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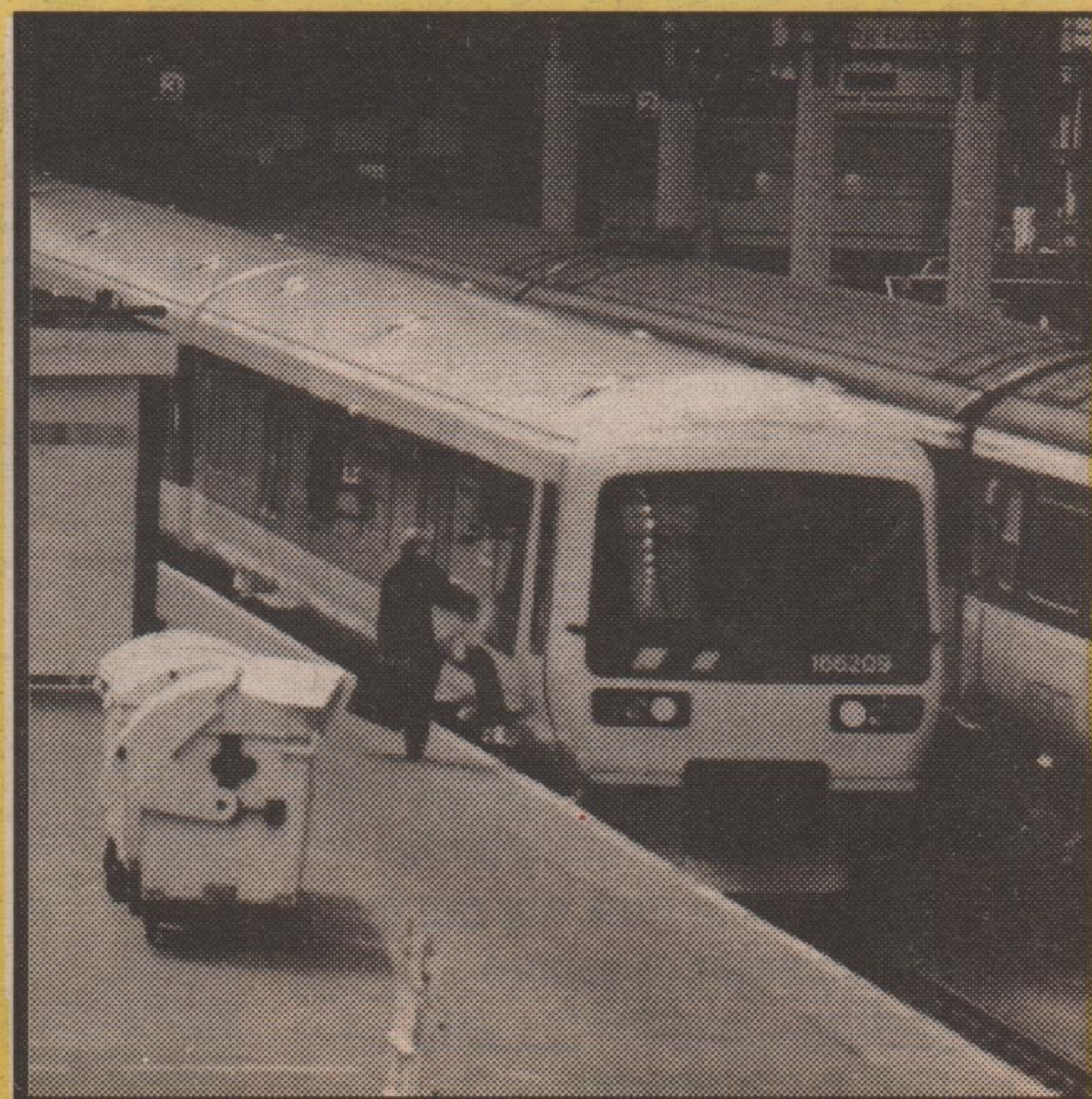
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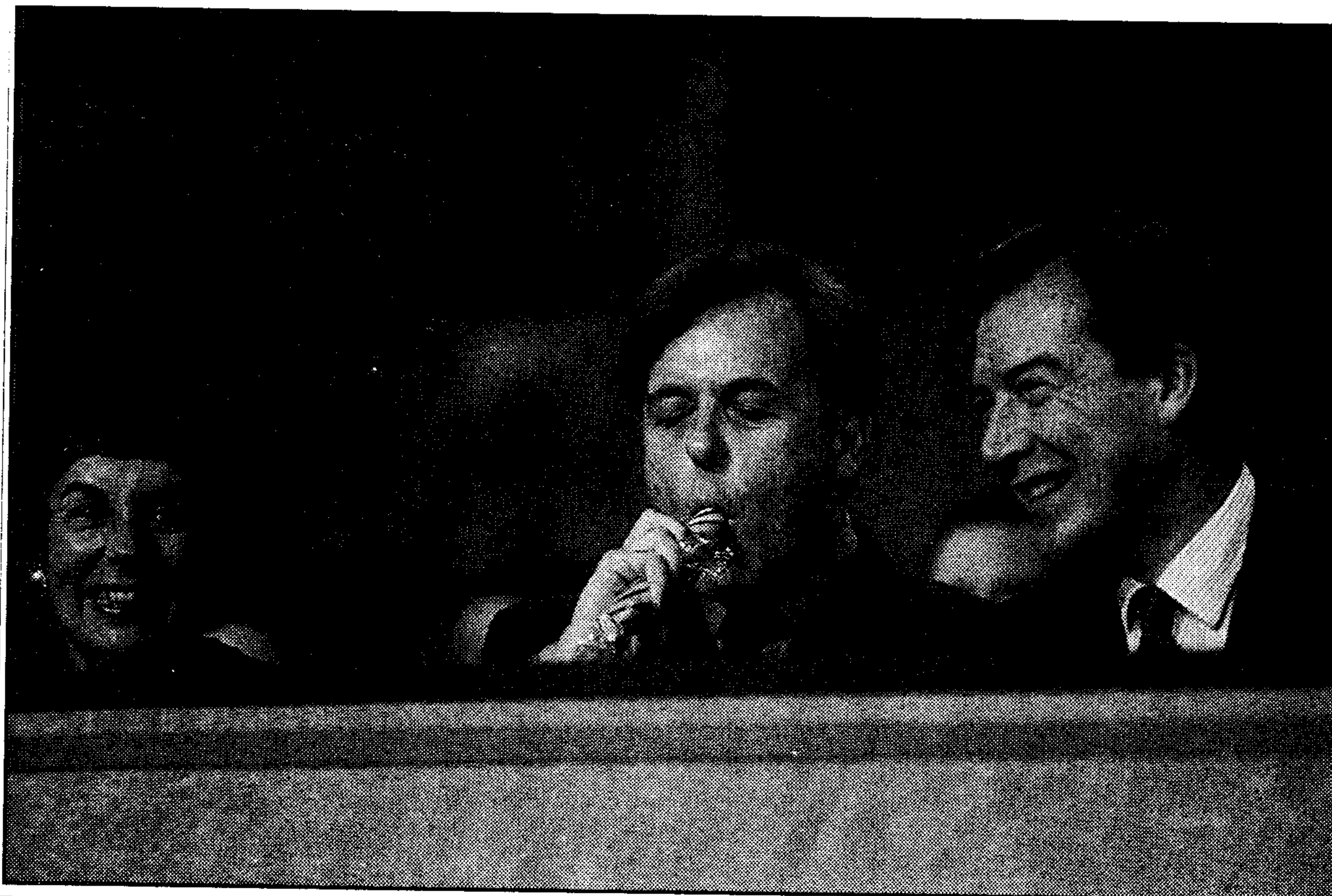
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RMT dispute
reports - **INSIDE**,
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Tory clown Patten paid price for school tests fiasco

