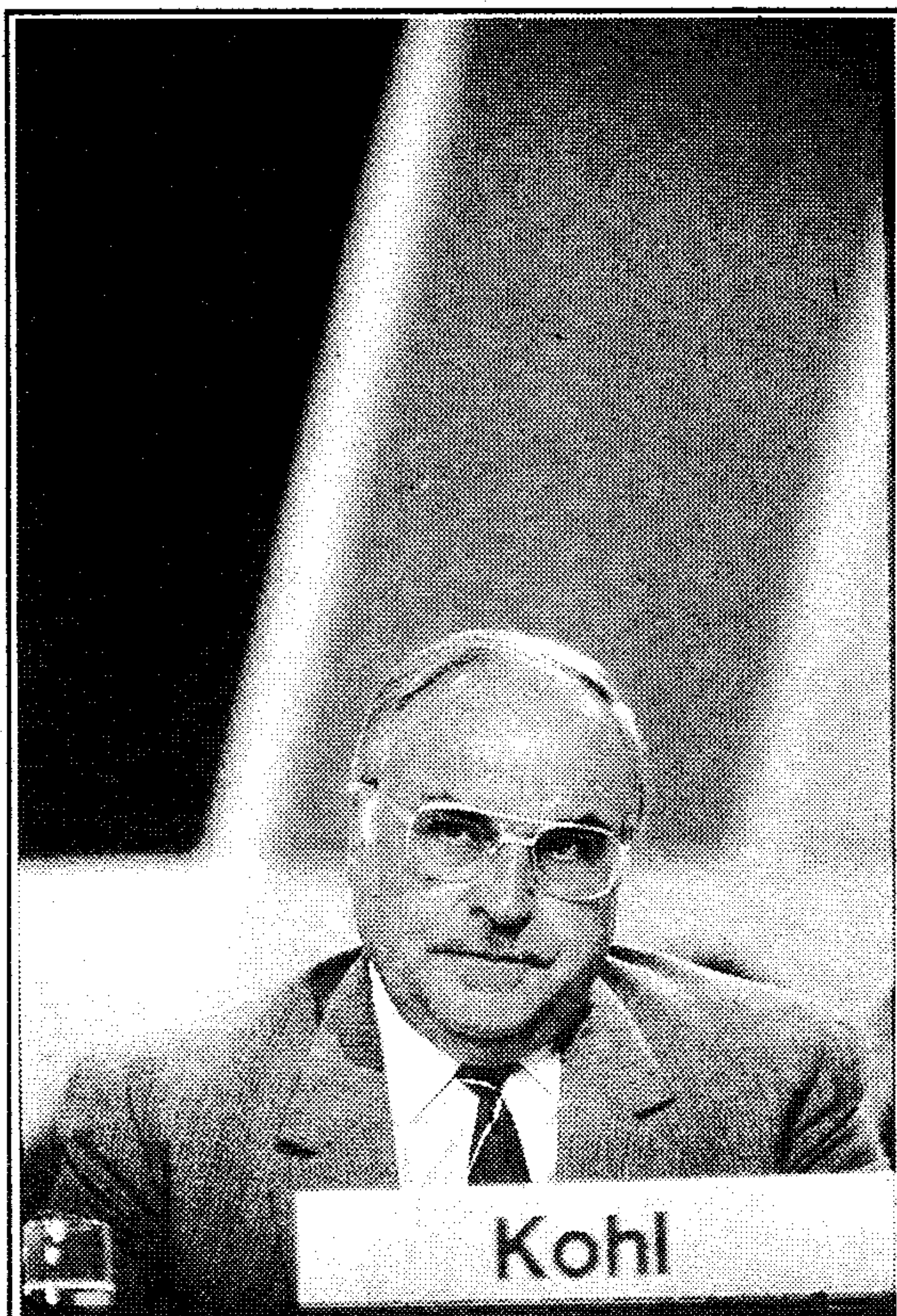
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Chancellor Kohl



German demonstrators protest loss of jobs in East Germany

What kind of European unity?

By Peter Gowan

Since the fall of Thatcher, the prolonged Tory crisis over European unity has not been resolved. The new stage of European capitalist integration poses a huge question mark over the whole of Tory political strategy.

During the 1980s the Thatcher project combined the following elements. First to deliver major defeats to the labour movement, second to export large amounts of the capital gained from North Sea oil to more profitable areas abroad, and third to encourage inward investment from the US and Japan. In this framework it was quite possible to remain in the European Community (EC), while maintaining a nationalist rhetoric which is central to Conservative political ideology. Indeed, being part of the EC aided inward investment, because Japan in particular used Britain as a launch pad to penetrate European markets.

The Tories could live with the single European market; but the problem became acute when it became apparent that the EC was serious about moving towards a higher form of economic and political unity. It was obvious that whole sections of the Tory party would oppose it.

Tory nationalism

The dilemmas were acutely posed by Geoffrey Howe when he resigned from the Cabinet. Big sections of capital want to make sure Britain is not left out of Europe, and the City of London is also worried about being excluded. But the prospect of having major decisions made by new supra-state institutions in Europe strikes at the heart of Tory nationalism. It is a question of *which institutions* command popular loyalty – will they continue to be those of the Crown and Parliament, or European-

wide institutions?

The political dimension of this is crucial: Toryism in Britain, like Gaullism in France, has always been distinguished by a strident nationalist trend. This is quite different to the German or Italian Christian Democrats, who are quite prepared to accept federalism. We should add that Thatcher and her supporters were particularly linked with sections of British capital dependent on the North American market, rather than Europe. But these sections of capital are really a minority in the capitalist class, both in the CBI and the City.

Fear of 'federalism'

While the Thatcherites are utilising the fear of 'federalism' to strengthen their factional position in the Tory party, Major is really not making fundamental choices but attempting to hold the Tories together to win the next election.

"Toryism in Britain, like Gaullism in France, has always been distinguished by a strident nationalist trend. This is quite different to the German or Italian Christian Democrats, who are quite prepared to accept federalism"

What are the real plans being developed for a united capitalist Europe? It is important here to distinguish rhetoric and reality. The overall trend is towards an increasingly united Western Europe dominated by its most powerful economic and political force – German capital. But the German ruling class wants this on its own terms – a 'harmonisation' of economics, especially monetary policy, with the harsh anti-inflationary policy of the German Bundesbank.

United capitalist Europe

No one should have doubt what this means. A united capitalist Europe means devastation for huge swathes of industry, especially on the periphery of Europe, which cannot compete with the manufacturing strength of its German-dominated heartland. It would not be a Europe where suddenly all workers had the prosperity of workers in western



Spain's Felipe Gonzalez

Germany or where the Social Charter eliminates poverty. On the contrary, it would be a Europe of a very tough anti-working class regime. We would see permanent rates of unemployment much higher than the highest in Europe today – like those in France and Spain.

In all the plans for European unity, it is German capitalism which will call the shots. And German capitalism will not go for new supra-national institutions which will have control of the decisive institutions, like a new European central bank. Jaques Delors' vision of the European Commission and the European Parliament as really powerful democratic institutions is a non starter. The French government itself does not even support Delors.

In fact, the type of European union being discussed today would even strengthen the power of the individual state apparatuses, against any form of democratic control. *An increasingly united capitalist Europe will be a Europe which attempts to crush any democratic control of its institutions.* It will be a harsh right-wing Europe, with real 'politics' done behind the backs of the masses in the corridors of central economic institutions.

Labour Movement

The right-wing Europe which is in the making is not a 'German-dominated' Europe, but a Europe dominated by *German capital*. This distinction is important

because of the vital role of the German labour movement in future struggles.

Two of the crucial labour movement forces in capitalist Europe in the past 40 years have been the German and Italian unions, and their mass parties, the German Social Democrats (SPD) and the Italian Communists (PCI).

Now the Italian Communists are in full retreat and collapse. The Occhetto leadership of what now calls itself the Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS) is collapsing rightwards at an horrendous rate, and their likely future is to be gobbled up by the right wing Social Democrats under Craxi. Of course, it is very good that the communist 'refounders', who have split from the PDS will have maybe 150,000 in their new party, but that is very weak compared with the 1.75 million in the old

Italian Communist Party.

The German labour movement has been an immense point of support for progressive policies like the 35-hour week, and is a major objective factor in the organisational strength of the European working class. So there is nothing 'anti-German' in outlining the reactionary consequences of the domination of German capital.

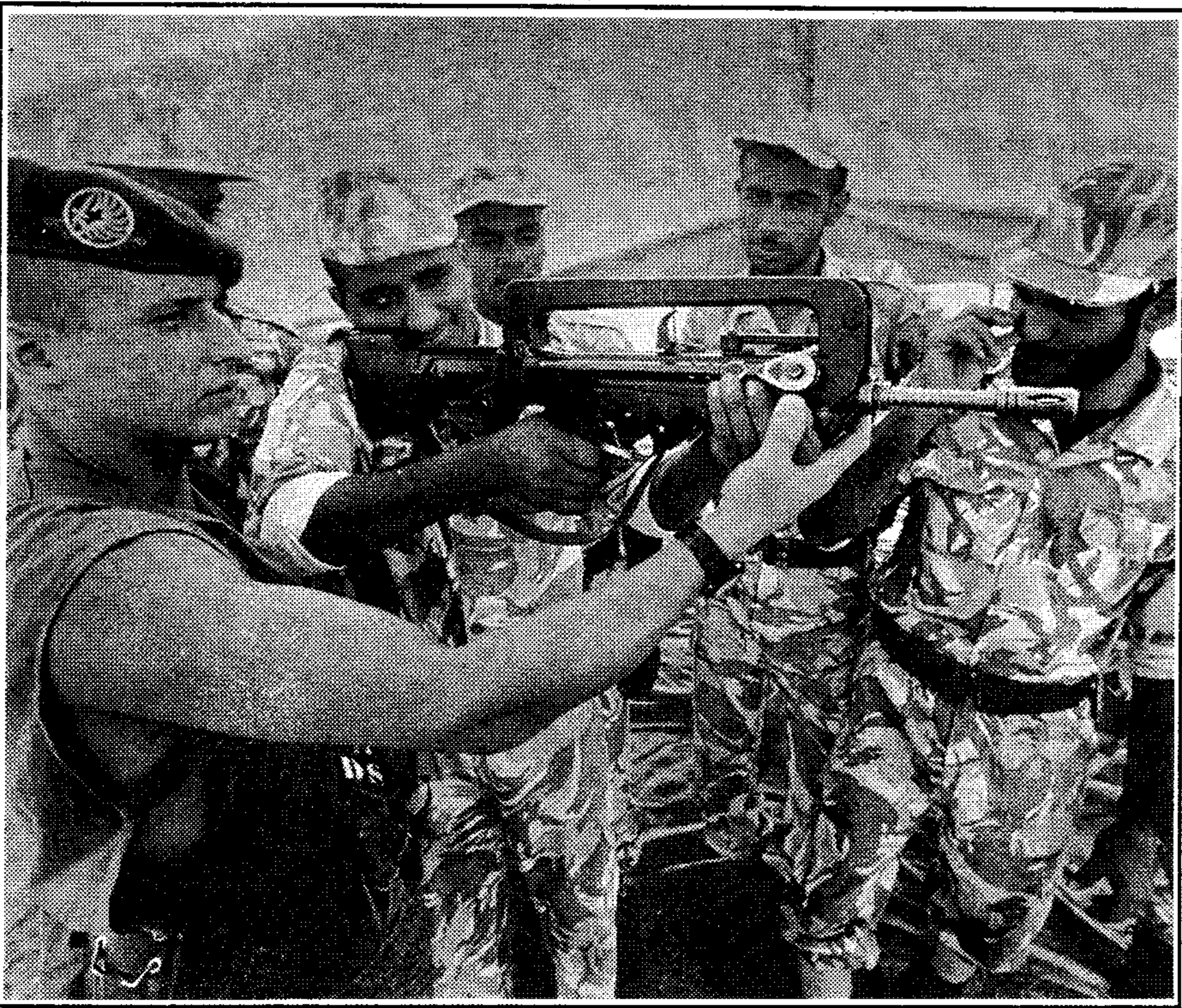
This relates to the political development of the European workers movement. Much of social democracy has shifted to the right. But there is also utter shipwreck in the Communist and ex-Communist parties. In many places there are forces in

those parties which don't simply want to collapse into social democratic or openly pro-capitalist politics. Socialists have to reach out to those forces. To do that we have to break with knee-jerk Stalinophobic attitudes. We are in a *post-Stalinist* situation. To imagine that the central, or even a major task today is 'the fight against Stalinism' is to flog a dead horse.