Scalp for teachers as Tories shuffle to right

By our lobby correspondent

THE ONLY significant casualty of the July 20 cabinet reshuffle was Education Secretary John Patten, who took the rap for the disaster of school testing – and for his wild public statements.

Faced down by the tenacity of the NUT action, Patten was clearly a lame-duck minister lacking credibility with parents and staff.

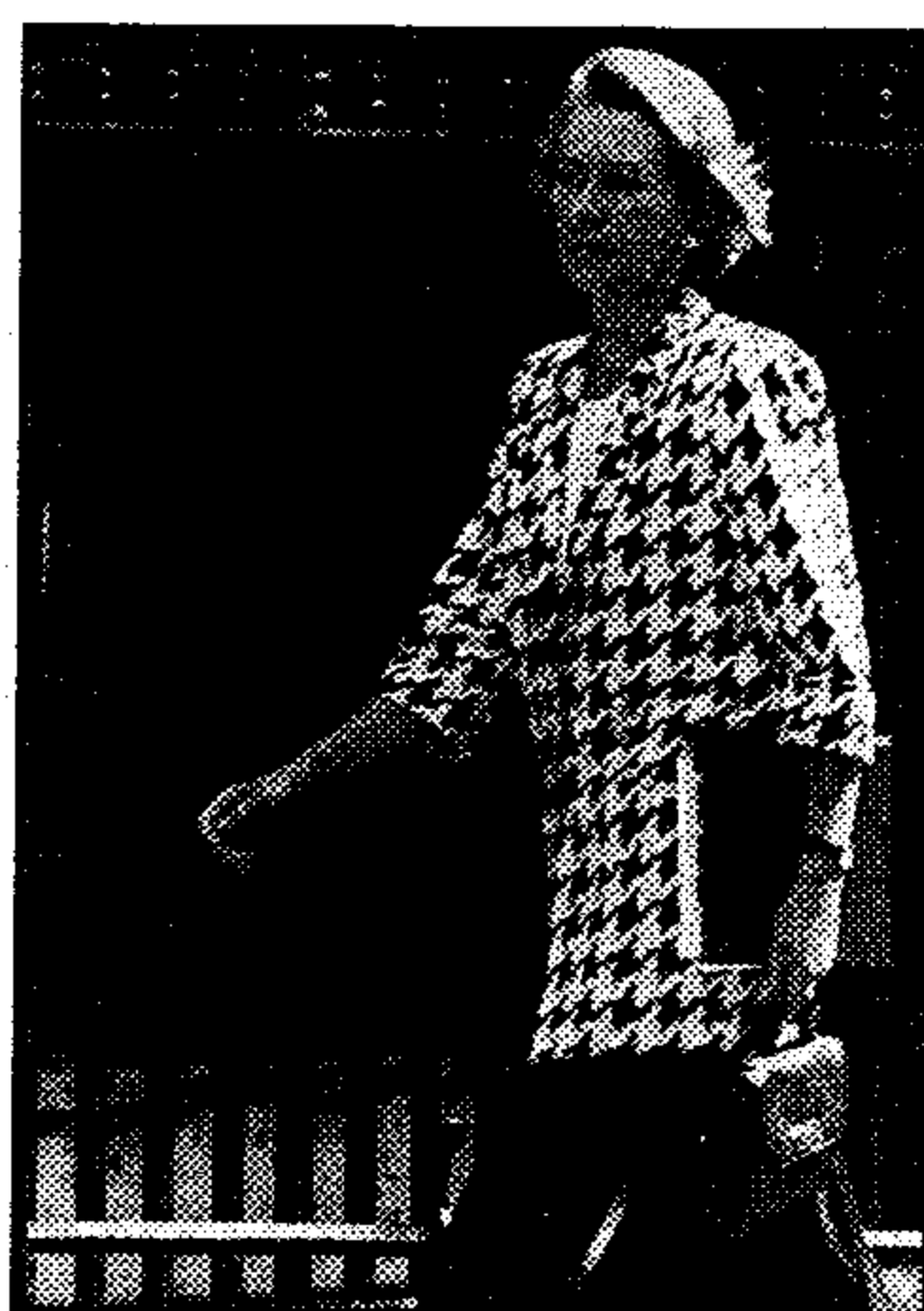
But the other super-unpopular member of a super-unpopular government, Health Secretary Virginia Bottomley, stayed in her hospital-closing job.

No let-up

That said it all: no bending to public concerns on the health service, no let up in the tough right-wing stance of the government.

This was underlined by the appointment of Jonathan Aitken as Chief Secretary to the Treasury. Aitken is a Euro-sceptic right-winger whose job is to continue the "good work" of Michael Portillo in slashing public expenditure.

At the same time as the cabinet reshuffle was being an-



Bottomley nounced, Chancellor Kenneth Clarke let it be known that the government was once again considering extending VAT to cover books, newspapers, children's clothing and other zero-rated items.

The idea is to reduce the overall rate of VAT, but collect the same amount of tax by covering more goods and services.

Tax cuts

The overall rate of indirect taxation, which always hits the poorest more, cannot be reduced if the government is to carry out its plan to further reduce the standard rate of income tax for the next election.

The main aim of the reshuffle was to tilt to the right, by making peace with the Euro-sceptics.

None of the Euro-sceptical "bastards" (Lilley, Portillo and Redwood) got ditched. Part of that is to signal that Major's government will be hard on public spending by appointing Aitken to the Treasury.

But behind it is a real shift in the attitude to the European Union. The process of European economic and political union is stalled.

Major can thus afford to make peace with the Euro-sceptics on their chosen issue, while cutting public spending harshly – the other right-wing cause celebre – fits in with Major's income tax cuts plans anyway.

Less than a landslide as Blair slips in

By Karen Pike

NEARLY a million people voted in the Labour leadership election from a potential electorate of 4,231,429 in a 22.5 per cent turnout.

In a travesty of the much vaunted democracy of 'one member, one vote', some party members had as many as seven votes.

An MP, who was also a trade union member, Co-op party member and a member of the Socialist Health Association, Socialist Education Association and a couple of other affiliated groups had seven votes.