Right wing

What will be the reaction of the right wing to a Europe dominated by German capital? In Britain the Thatcherites certainly think they have a future on a nationalist anti-German basis. They have been extending their attempts to link up with the French right. The Bruges

"An increasingly united capitalist Europe will be a Europe which attempts to crush any democratic control of its institutions"



French troops: Mitterrand is pressing for a joint European strike force

group in the Tory party has been at meetings attended by deputies from the French Front National. Chirac and the Gaullists in France have drawn back from their enthusiastic Europeanism, and are preparing to play the nationalist card.

What we are seeing is the possible birth of a nationalist-populist 'anti-federalist' right wing throughout Europe.

World system

How close are we to this vision of a united capitalist Europe? Despite the rhetoric, things have temporarily slowed down, for two reasons. First, Germany is insistent that monetary union will take place on its own terms; they have delayed monetary union from 1994 to 1997 to ensure that this happens. Second, there are the political consequences in Europe of the Gulf war, which relate directly to ideas about a common European foreign, security and defence policy.

During the Gulf war and after, leading German politicians like Kohl, foreign minister Genscher and defence minister Stoltenberg sent a very clear message to Washington that on matters of high state policy they would not attempt to form a common European bloc against Washington. The crux of the matter is this: will there be a common forum for developing a European foreign policy and security view which excludes the Americans? And crucially, will there be a military command structure based on Europe, outside the framework of the US-dominated NATO? For the moment at least, the Germans say no. Mitterrand says yes, but the German view prevails.

Despite the European security system being based on NATO, a joint European strike force will probably go ahead. This would be aimed primarily at supporting the United States in policing the third world. If it was under NATO control, the US will have no objections.

EC responsibility

There are two qualifications to this overall scheme. The EC will want to have its own areas of responsibility, and has in a very limited way tried to develop a specifically 'European' approach to Yugoslavia, although there has been much co-ordination with the US. Second, German capitalism wants to be free to develop its own sphere of interest - specifically towards dominating as much of eastern Europe as possible, and developing close links with the Soviet Union, which are a precondition for its

operations in eastern Europe.

In other words German capitalism has for the moment decided not to go along with the French drive for 'Europe versus America'. And that means that the drive for capitalist unity in Europe has to some extent been put back.

This has a bearing on the whole world political system which will come out of the Gulf war. We should not come to premature conclusions about an intensification of trade wars or even sharper conflicts between the three main capitalist blocs - Europe, North America and Japanese-dominated Asia. Neither the US nor Europe wants a trade war now. But there is a sharp trade war developing between Europe and Japan. The way the world system will develop is open, despite the tremendous turbulence which exists in the post-Gulf war situation.

The real question is what the United States will do in the face of its declining economic position in relation to Europe and Japan. It faces two central dilemmas. First, should it launch an economic and political battle for absolute dominance of the capitalist world now, with all the consequences that would have? They are

not convinced it is absolutely necessary, but on the other hand in tens years time they will be in a weaker economic position to do it.

The second is that, to really compete in the international economy, they have to renovate their productive structure dramatically.

First and foremost that means drastically cutting the huge unproductive drain which their vast military forces impose. But much of their political and economic power is linked to that militarism, and to give it up is a very big risk.

Co-operating spheres

After the Gulf war, we have to ask: are we drifting to 'ultra-imperialism', an arrangement between the major imperialist powers in which conflicts will be minimised, and the world carved up into co-operating spheres of influence, behind the US, Germany and Japan. There are real signs of this. European, Japanese and US capital is not just competing, it is also fusing in important areas.

But for 'ultra-imperialism' to be successful, it has to forge new international political structures to police it. Here we come to the real dilemma; whose military and political authority will be imposed internationally? In Western Europe some capitalist politicians say that this new international power should be the United Nations, not the United States itself. But that has consequences; Germany and Japan would have to be permanent members of the UN Security Council, something which means



Mitterrand: shrugging it off

diminishing the power of Britain, France and the US itself. The Soviet Union strongly backs German entry into the Security Council, but the other major capitalist powers would block it.

In any case, in the Gulf war, through his rhetoric about the 'New World Order' George Bush stole the thunder of those who wanted the UN to be the focus of a new international order. It seems like a non-starter for the moment.

Socialist response

The left has to grasp that beneath all the changes taking place in Europe the cold war is still going on. By that I mean there is still a tremendous trade embargo against eastern Europe, which with the collapse of the state-ised economies is causing tremendous hardships to the peoples of eastern Europe. We saw that when the trade barriers come down, as they did partially in Hungary and Poland, then exports from these countries rise rapidly.

The West, including the EC, is carrying on a cynical operation promising aid in return for privatisation, creating the basis for the destruction of native industries like the Polish steel industry, and the taking over of the most profitable sectors by Western capital.

This then is the twin attack being prepared on the peoples of Europe. The tragedy of capitalist restoration in eastern Europe, together with the building of a 'fortress' capitalist super-state under the domination of German capital on the other.

Socialist programme

Socialists must counterpose their own programme to this, and it must be a Europe-wide programme. First, we must defend basic working class organisation and gains - and fight to extend them. This means the fight against redundancies and austerity, against the effects of the



Jacques Delors

Single Market. It means an international fight for the 35-hour week, and the generalisation of the social gains enjoyed by the working class in western Germany.

End blockade

A united Europe potentially creates the basis for the liberation of the productive forces and their use to reduce working time, boost prosperity, develop every aspect of social services, defend the environment and create a new order of peace and equality. The working class and its organisations cannot respond with neutrality to the bosses' plans for Europe, east or west. We have to argue strongly against the continued economic blockade of eastern Europe and against the privatisation and destruction of the industries in those countries.

For such a programme to become a reality it is necessary to redouble efforts at Europe-wide working class organisation and co-ordination. The plans for a bosses' Europe cannot be fought country-by-country.

Book review

Evolutionary theories on the rocks

What would happen if we could zoom 3.5 billion years back and play the tape of evolution again? Would life have evolved in a similar way and inevitably thrown up a self-conscious, tool-manufacturing, language-using primate species like *Homo sapiens*?

In all probability, no – says palaeontologist and science writer, Stephen Jay Gould in his book, 'Wonderful Life'. SAM INMAN argues that this approach exposes the limitations of human chauvinism in relation to nature – something which marxists are often accused of being guilty of by sections of the green movement.

THE EVOLUTION of our species, like the evolution of all the other major classes and groups of species we see today, is by and large a product of contingency, of lucky breaks.

This is the central argument that Gould puts in 'Wonderful Life'. It is an argument that shoots right at the heart of the popular notion that evolution is an inherently progressive and ordered process. One that lifts simple life up to more complex forms, and ultimately results in that pinnacle of evolutionary accomplishment – us.

Much of the book is devoted to looking in detail at one particular bunch of fossils from a place called the Burgess Shale in British Columbia. The fossils themselves have been known about for over eighty years now. But it is the interpretation of them that Gould writes about.

Sudden appearance

The Burgess Shale was discovered in 1909 by the then leading palaeontologist and top science administrator, Charles Walcott. The reason for their importance is their age. Modern multicellular animals make a sudden and dramatic appearance in the fossil record in rocks that are some 570 million years old. This period of life is known as the 'Cambrian explosion'.

Within 100 million years – the geological wink of an eye – just about all the major groups of modern animals had evolved. The Burgess fossils come from a period that was just after this explosion, and so provide a window through which we can glimpse this most important of evolutionary events.