Sections

And even all those votes had different values. The 327 Labour MPs and MEPs; the 249,430 constituency party members; and 3,981,672 affiliated union and socialist society members form the three sections of the electoral college, each of which have equal weight.

On the turnout in this election, a trade union or affiliated society member's vote was worth 0.00042 and a constituency party member's vote worth 0.0019 of an MP's vote.

In other words one MP's vote was the equivalent of 2,380 union members or 526 constituency members.

In terms of the actual votes



Beckett defeated cast, the result gives Blair 53 per cent and Prescott and Beckett 47 per cent combined.

Given the media bandwagon and speculation of a landslide victory this is not an overwhelming vote for Blair's programme.

Many voted for Blair as an 'electable' leader rather than for his policies. With very little to choose between the other two Blair inherits a situation with a sizeable minority voting against him.

In the trade unions where there was any recommendation by the executive it affected the voting.

Beckett's vote was higher in the TGWU, where she achieved 33 per cent for leader as opposed to between ten and 18 per cent in the other major unions.

The only major unions with a majority against Blair were the GPMU print union and the rail union RMT – both with majorities for Prescott.

Thoroughly modern Tony ignores poor, courts millionaires

TONY BLAIR has wasted no time in setting out his "modernising" stall. In his first two days as party leader he bluntly repudiated any form of socialist values and put his boot into the trade unions.

His inaugural speech was notable for his declaration that the party must move away from "Marxist socialism based on social ownership" and fully embrace the market.

The idea that the party leadership has at any time this century had anything to do with "Marxist socialism based on social ownership" is a bit laughable.

But the use of the term "social ownership" as opposed to "old fashioned nationalisation" is significant: Blair wants to repudiate anything but the mar-

ket.

Blair has also made it clear that he wants to continue the process of weakening the party's links with the unions.

Declaring that the unions "would not be shut out in the cold" under a Labour government, he also made it clear that they would have no "privileged access" to government as compared with employers' organisations.

No special role

Clearly pointing to further plan to erode the trade union link, Blair said: "Trade unions will have no special or privileged role within the Labour Party".

Blair's pro-market view also came out on taxation. He claimed that "only millionaires

will pay more tax under a Labour government" – a bizarre claim for anyone who wants to be able to rebuild the welfare state.

Further: "I am not anti-wealth. If someone goes through hard graft and work and makes themselves a millionaire, then good luck to them".

All this makes it no wonder that Blair is being enthusiastically welcomed by Liberal Democrats.

According to Roger Liddle, a member of the Lib Dems policy committee, "There are in reality no philosophical differences of substance between Blair and the vast majority of Liberal Democrats...The Liberal Democrats and Labour are now natural allies".

LABOUR PARTY

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Can Blair dress Labour in Bill Clinton's clothes?

TONY BLAIR winning the Labour leadership ballot was a foregone conclusion. His victory gives a snapshot of the situation in the labour movement, reflecting the continuing weakness of working class organisation at every level, and the continued dominance of the defeatist politics of 'new realism', despite new challenges with which it is faced.

But what does Blair's victory mean for the future of the Labour Party? Will Blair set it irretrievably on the track to breaking the party's links with the trade unions, to becoming an openly capitalist party like the US Democrats? Is Labour now definitively on the path of coalitionism with the Liberals?

To answer these questions we need to look at the overall trends in British politics and the historical roots of Labour's crisis.

Tony Blair does not represent a confident Labour right-wing which knows exactly what it wants to do. On the contrary, his apparently radical statements - for example his strong implication that the welfare state breeds a 'dependency culture' - are more soundbites than a worked-out programme.

The current Labour leadership represents the absence of a clearly-defined programme, and is thus buffeted by the nostrums of the post-Thatcherite right-wing political consensus.

Labour has lost its political bearings because their objective underpinnings have been kicked away by capitalist economic crisis. Post-war Labourism was above all defined by its adherence to the twin pillars of Keynesian orthodoxy - the mixed economy and the welfare state.

Welfare state

With privatisation the mixed economy is torpedoed; and all over Europe the welfare state is being under sharp attack and decaying. This is the basis of all "realist" political positions on both the left and right of the political spectrum. It is the reason for the crisis of social democracy continent-wide and the vast attrition of its working class support.

Tony Blair of course represents the most complete adaption to this reality: it is the meaning of "modernisation" of the Labour Party.

The trend of development is thus very clear. Historically, Labour, like all European social democratic parties, will collapse into becoming a bourgeois liberal party if working class defeats continue unabated.

In the long run, only a new economic boom, or an upsurge of working class struggles, will stop that development.

But history lasts a long time. There are huge and probably insuperable obstacles to Labour collapsing into being a US Democrat-style party, in both the short and medium term.

There are two reasons for this. Labour's links with the unions, although attenuated by the modification of the block vote, are largely intact. In 1993 John Smith failed in his project a radical



Blair: not such a landslide

rupture of the Labour-union link.

The second reason is that "new realism" in the unions is in crisis and unravelling. The leaderships of the two biggest general unions - the TGWU and the GMB - have more or less broken with the extreme collaboration of US-style 'business unionism'.

Faced with the rapid decline of their membership, the social role of the trade union bureaucracy is threatened. They want policies which will restore that role. Thus they have sharply reasserted the questions of full employment and defence of the welfare state.

They have in effect defended the terrain of the post-war settlement, the traditional Labourism of full employment, the mixed economy and the welfare state. It matters little that the objective basis for that settlement has disappeared. The attachment to these ideas in both the organised labour movement - and let it be said vast sections of the population - is undiminished.

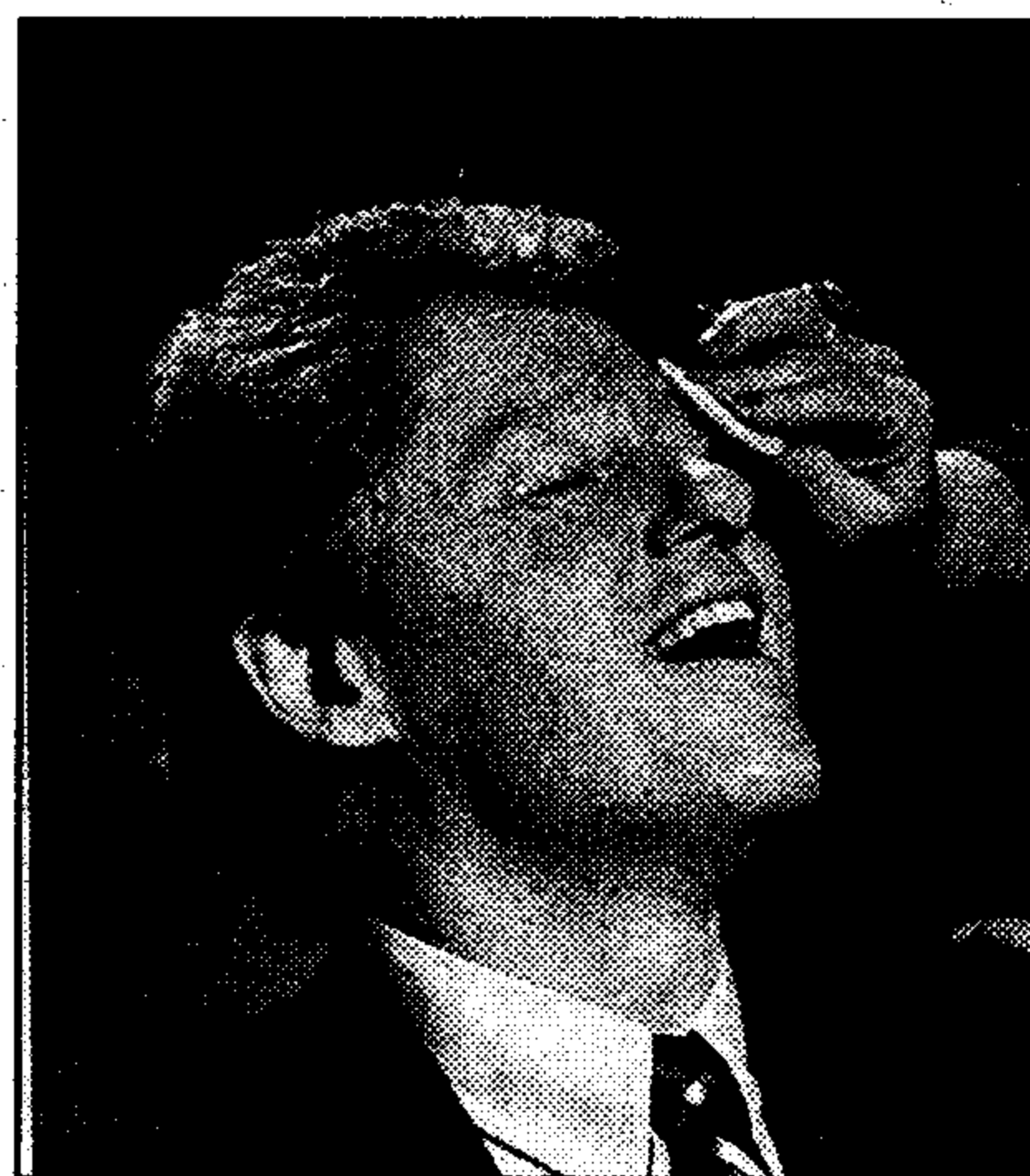
It is on this terrain - defence of full employment and the welfare state - that the defence of class independence, Labour's role as a party organisationally independent of the ruling class, must unfold.