Walcott collected and classified

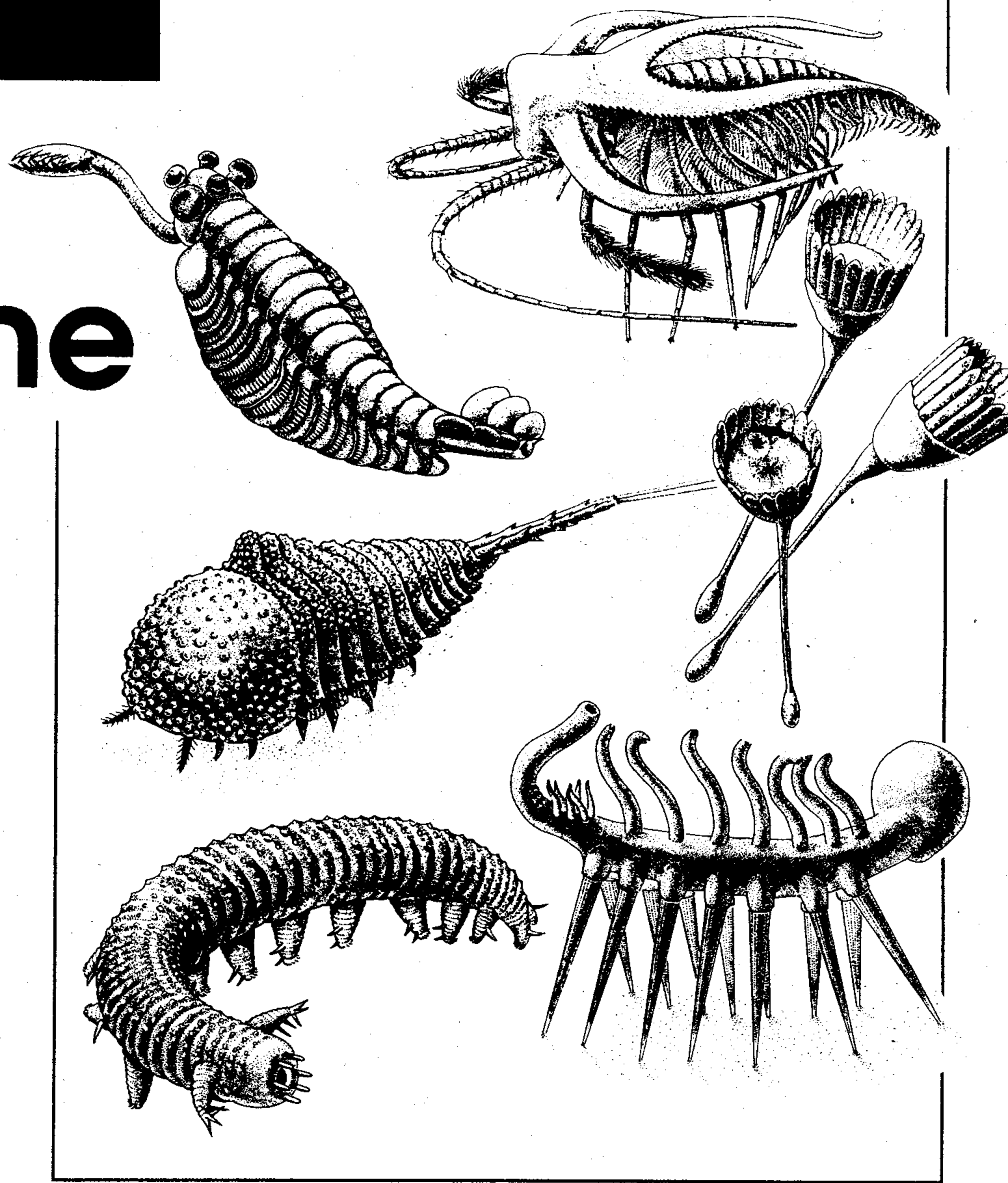
some 12,000 Burgess fossils in his life. Every single one of these he 'shoehorned' into modern groups. Walcott assumed that each type of Burgess animal was a primitive pre-cursor to later, more advanced forms of these groups. He was wrong.

Good science

The story of how these fossils came to be reinterpreted is a fascinating example of 'good science'. Gould suggests that 'the greatest impediment to scientific innovation is usually a conceptual lock, not a factual lack'. Yet with the Burgess fossils, Gould is merely a commentator, albeit a highly informed one. The nuts and bolts of reclassifying the animals was done by Harry Whittington from Cambridge University and two of his graduate students, Simon Conway Morris and Derek Briggs. The work started in the early 1970s and continues today.

Whittington and colleagues did not set out to radically reinterpret the entire history of life. This was the outcome of their work, not the motivation. Nevertheless, radical it certainly turned out to be.

About eighty per cent of all known species on the earth today are arthropods. Despite our rather egotistical belief that mammals (and particularly human mammals) are the most successful evolutionary invention since the Big Bang, the Arthropoda phylum remains the largest and most ecologically diverse of all. Taxonomists (the people who classify different forms of life) have classified around one million species of arthropods. All of these fit into four major groups – the trilobites (extinct



Some of the 'weird and wonderfuls' from Burgess Shale

today), the crustaceans (crabs, lobsters...), the chelicerates (spiders, scorpions, mites...), and the uniramians (insects).

Squeezed in

Representatives of all four major groups of arthropods are found amongst the Burgess animals. But additional to these are a further twenty or so that can only be classified as different arthropod designs, not represented in today's fauna. Walcott, however, squeezed them all into modern groups when he shouldn't have done.

On top of this, there are further twenty Burgess species which cannot even be placed in known phyla, and should, therefore, be placed in their own separate and unique phyla. The traditional view is that phyla have evolved through a process of many speciation events, that accumulate differences over time. The 'discovery' of the twenty odd unique Burgess phyla fundamentally challenges this view.

The process of evolution is often diagrammatically illustrated with trees. Evolutionary trees were introduced in the 1860s by the German biologist, Ernst Haeckel. In fact the same guy also introduced the word 'ecology'. According to the conventional view, shared by everyone from Haeckel to Walcott to many today, evolutionary trees look like big oak trees, that branch ever upward and outward.

Lottery

What the evidence from the Burgess Shale shows is that evolution does not occur by 'slow, continuous proliferation and advance, but [current patterns of life were] set by a pronounced decimation (after a rapid initial diversification of anatomical designs), probably accomplished with a strong, perhaps controlling, component of lottery.' This turns the oaks into something more like a Christmas tree, with maximum diversity at the bottom not the top of the tree.

So, what do all these Burgess 'weird and wonderfuls' have to do with marxism? In a direct sense, not a lot. But evolutionary theory is, and always has been, an intensely political subject. Because it is an historical science, it has rarely been given the same status as so

called 'hard' sciences like chemistry or experimental physics. Evolutionary scientists cannot possibly re-run the tape of life again to check their theories. They have to look for patterns in the historical evidence they have.

The picture that the Burgess fossils give of evolution can be quite disconcerting for traditional human chauvinists. Life was not one long march towards consciousness. Nor is evolution a comfortably predictable process. Mass extinctions throughout the history of life have profoundly altered the course of evolution and should give us, as a species, a chilling reminder of the impartiality of death.

Dinosaurs

Homo sapiens is a large(ish) animal inhabiting and dominating all parts of the land surface and ecology of this planet. But so did the dinosaurs, and they lasted for a good deal longer than we have to date. The lesson of evolutionary history is quite simple. It has often been the seemingly successful animals that have disappeared in periods of rapid evolutionary change, often brought on by rapid environmental change.

It would be a dangerous and misplaced arrogance on our part to assume it would be different for us. Of course, in no way does this mean that we are destined to extinction. Destiny, God (in all its forms), and 'Gaia' have nothing to do with it. There is no morality in nature. Humans have an ace card they can play in the poker game of evolution – their capacity to consciously direct the course of their own future. That's something the dinosaurs never had.

In 'Wonderful Life', Gould takes the reader on a journey that is both exotic in its imagery and scientific in its method. You don't have to be a biologist to read, enjoy and understand it. Hopefully, after reading it, many more people will have a little more understanding of some of the most exciting and, at the same time, humbling debates in science. Marxists can learn a lot from this approach. As Gould says, of humans, 'we are a thing, an item of history, not an embodiment of general principles.'

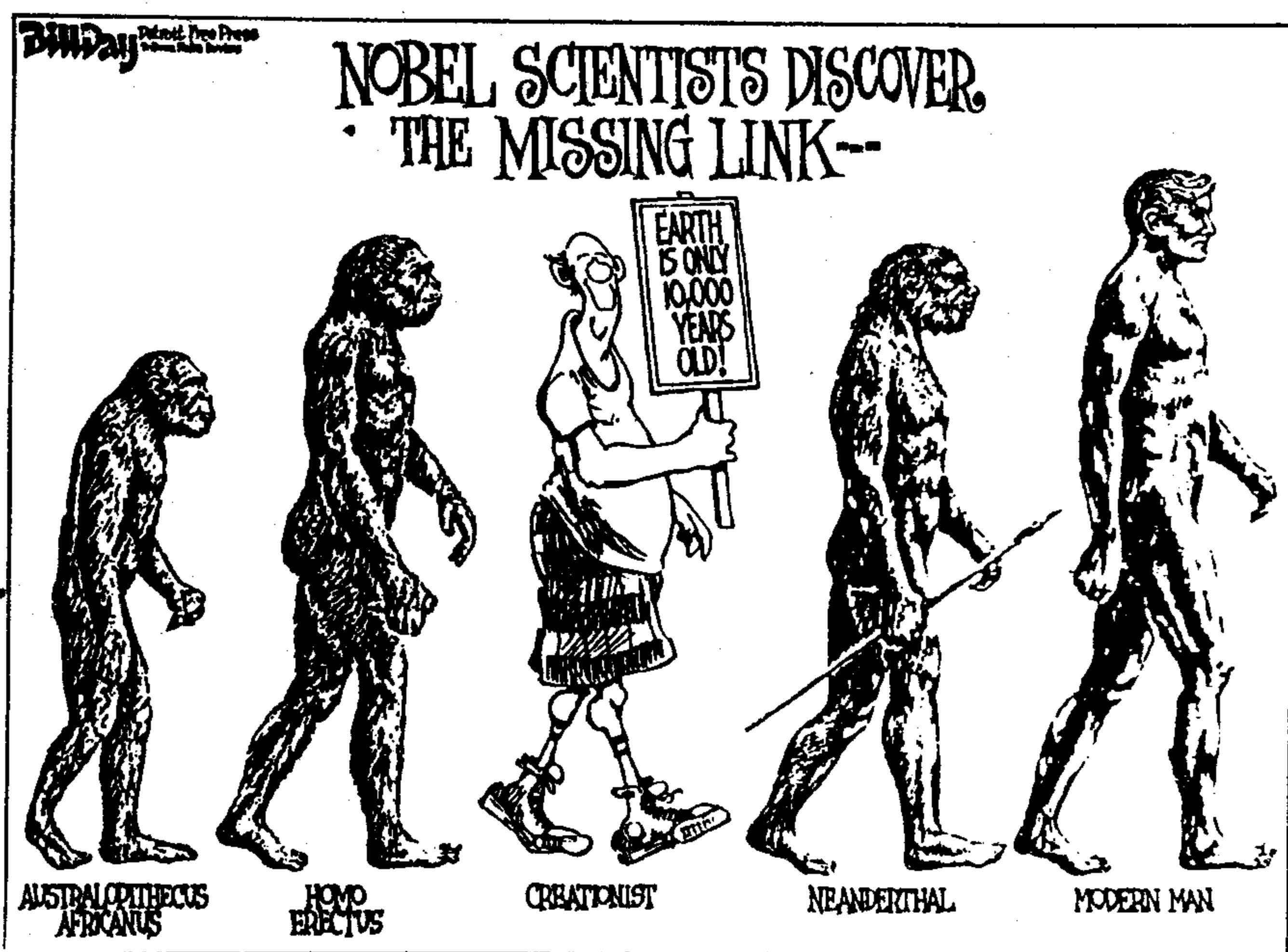




PHOTO: John Harris

Post-modernism – what it is and how to fight it

You've probably heard of post-modernism, but if you've tried to read any of its advocates, you're probably none the wiser. Here SEAN TUNNEY tries to unravel its meaning, basing himself on David Harvey's book *The Condition of Post-modernity*.

FOR THE SAKE of simplicity we can categorise 'post-modernism' as combining three things – a philosophical movement, a stylistic movement, and an allegedly new way of organising production under capitalism (also called 'post-Fordism').

There is no agreed 'orthodoxy' of post-modernism. But what unites its key thinkers, like Baudrillard, Lyotard and Foucault, is a rejection of the 'grand narratives' of social thinkers like Marx. For post-modernists, history has no meaning and no subject.

The whole project of the Enlightenment, the tradition starting with the French revolution and reaching down through Marx, is fundamentally flawed in thinking that rational social organisation can be created. For many of the post-modernists these 'grand narratives' lead directly to Stalinism and the Gulag.