Constraints

These constraints put big limits on what the Labour right can do. In the 1950s and '60s, the Labour right under Gaitskell, although out of power for much of that time, was utterly confident. It imagined that continuous economic growth would create the basis for an eternal increase in living standards, free education at every level, the welfare state and "equality in affluence" through progressive taxation.

That dream is shot to pieces, and the Labour right has nothing to put in its place. Blair is a total lightweight compared with Gaitskell.

But in both the Labour and Tory parties there is a political vacuum, an ab-



Is "Clintonism" Labour's future?

sence of serious programmes for restoring the fortunes of British capitalism.

For the Tories, Thatcherism simply has not worked; bigger and bigger attacks on the working class and the poor have not resulted in any fundamental turn-round in the economy. For Labour, the mixed economy and the welfare state are not realistic options, given the structural crisis of British capitalism.

There is a further complication which will have a big impact on the Tory Party: the Americans have pulled the rug away from the "special relationship" with Britain. Clinton was completely up-front about that during his visit to Germany.

This will give a further twist to the Tory crisis over Europe. "Atlanticism" is no longer a realistic alternative to Europeanism. On the other hand, partly because of Britain, the pace of European capitalist integration has slowed dramatically.

Labour, for want of any other ideas to boost the economy, hangs on to the "Europeanist" option for grim death, despite the fact that Europeanism is not going to save British capitalism.

British politics is going through an unstable transition period, waiting for the emergence of a serious programme

on the scale of Thatcherism or Bennism in the 1970s and '80s. Neither Major nor Blair will provide it.

None of this means that Labour can't win an election under Blair. There are strong voices in the ruling class calling for the Tories to take a spell in opposition, to regroup and re-define their programme.

But a Blair government would be confused and probably short-lived, unable to begin to solve any fundamental problems. And the Tories in opposition would be a nasty spectacle; all the constraints in the extremism of the Tories' right wing would be removed once they were in opposition.

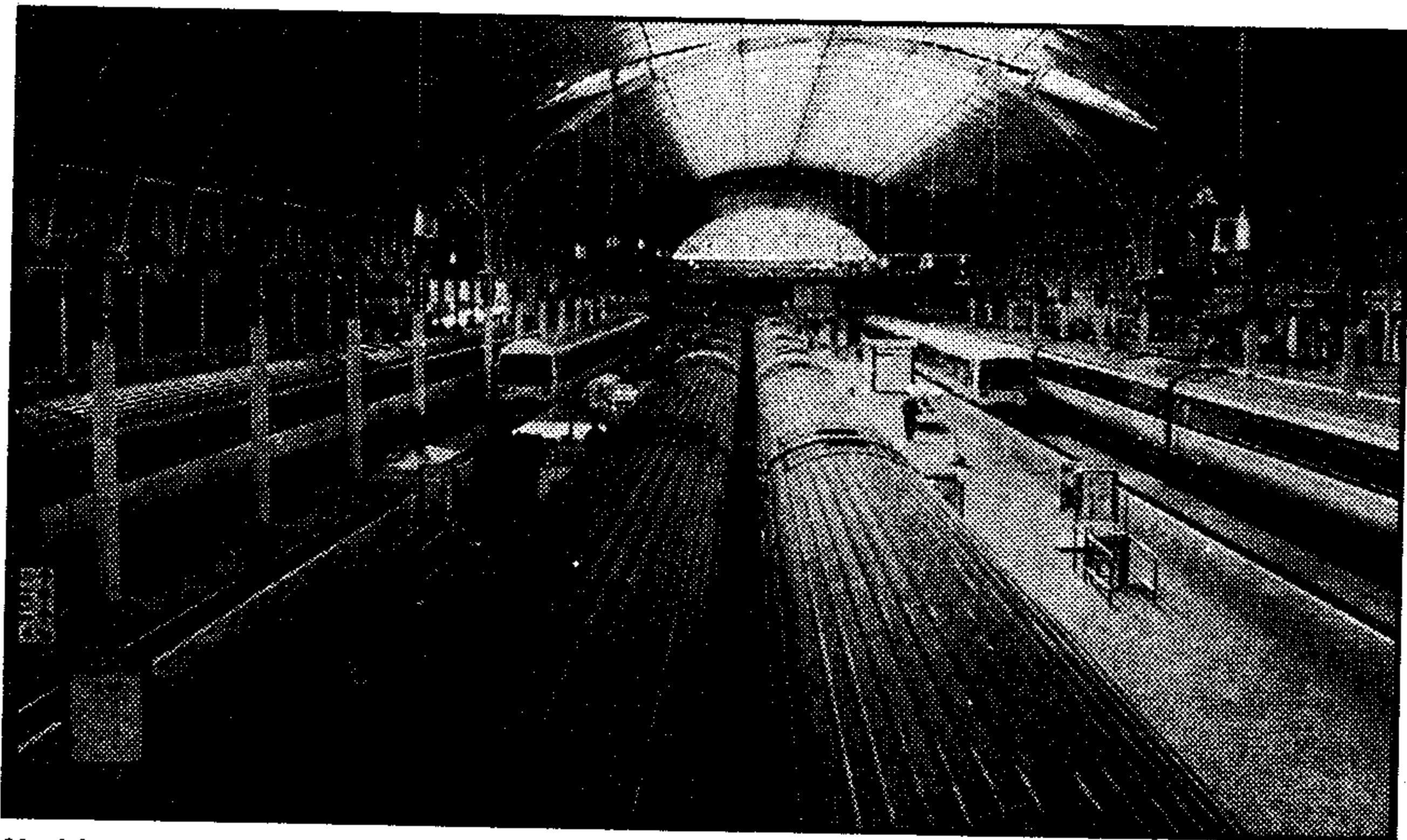
Blair could win an election because he leads the main party which is not the Conservative party; and that is one reason why talk of a coalition with the Liberals before the next election is overdrawn.