Intellectual reaction

Today, a period of intellectual reaction, defending the Enlightenment tradition, what might be called 'rationalism', is a crucial task for Marxists. Irrationalism, the tradition which comes from the German philosopher Nietzsche, has at its core the rejection of any project for building a more sane human society. Its says that theory, any theory, has nothing to do with an account of the real world or changing it; on the contrary 'discourse' is a game, a pure intellectual construct, even just 'conversation'.

The major post-modernists do not just convey pure irrationalism. Foucault, who wrote serious accounts of the history of sexuality, stressed the importance of the concept of 'power', as opposed to the Marxist 'class' and 'class struggle' for understanding history. This is the connection of a part of the post-modern tradition with some theorists of 'new social movements'. But the connection is tenuous. Most social movement theorists, even if they reject Marxism, still see their project grounded in rational world-views.

The irrationalism of post-modern theory is intimately linked to a rejection of *collectivism*. For them there is no such thing as truth, everything is relative, and the social is a combination of individual, partial experiences. In this world, images and appearance are more important than what Marxists claim are 'underlying realities'.

As can be seen, post-modern philosophers abandon any attempt at explaining the world, and regard attempts to change it as leading directly to dictatorship.

Why, if post-modernism is so deeply irrational, is it so influential? David Harvey links this to changes in capitalism, and I think he is right on this. 'Modernist' social theories and artistic styles – those which predominated through much of this century – represent confidence in the future on the part of the bourgeoisie and the working class. Post-modernism is the pathological theory of a system incapable of confidence in the future.

What are the changes in capitalism – 'post-Fordism' – which post-modernism mirrors? They are the attempts, called by Harvey 'flexible accumulation', to restructure capitalist production to deal with the long crisis which started in the early 1970s.

Work has been restructured so the full-time workforce gets smaller, and the number of workers on short term and temporary contracts has been greatly increased. In addition subcontracting by small firms has increased. This has led in turn to older systems of production such as sweatshops and homeworking being reintroduced.

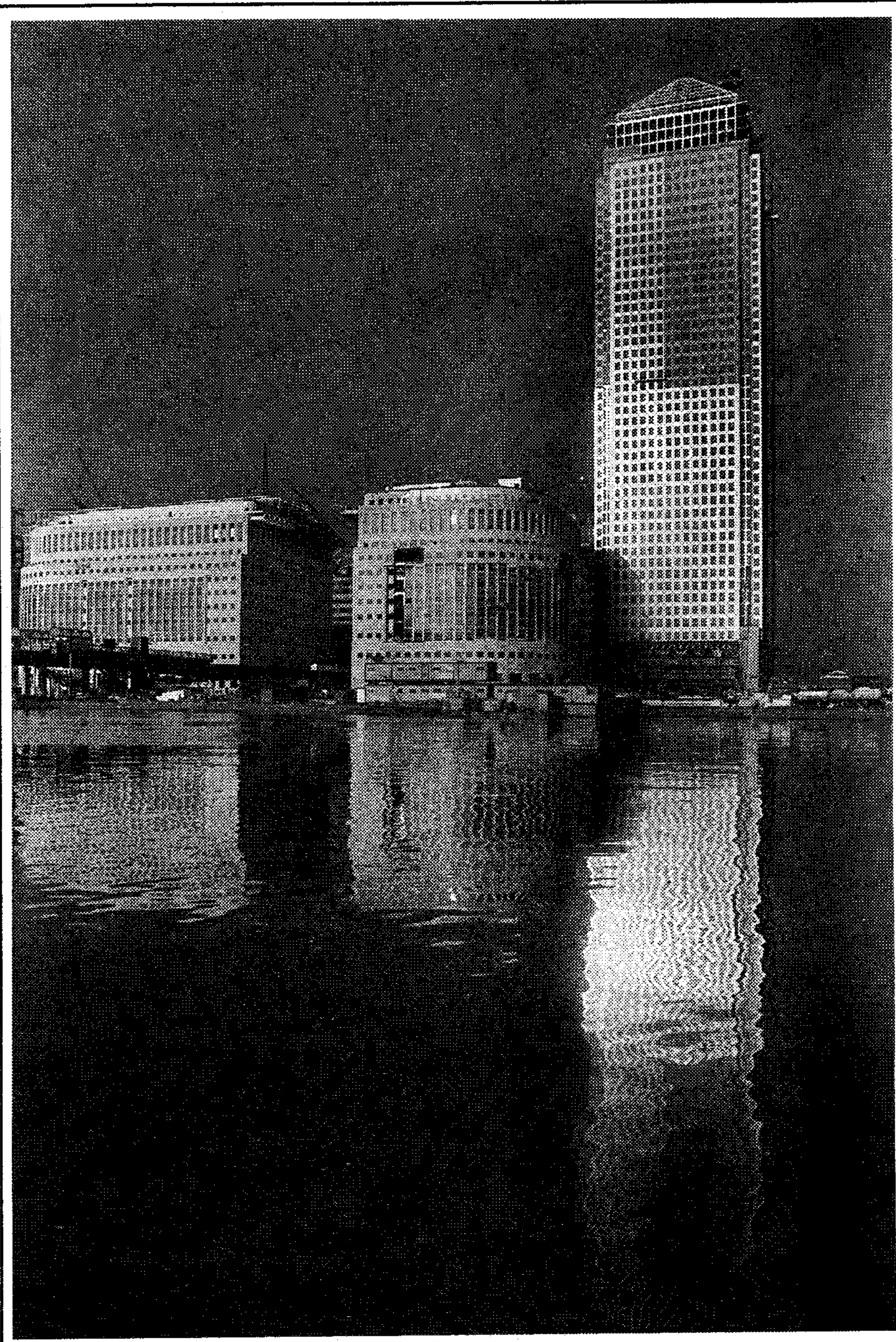
These features threaten the ability of the unions to organise. And, contrary to the view of some *Marxism Today* theorists who argue this is positive for women and black people, it is precisely these workers who are most exploited by these practices.

Harsher exploitation

Post-Fordism is an attempt to impose a new structure of production which is more flexible and imposes harsher forms of exploitation on the working class, while greatly increasing its insecurity. Coupled with this has been a massive reduction in transport and communication costs. This has led to much more mobile international capital, and a new international division of labour.

In turn consumption has been manipulated to speed up the use of products. While a typical 'Fordist' product, a washing machine, had a turnover time of around seven years, the average for post-Fordist goods, such as computer software or fashion-manipulated textiles, is 18 months.

Does this imply a new post-industrial era, as some post-Fordists claim? Harvey says not, and I think he is right. The



Canary Wharf: Modernism with twiddly bits

post-Fordist era represents a *modification* within the mass production, huge factory, conveyor-belt capitalism which emerged in the 1920s and '30s, and not a completely new order. Insofar as it attacks the basic job security and social security of the working class it is a massive step backwards.

Progressive?

Post-modernist and post-Fordist theorists present the changes in capitalism as *progressive*. How can this be? They associate the new period of capitalism as having the virtues of more social and geographical mobility, more freedom for the individual, and a bigger choice of consumer products, than the old capitalism dominated by the big factory, the big bureaucracy, nationalised industries and the welfare state.

This is an individualistic (put crudely, 'yuppie') view, if ever there was one. The new capitalism was highly liberating for young commodity brokers on 80,000 a year – but even they are now in trouble. But for the mass of the working class, as opposed to yuppies and salaried intellectuals, the new capitalism is a disaster. The freedom to set up your own small business (if you've got the capital) or choose from 2000 models of personal computers doesn't mean a lot to most workers. Generally they put more value on a functioning health service, lower electricity and water bills, and a secure job.

How are the ideologies of post-modernism and post-Fordism linked? Post-modernism is a useful ideological cover for justifying the phase of capitalism with all its cruelties and exploitation. As Alex Callinicos explains in his *Against Post-modernism*, this ideology is typically popular among the new middle class intellectuals who see the new order enhancing their position.

How does post-modernist social theory fit in with post-modern *style*? Harvey explains that modernist styles,

especially in architecture, were linked to mass production. Mass-produced post-war housing, needed to reconstruct the bomb-damaged cities, gave rise to the tower blocks and simple bold lines – the kind of thing which Prince Charles calls 'monstrous carbuncles'. Often this kind of architecture was deeply oppressive and *depressing* – especially for those living in working class council estates.

Post-modernist style on the other hand claims to promote the individual and the new, often making a pastiche of previous styles – so that your local Waitrose supermarket often looks like a Roman Villa. But is post-modernist style really new? Martin Thomas has aptly described much

post-modernist architecture as 'modernism with twiddly bits'. Its claims to originality, to being a fundamental break with 'modernism', are as weak as the claims of post-Fordism to be a fundamental break with mass-production capitalism.

Modernism, and modernist social philosophies like Marxism, represented the tremendous growth of the productive forces in capitalism in the 20th century. It also represented the 'modern' challenges to it – in particular the Russian revolution and the Communist movement.

Post-modernism represents not something new, but modernism gone rotten. Yes, there is a 'post-modern' capitalism, the capitalism of flexible accumulation and anti-working class restructuring; it is not a mirage. This new phase of capitalism can only justify itself by a morbid philosophy of irrationalism.

The claims of post-modernist philosophy should be challenged. But the key to fighting it is to organise against the attacks on the working class which come through capitalist restructuring. The claims of post-modernism will collapse when a new period of advance for the working class develops in the major capitalist countries.

**"Post-modernism
represents not
something new, but
modernism gone
rotten"**

What's wrong with religion

By Sam Inman

AS THE LAST years of the twentieth century tick by and we get closer to the year 2000, the faint whiff of 'millenniumism' in the air today is likely to grow stronger. For your average Christian fundamentalist, the time is rapidly approaching where the great historical battle between Good and Evil, prophesied in the Bible's book of Revelations, becomes reality on earth.

It is easy for marxists to scoff at this and other manifestations of religious fundamentalism. But we should be careful, this is no idle threat in a period of massive capitalist crisis. The rise of the Nazis in Germany was not merely a question of them brutally taking state power. It was also accompanied by a very strong ideological assault, of which the appeal to *Christian* spirituality was a very important component.

Religious fundamentalism is on the rise, and importantly it is becoming increasingly militant. What then should marxists make of religion?

Ritual

First of all it is necessary to look at what we mean by 'religion'. Are all forms of human ritual, or even spirituality, necessarily religious? In a historical sense, no. In very early human societies, tens of thousands of years ago, symbolic importance was attached to a great number of everyday objects and events. Food, water, fire, wood, rain, the sun, the moon, illness, birth and death were all part of the struggle for survival and often rituals existed around these things.

But symbolic rituals are not necessarily the same thing as religion. Rituals were used as part of learning the art of

survival and of explaining the apparently unexplainable.

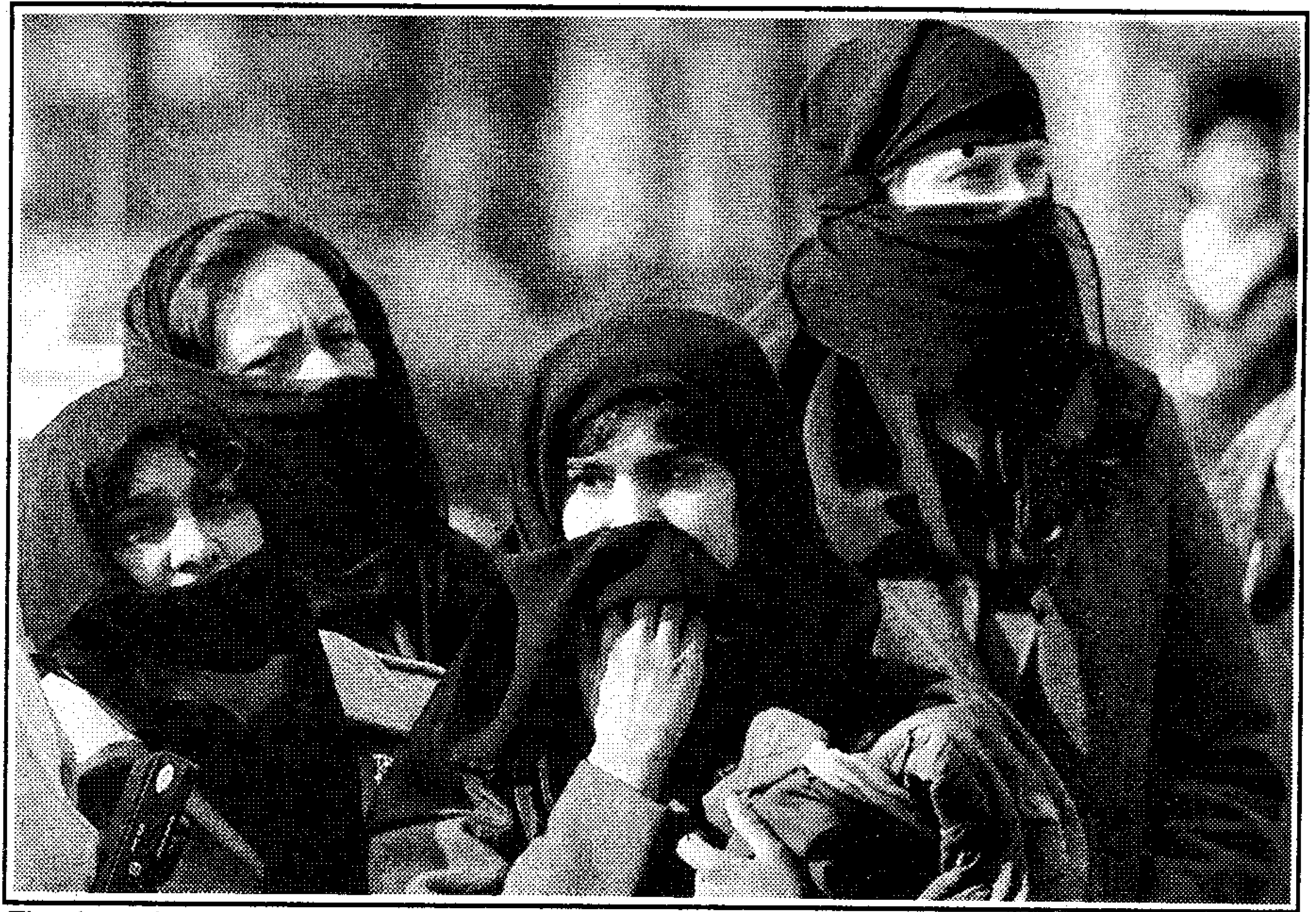
The development of religion came alongside the evolution of class societies. Spirits became promoted to gods and goddesses, and rituals became institutionalised. Religion then came to be used to ideologically maintain the domination of one individual or group in society over the rest.

Oppressed

The development of monotheistic (one god) religions came much later on. Judaism was the first, followed by Christianity and then Islam. The development of new religions has always coincided with revolts and upheavals in the societies concerned. At their inception Judaism, Christianity and Islam were all religions of the oppressed sections of those societies. All had popular leaders and prophets - Moses, Jesus and Mohammed - who dealt not only with spiritual salvation, but also with the everyday concerns of the oppressed peoples.

What all religions share in common is they first of all offer *hope* to people whose everyday existence is full of exploitation, oppression and despair. As the new religions became incorporated into the ideology of ruling classes, religious messages became more and more concerned with salvation after death, rather than change during a lifetime.

These religions have constantly adapted to changing class societies. Christianity started off as the religion of slaves in revolt against the Roman empire. It then became the official religion of the empire itself - the Holy Roman empire. It has been used to justify slavery, feudal monarchies, and free unadulterated capitalism. Britain today is still a Christian state, which is why so



Theology doesn't liberate all

many politicians are so keen to emphasise their Christian credentials.

For marxists, religion can be criticised on two levels. Firstly, on a philosophical level, all religion is essentially idealist. This means that explanations of the material universe are sought in supernatural causes, rather than in the material universe itself.

Religions of all kinds tell us that the answers to the problems of life are to be ultimately found with some supernatural being(s) rather than in the here and now. The philosophical tradition of marxism, in contrast, is that of *dialectical materialism*, which was developed out of scientific criticism of religion.

Dialectical materialism supercedes religion in that it provides an explanation of all existence, including the development of consciousness, solely from the motion of matter itself - rather than by invoking God or spirits.

Reactionary

On a social level, religion is rather more contradictory. In most cases, the established religions act in a fundamentally reactionary way. The Anglican church seeks to maintain its current status as part and parcel of the British state.

The current Pope is arguably the most reactionary Pope for forty years. Judaic fundamentalism is the ideological cornerstone of the utterly reactionary Zionist state of Israel. Similarly, Islamic fundamentalism provides the ideological prop for regimes in Saudi Arabia and Iran.

On the other hand, there are religious movements which consciously seek to fight imperialism. The popular liberation theology movement in Latin

America is one example of this. This movement has formed through the struggles against US imperialism, where the Catholic church establishment has colluded with both the imperialists themselves, and the friends of imperialism in Latin America. Father Aristide, recently elected President of Haiti, is a liberation theologian, considers himself to be a christian marxist, and has even released a rap single 'Capitalism is a Mortal Sin'.

Atheism

But is religion compatible with the struggle for socialism? The answer to this must be found in the dual character of religion. Even Lenin, whom no-one can accuse of shying away from philosophical polemic, insisted in '*Socialism and Religion*' that atheism should not be part of the Party's programme. He argued that 'unity in the really revolutionary struggle of the oppressed class for creation of a paradise on earth is more important to us than unity of proletarian opinion on paradise in heaven.'

Whilst religion may not be philosophically compatible with marxism, it should not be used to divide the workers' movement: that is a favourite technique of the ruling class.

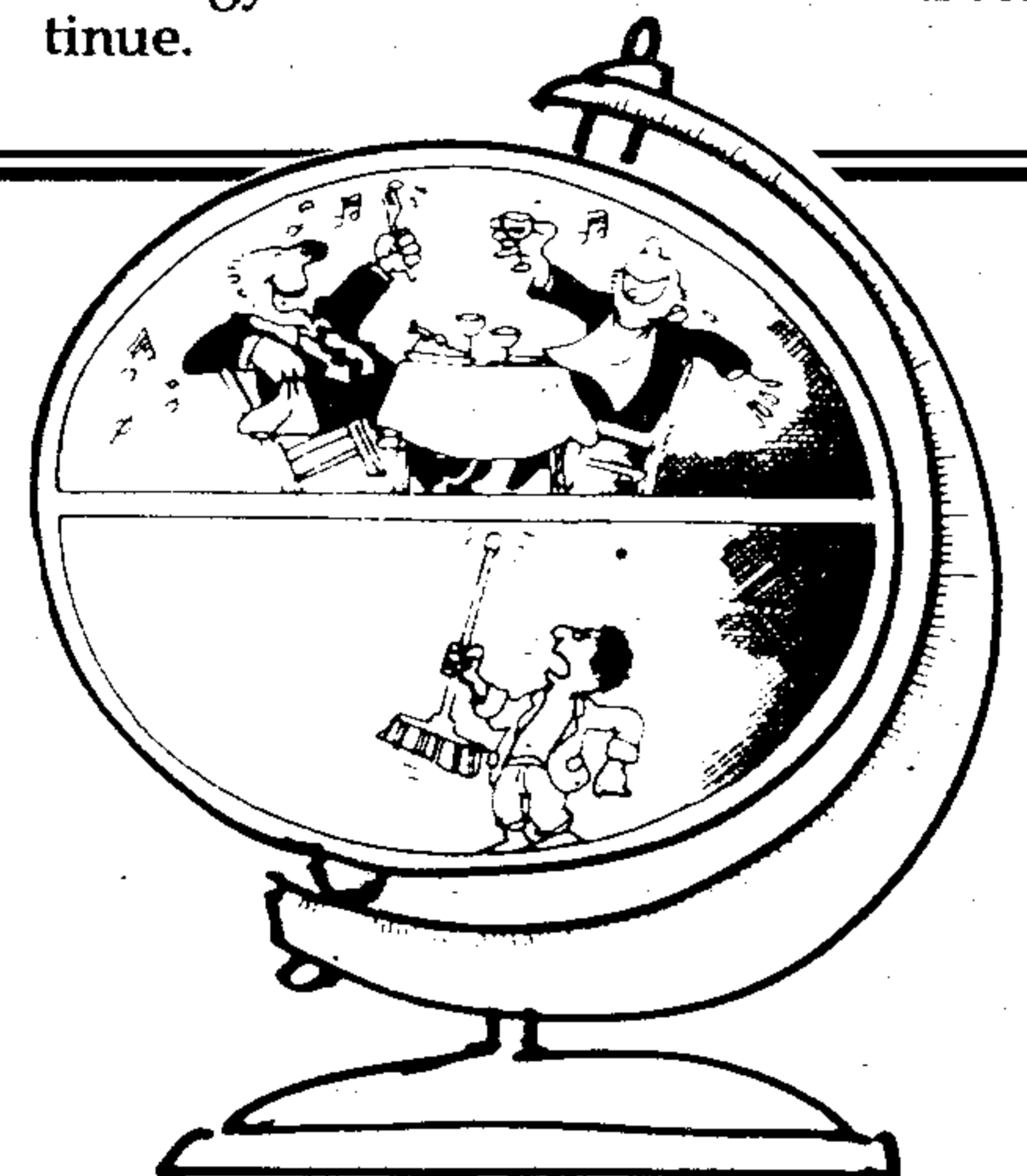
In order to win the minds of workers, you have to win their hearts as well. That is why marxists will continue to work where necessary alongside progressive religious currents in the fight against capitalism and imperialism, while making no compromise in defending and arguing for our materialist views, and combatting all forms of bigotry and ideology. No doubt the debate will continue.