Rightward lurch

The danger for the working class movement in the overall development of British politics is clear: it is the danger that post-Thatcherite British politics will take a further, and very dangerous, lurch to the right. And only a deepening of working class struggle and a strengthening of the left can stop it.

There are elements of this already in the actions of the current government - the limitations on the right to strike, and the Criminal Justice Act, putting in place elements of the strong state, are examples. The re-emergence of the far-right, however limited, is another sign of this.

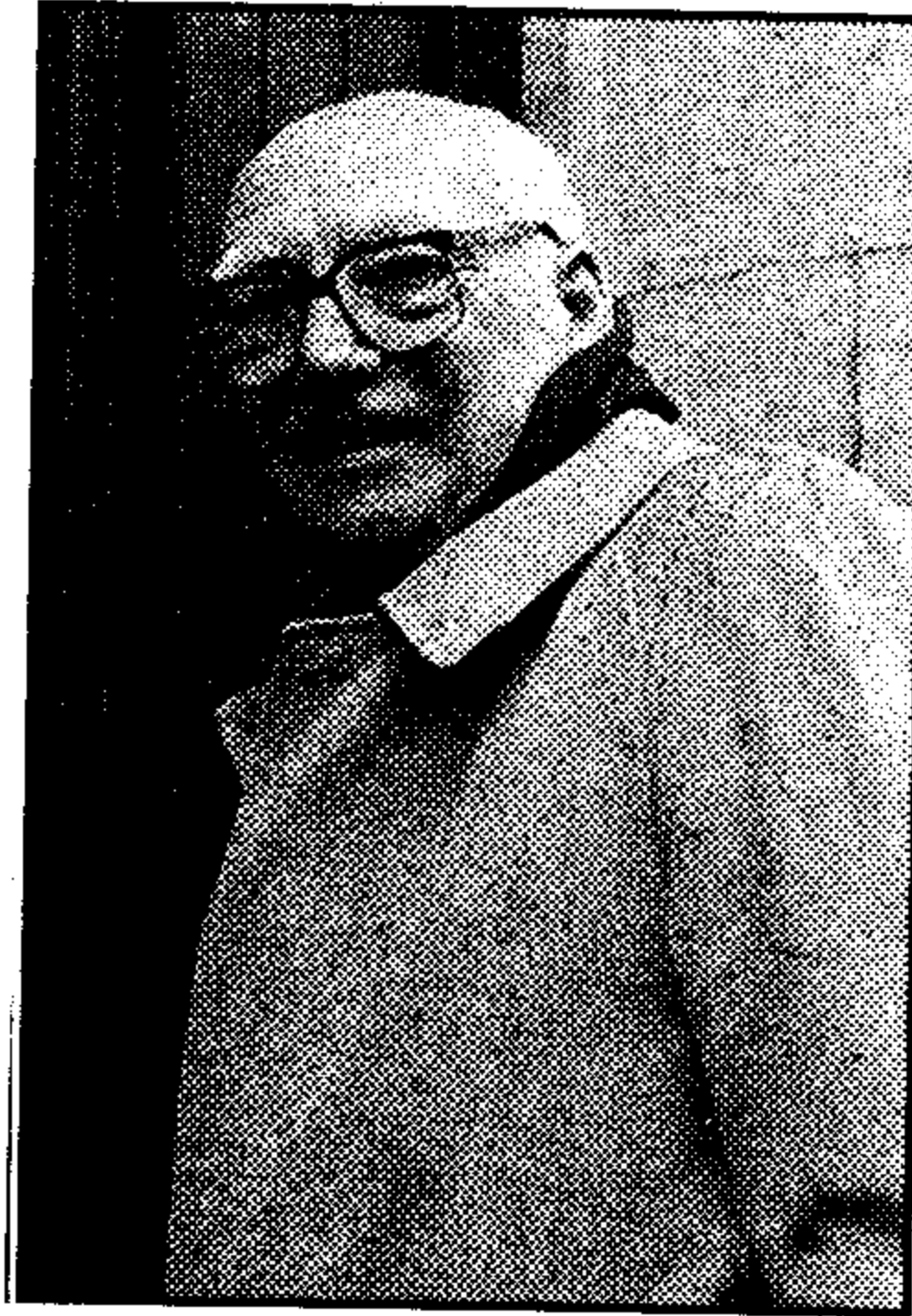
The politics of Tony Blair are no impediment to this trend. It is a further demoralisation and demobilisation of the organised labour movement, allowing a further shift to the right in British politics, which is the immediate danger from Blair's leadership of the Labour Party - not the improbable notion that Blair can transform Labour into a British version of the US Democrats.