Outlook for Socialism

Crisis in the Third World

William Collins School, Charrington Rd, London NW1

Friday November 29 - Sunday 1 December



The collapse of the Eastern bloc, economic recession in the West, US militarism in the wake of the Gulf war, and the debt crisis all add up to misery for the less developed countries. Catastrophe follows on catastrophe as poverty intensifies the effects of 'natural disasters'. All round the world, from South Africa, to Central America and Palestine, liberation movements are under heavy pressure. Cuba is in the US gunsights.

What future, then, is there for radical change in the third world? How can the imperialist offensive be fought? these are the themes for the third Outlook for Socialism.

Key speakers include:

Ernest Mandel Marxist economist and leading member of the Fourth International
Sergio Rodriguez and Heather Dashner Revolutionary Workers Party (Mexico)
Saleh Jaber leading Arab militant of the Fourth International
 Plus socialist activists from India, Sri Lanka, South Africa and Brazil.

For advance registration send £12 (£15 on door), or for students £5 (£6 on door) to: *Crisis in the Third World*, PO Box 1109, London N4 2UU. Cheques payable to 'Outlook International'.

socialist
OUTLOOK

Feedback

We welcome letters on any subject but please keep them brief. Letters over 350 words will be cut. Send your letters to: *Socialist Outlook* PO Box 1109, London, N4 2UU

Best way to get Tories out

Today the main problem facing working people is somehow to find the means to get the Tories out of office. Already the mobilisation against the Poll Tax, combined with the crisis among the bourgeoisie about their future orientation, to the European community or to US imperialism, led to the fall of Thatcher.

In a General Election, we clearly should call for votes for Labour candidates at that point in time, because that will be the best way for working people to get rid of the Tories.

But the editorials in *Socialist Outlook* are an unnecessary concession to opportunism. Mahmood's candidature obviously cannot weaken the mood of the working class to drive out the Tories. Rather, it is the highest expression of it so far.

It shows people wanting to get at the government without the Labour apparatus holding them back. Advanced workers are already taking a step further than just relying on Kinnock to defeat the Tories. Votes for Mahmood, at this particular place and time, are the best contribution to getting the Tories out.

If Mahmood were badly beaten, that would really strengthen the appetite of Walworth Road for the witch hunt. If she does well, it might encourage the healthy tendencies around *Militant* to question its long hardened prejudices and bad practices.

We obviously cannot ask anyone in the Labour Party to put their heads on the block and

invite exclusion, where there is no need. But the whole left is going to be in crisis over Walton. The very existence of some currents may be at stake. But how can we look the advanced workers of Merseyside in the face when they ask us 'Where were you on the day?'

Tim Gregory
London SW16

Fighting the ban on 'Return'

An article by Andrew Berry in your April 9 issue repeated a libel put about by Tony Greenstein, editor of the anti-Israeli magazine *Return*. 'Return...was banned (in the National Union of Students) by the NUS President without a vote. This censorship was endorsed by *Socialist Organiser's* front, *Left Unity*'.

Thoughtless repetition of libels, without checking your facts, is bad enough. At least *Socialist Outlook* no.4 carried a letter from Paul McGarry correcting Berry.

But *Socialist Outlook* no.5 has a letter from Berry refusing to apologise and trying to keep the libel going in a weaselly sort of way. 'Two Left Unity supporters did sign a petition calling for the banning of *Return*...No attempt was made by either LU or *Socialist Organiser* to distance themselves from the actions of the two.'

The facts? The other hundred or so LU supporters at the NUS Conference refused to sign the petition. The LU organisers told the Union of Jewish Students,

Sign up to 'unshackle the unions'!

'Unshackle the unions' is a campaign launched by the Socialist Movement Trade Union Committee, the Haldane Society Employment Committee, the Solidarity Network, Labour Party Socialists and Trade Union

News. It is a campaigning priority of the Socialist Movement.

The statement below is being circulated in the labour movement for support from activists. It will be publicised in the media as part of the campaign.

"We demand the complete repeal of all anti-union legislation and that the British Government comply with the Conventions and Principles of the United Nations International Labour Organisation for the full restoration of trade union rights."

We do not accept the criminalisation of trade union activity and the attacks on civil liberties.

We reject the argument that

a trade union movement of 8 million members has no alternative but to comply with anti-union legislation.

We support trades unionists threatened by use of the laws and all those who challenge the law to defend their interests."

Please send statements of support, saying whether you would like your name printed as a supporter, and any donations to: Carolyn Sikorski, 53a Geere Road, London, E15. Literature on the anti-union legislation is also available at 50p plus SAE.

Carolyn Sikorski
London E15



Lesley Mahmood

Problems with G.B.H.

I wish to congratulate you on the scope and depth of cultural coverage which has appeared in *Socialist Outlook* so far. The debate around Madonna has been of particular interest. However I must take issue with the review of *G.B.H.*

Clearly the series sets peculiar problems for socialist reviewers. Given this, it is essential to start by remarking that the programme is a savage attack on socialists and trade unionists. It is based on a tissue of lies. The idea, for example, that the police would stand by during a mass picket of a school is not only a lie, it is also a deep insult given the recent admission by the South Yorkshire police of their horrific brutality at Orgreave.

There has clearly been a massive deterioration in Bleasdale's writing since *Boys from the Blackstuff*. One has only to consider the contrast between Julie Walters in *Boys from the Blackstuff* (a harrowing performance) with the joke of her character in *G.B.H.* - a kind of demented rerun of 'Mrs Overall'.

However at a political level I believe there is continuity between *Boys from the Blackstuff* and *G.B.H.*. He starts from a very narrow conception of the working class as almost solely consisting of male manual workers.

It was very clear in *Boys from the Blackstuff* that DHSS workers (CPSA members) were not part

of the working class. Bleasdale is then able to assert that the working class is a dying force, passed over by history. If this sounds familiar it should; it is of course the mischievous rubbish put forward by *Marxism Today*.

Even more crucially, Bleasdale rejects the notion that workers can think for themselves and the possibility of collective self-activity. Thus in *G.B.H.* the workers take action not because it is in their interests to do so but because they are told to. In *Boys from the Blackstuff* there was no possibility of escape because the characters had neither the confidence nor the power to do so. What began in *Boys from the Blackstuff* as a failure to understand the nature of the working class has now deepened into contempt, fear and loathing. Exactly the same trajectory followed by *Marxism Today*.

It is interesting to consider that one of the groups of workers currently at the forefront of action in Liverpool are social workers - in *G.B.H.* the 'hero's' wife is a social worker but clearly not a worker. This is probably why Bleasdale crosses picket lines; it is also why at base *G.B.H.* is profoundly uninteresting - much more interesting are works produced by those who, while being against workers, at least understand and confront what is really happening.

Nick Hay
Birmingham

Which way for Sandinistas?

When I heard that *Socialist Outlook* was becoming a newspaper I groaned inwardly - a good magazine being sacrificed for yet another Trot 'line' paper! I must admit to having been won over. *Outlook* has maintained a consistently high standard. But being non-sectarian and open should not lead to a refusal to take a clear line on important issues.

I think Gareth Mostyn's article on the FSLN congress in your last issue suffered from this failing. The harsh debate in the FSLN shows that the Sandinistas' alliance is unravelling. While the Frente held power, and maintained a mixed economy and an alliance with the 'patriotic' bourgeoisie, the cracks could be papered over.

But now the FSLN is not in power,

the basic question is posed: will it become a reformist, loyal, opposition - or will it crystallise as a revolutionary, proletarian party? The signs are not promising. Not just Sergio Ramirez, but the Ortega brothers appear to be taking what is essentially a line for being a 'loyal' opposition and winning the elections in 1996. Among the Commandantes, only Tomas Borge appears to have an intransigent line. In the ranks, especially the youth and the trade unionists, a revolutionary perspective has more support.

Socialist Outlook, draw the conclusions! The FSLN was a multi-class alliance, wedded to the mixed economy. If the FSLN splits, you will have to make a choice!

Nick Smith
London N4

National Abortion Campaign

Reproductive Rights in the 1990s CONFERENCE

Saturday 27 July 1991
10am - 4.30pm

WESLEY HOUSE, 4 WILD COURT, LONDON. WC2B 5AU.

Nr Holborn Tube
GOOD ACCESS

- impact of NHS reforms on abortion provision ■ the future of contraceptive services
- new technology and the new act ■ Poland and Germany: fighting for rights
- with Jo Richardson MP, Maureen O'Mara (NUPE), Ann Robertson (NCU), Flo Wardle (MSF), Alison Hadley (Brook), Moira Brooks (PAS), Kathleen Frith (BHA), Tara Kaufmann (BPAS), Jolanta Plakwicz (Polish Women's Association)

PHOTO: John Harris



Beat back the right – fight the witch-hunt!

by Pete Firmin

The witch-hunt in the Labour Party will reach a new intensity over the next few months, not simply due to the leadership's campaign to expel everyone they can vaguely associate with Lesley Mahmood's candidacy in Walton, but also because various 'enquiries' are reaching their conclusions.

A report will be going to the organisation sub-committee on July 15th aimed at the 13 suspended Lambeth councillors. The 13 were attacked for opposing the Gulf War and the use of bailiffs against Poll Tax non-payers. Two other Party members were also targeted

for supporting the anti-Poll Tax Federation.

Now the case is to be referred to the National Constitutional Committee (NCC) on the grounds of 'a sustained course of conduct prejudicial to the Party'. A similar report is likely on the six Brighton councillors suspended for their opposition to the Poll Tax and the CLP suspended for supporting them.

Of the 13 members of the Labour Party in Tower Hamlets referred to the NCC, accused of being supporters of Militant, seven were recently expelled (the other 6 cases have still to be heard). In Sheffield Central CLP, where a previous attempt to move against a *Socialist Organiser* seller was knocked back, a new proposal

'to investigate the presence of Socialist Organiser in the constituency' was passed in the first five minutes of a General Committee meeting packed by the right for that purpose.

If the right have not exactly pulled their punches so far, the Walton by-election has them frothing at the mouth. The assistant regional organiser cancelled a ward meeting in Newham North-West on the grounds that 'it is intended to hold a discussion under item 5 on 'the renewed struggle for socialism in Liverpool'. In the light of this I must instruct you to cancel the meeting so that this matter can be investigated'.

Besides using secret police methods to gather information against the left and moves to

remove Terry Fields MP as the endorsed candidate for Broad Green, the right will attempt to tar the whole left with the brush of Walton in their usual claim that we are 'all the same'. Disagreement with the Liverpool Broad Left over standing Mahmood will be no protection.

The Left needs to build a single campaign in defence of all those being witch-hunted, drawing in those who will defend our right to fight for our politics and organise around them even though they disagree with them. The issue needs to be taken consistently into the movement at all levels, particularly the unions. Little work against the witch-hunt has been done in the unions so far, but they provide the bul-

wark of Kinnock's support.

In particular, individuals and sections of the Party should be encouraged to sponsor 'Campaign against the witch-hunt', set up recently from a meeting with representatives from all the main areas of the witch-hunt. The Campaign is holding a conference on September 21st in Manchester and every effort should be made between now and then to ensure that this provides an effective springboard for serious defence of activists, something missing for many years.

Bulletin with model resolutions and information available from address below.

'Campaign against the Witch-hunt' can be contacted at CAW/c/o 10b Windsor Road, London N7.

Kurds arrested after protest at Turkish massacre

FIFTY-TWO Kurdish demonstrators were arrested last Friday after occupying the Turkish embassy in London in protest against the massacre of some 20 Kurdish people by the Turkish army.

The London demonstration was one of several Kurdish protests over Europe on the same day. In Holland there were also clashes with the Dutch police outside the Turkish consulate in Deventer. In Brussels, around 50 Kurdish activists occupied the offices of Amnesty International.

The massacre took place in Diyarbakir in eastern Turkey on 10 July. Some 30,000 people had gathered in the town to attend the funeral of Vedat Aydin, a Kurdish leader who had been murdered six days earlier by the Turkish state's

death squads. Around 20 people were killed and over 200 injured when the Turkish army opened fire on the crowd. Over 500 people were arrested, including 5 foreign journalists. Diyarbakir is less than 100 miles away from where Bush's 'Rapid Reaction Force' has been deployed.

All of those arrested in London were released on bail after being charged with criminal damage. They will be appearing in court in the next few weeks. Meanwhile the protests continue against the actions of the Turkish state. Around 100 Kurdish activists have been on hunger strike outside Westminster Cathedral. A demonstration is planned in the next couple of weeks. For further information contact: Kurdistan Information Centre on 081 880 1759.

Rail workers demand action for union rights

by an RMT conference delegate

In a series of overwhelming defeats for the union leadership, delegates to the main rail workers union (RMT) conference voted time and again for action in defence of their union rights.

The mood of the conference, and the votes taken, indicated that across the political spectrum rail workers understand that only industrial action will halt the management offensive. On receiving his retirement gift, Assistant Secretary Andy Dodds commented 'a flak jacket would have been more apt than a watch'.

Delegates voted for action around two key questions: the replacement of collective negotiating rights with individual contracts; and the 'restructuring' of the industry. It was clearly understood that the only possibility of rolling back this offensive was to achieve the unity of all grades of railworkers, as in the 1989 strikes.

But on pay, attempts by the left to tie negotiators down to a specific sum failed. The



Knapp – pleaded, but got only two votes

conference agreed to campaign for a 'substantial rise', thus leaving union negotiators a free hand.

Delegates reluctantly recognised that the federation between the RMT and ASLEF, the drivers' union, had collapsed.

General Secretary Jimmy Knapp pleaded for a continuation of the agreement – but scored just two votes. The possibility of any move towards a single union for railworkers unfortunately looks remote. But this is a fight that must go on, based on the

recognition of the common interests of all railworkers.

Thus the key issue coming out of the conference is how to pressure the union leadership to carry out its mandate for industrial action. The 1990 conference agreed a resolution committing the union to uniting all grades of workers, avoiding the possibility of British Rail management picking sections off, one by one.

This was simply ignored by the RMT leadership. This must not be allowed to happen again.

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The French contingent call for cancellation of the Third world debt. More than 1,500 demonstrators protested outside the G7 Summit, making the front page of 'The Independent on Sunday'.

PHOTO: John Harris



TGWU gives Kinnock an easy ride

THIS YEAR'S Transport and General Workers Union biennial conference was chiefly characterised by complete absence of controversy. Executive manoeuvres ensured that any debate that might produce something vaguely embarrassing was quietly dropped from the agenda.

As predicted, though new General Secretary Bill Morris attracted spoke out against incomes policy, the leadership managed to let the Labour leaders off the hook with a fudge on the question of anti-union laws, recommending support for two contradictory policies.

This was far from the only manoeuvre. Despite repeated promises, debates on the Poll Tax, race equality and immigration, and the union's relationship with the TUC simply did not happen.

In the debate on the anti-union laws, delegates pointed out from the floor that they wanted nothing less than complete repeal of the Tory legislation. And a sizeable minority – 40% – voted against Labour's document 'Looking to the Future', despite the Executive supporting it.

One oddity was Neil Kinnock's little homily. 55 minutes were allocated, but Neil took only 20. Not a breath was allocated to bashing the left, whereas

he had the last T&G conference up in arms.

Could it be that he was listening during the previous debate on unemployment, as speaker after speaker spoke out against Liverpool Labour council's redundancy programme and decided to drop 35 minutes of Militant-bashing?

Victories for the left included winning an overwhelming majority for complete non co-operation with Youth Training, despite executive opposition.

In addition, a meeting organised by the T&G solidarity group, attended by more than forty delegates, provided a positive forum to discuss a way forward for socialists in the union.

Right wing sacks NUJ General Secretary

THE SACKING of the General Secretary of the National Union of Journalists (NUJ), Steve Turner, by a narrow 10 votes to 9 on the union's executive, is not just

a surprise move but comes at the worst possible time for the union.

Contrary to the reports in Monday's *Daily Mirror* the move came not from the left on the

executive but from the right-wing.

Turner is no friend of the left but the right-wing were desperate to get rid of him because of his opposition to merger with other print and media unions.

It was this issue that led to Turner's sacking, over the question of him flouting union policy on merger.

The union is now set to enter a long and expensive period of battles in the courts as Turner attempts to get the decision overturned.

This will all serve as a bitter blow to many of the industrial disputes that NUJ members are involved in around the country, with a union already in financial crisis.

Employers will no doubt use this as an opportunity to kick media workers when they're down.

However, the worst of all worlds is to be found in the misguided campaign supported by Socialist Workers' Paul Foot for Turners' reinstatement pending a Special Delegates Meeting of the NUJ. This is a formula for endlessly protracted internal rows at a time when unity is needed.

Act now to free Tottenham Three!

NEW EVIDENCE from forensic tests has shown that at least one of the so-called confessions of the Tottenham Three – that of Winston Silcott – had been tampered with. The families of the three men have demanded their immediate release.

Winston Silcott, Engin Raghip and Mark Braithwaite were all convicted of the murder of PC Blakelock during the 1985 Broadwater Farm riots. They were convicted solely on the basis of uncorroborated confessions, which were subsequently retracted. The media conducted a viciously racist campaign against the three, and all were sentenced to life imprisonment.

This latest evidence, which Silcott's lawyers have submitted to the Home Secretary along with the demand for an immediate enquiry, uses the same forensic tests that led to the release of the Guildford Four and the Birmingham Six. New evidence is already being considered for Mark Braithwaite's case and Engin Raghip has already been granted an appeal.

The sham that resulted from the Maguire Sevens' appeal showed that the courts cannot be relied on to overturn miscarriages of justice. Support for the immediate release of the Tottenham Three must be won in the Labour Party and the unions, along with support for all other miscarriages of justice.

Marchers at Lesbian and Gay Pride 1991, the twentieth anniversary of the first Pride festival in Britain. Organisers claimed it drew more than 40,000 to the demonstration and over 55,000 to the festival – easily the largest ever.

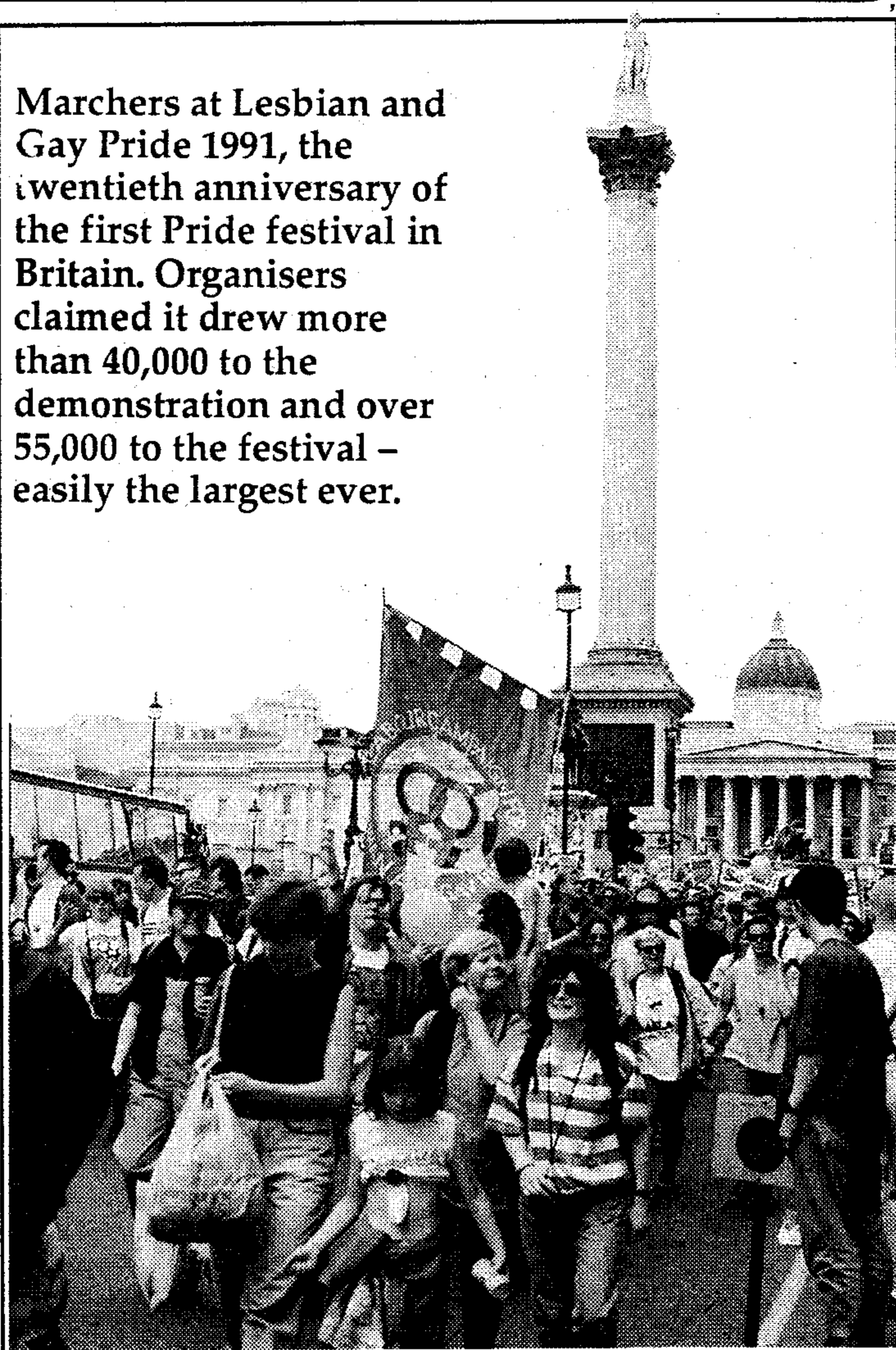


PHOTO: Tom Loucas

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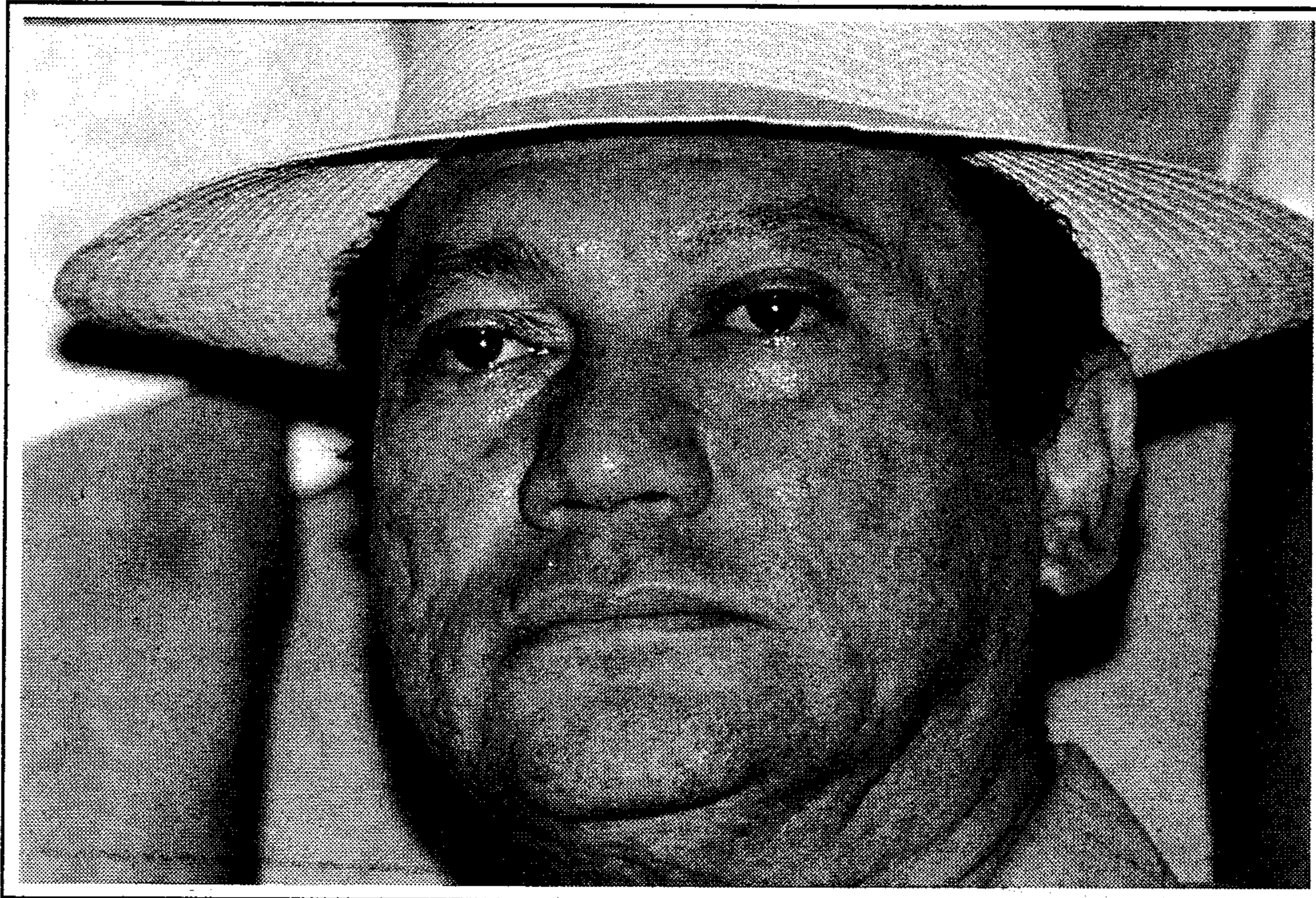
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socialist OUTLOOK

Socialist Outlook is taking a well-earned rest. We will return on September 7th.



Noted BCCI patron - General Noriega

Lessons of BCCI collapse...

Banks means fraud!

The collapse of the Bank of Credit and Commerce International (BCCI) will rob tens of thousands of their life savings and livelihood.

Local authorities are losing over £100m of poll tax money. As in previous giant banking frauds, most notoriously Bernie Cornfeld's Investors Overseas Services (IOS) in the 1970s, the rich and famous are deeply involved - Lord Callaghan, Tory MPs Julien Amery and Julian Ridsdale and former US President Jimmy Carter were all friends of the bank's owner

Agha Hassan Abedi.

Fraud is endemic to the operations of finance capital - for the simple reason that finance capital, by definition, is based on usury and fraud. The distinction between 'respectable' banking operations and fraudulent ones is impossible to draw.

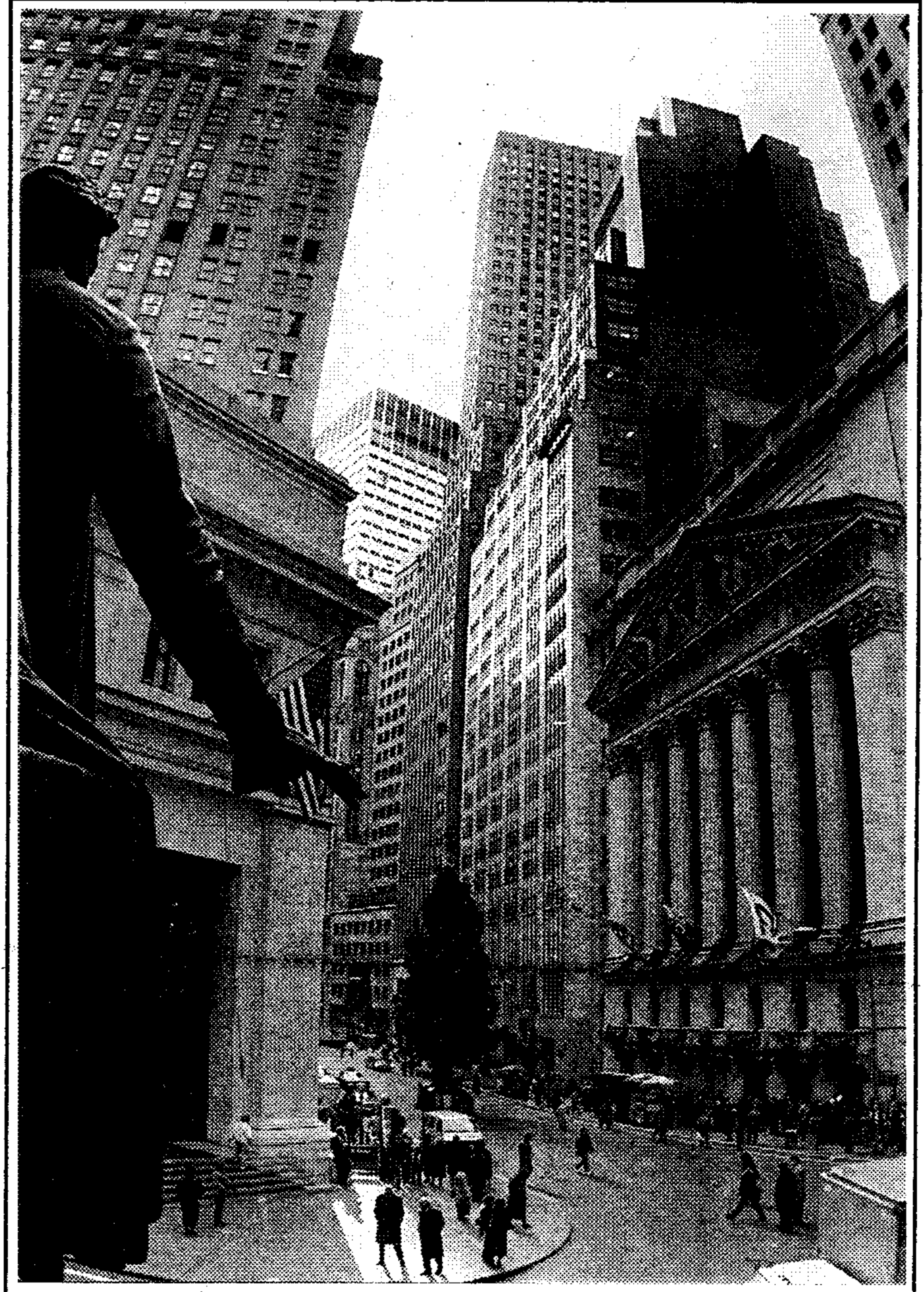
Most leading international banks are go to great lengths to get despite of 'flight capital' - hot money.

In 1966 the US giant Chase Manhattan became the first of many US banks to go searching

for hot money - rather than let it all go to the Swiss gnomes. The money comes from drug barons, corrupt government officials and the tax-evading rich world wide.

Fraud is at the heart of the capitalist system. BCCI got caught in 1988 laundering drug money, especially from Panamanian dictator General Noriega. Their crime was serious indeed - to get caught.

While the IMF and the World Bank impose harsh austerity on the world's debtor nations, unable to pay huge interest rates,



Wall Street

their buddies in the private banks everywhere are recycling huge amounts of hot money.

The trick is to maintain a front of solemnity and propriety. This front helps the banks lecture poor countries and poor customers about thrift, while charging huge interest rates and exorbitant bank charges - and extending the hand of friendship to gangsters big and small worldwide.

There are no effective controls on the profits which banks can make out of the poor.

Provided there is enough cash to cover withdrawals, any bank can stay afloat, using the money from millions of depositors to for dodgy deals at high interest rates.

Legality or illegality is not the point. The point is that the poor pay and the rich make more profits. If you've got a £100 overdraft you can expect hassle. But a £100m of drugs money will get you nothing but respect and co-operation.

Bush, Major - hands off Iraq!

THE USA AND BRITAIN have launched a new round of sabre rattling against Iraq, threatening further bombing raids. Their excuse is the claim that Saddam has not destroyed Iraqi nuclear installations - a condition of the Gulf war 'ceasefire'.

But socialists should not be taken in by this excuse. Though no-one welcomes Saddam's nuclear programme, this is just convenient whitewash for the Bush administration.

The USA has always been the main guilty party in terms of nuclear weapons proliferation. It has made absolutely no attempt to stop the development of nuclear weapons in a whole string of brutal regimes, from South Africa to Israel.

The real aim of George Bush and John Major is to safeguard their domination

over the Middle East. The establishment of a 'Rapid Deployment Force' of Western troops in Turkey will do nothing to make the Middle East a more peaceful area. It will be a prop for those dictators - like the Kuwaiti Emir or King Faud of Saudi Arabia - who support Bush's World Order.

As for the threat of a new round of carpet bombing of Iraq, this will just deepen the misery of the Iraqi people, already suffering from poverty and disease in the aftermath of the Gulf war. Bush's priorities were made quite clear in the UN decision of July 11 - where Iraq was once again denied permission to use its oil revenues to buy medical aid.

Socialists should campaign in the Labour party and the unions - Hands off Iraq! Western troops out of Turkey!

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