Nothing moves at strike-bound Paddington

Stand firm with signal strikers

By a railworker



Jimmy Knapp

Danger! Scab signal box ahead

SAFETY is at the bottom of management's list of priorities on strike days.

● Across the country managers and supervisors who haven't worked in a box for years are being forced to operate them with minimal training.

● Non-RMT signal workers from Crewe are being sent all over country to boxes they barely have any understanding of.

● Similarly in Edinburgh signal boxes are staffed by signal workers from Sterling and Perth.

● In Edinburgh there was a short stoppage of work by drivers frustrated and angry with so many mistakes being made. Inexperienced supervisors put two trains travelling in opposite directions on the same track. A serious accident was averted by the quick response of drivers and the fact the trains were going slower than usual because of earlier signalling problems.

● In Victoria the manager running the signal box didn't know how to operate a vital piece of safety equipment and had to spend 3/4 hour phoning round other managers to find out how to turn it on.

● At Sandhills near Liverpool passengers were trapped between level crossing barriers.

ers.

● In Birmingham - a rail inspector sent home on Wednesday after he said he was not able to operate a signal box safely after being subject to intense intimidation was still suspended on Saturday. He faces disciplinary action for refusing to follow a direct instruction to operate the box. Spontaneous half hour strikes took place at six other Midlands signal boxes in his support.

Three Bridges

● The Three Bridges box opened on the week of the first two day action staffed by four managers, two of whom had never operated a box, the other two last doing so four years ago and their only recent knowledge based on looking at it during the strike day in the previous week when it was closed.

● ASLEF has reported near accidents at Woking, Southend, Portsmouth, Glasgow, Crewe, Shoburyness, Wolverhampton, Leeds, Westbury, Paisley, York, Preston, Edinburgh, Llandudno and Llanwrst.

The lives of RMT and ASLEF members are at risk as are those of the public who are crazy enough to travel on strike days.

THE SIGNAL workers dispute remains solid amongst RMT members. But over the last three weeks Railtrack management have pressurised a number of supervisors and managers to work an extremely reduced service.

According to the RMT no more than 10 per cent of the usual passengers are travelling on strike days. In a handful of areas a near normal service is running but carrying few passengers.

But in most places it's a Mickey Mouse service at times and to places that no-one wants. The strike is costing the railway companies 90 per cent of their usual revenue. It is estimated that the dispute has so far cost £45 million despite the fact that the settlement would cost a mere £5 million.

The union's tactics nationally have not been to encourage organisation on behalf of the signal workers.

Whilst the executive took the decision to organise the march, produce public leaflets, set up a strike fund, the bureaucracy has dragged its feet over implementing the decisions.

Its only now that things are being done and in most cases its been left to local branches. Instead the bureaucracy wants to keep hold of the reins.

Every signal worker has had a letter from Jimmy Knapp probably every week since the dispute started. Whilst there's a culture of passing messages between signal boxes they are isolated within the union because of the way their job is organised.

It has been very difficult for non-signal worker activists in the union to meet with them unless they have wanted to themselves and come along to RMT special meetings.

Many of them have yet to come to terms with the fact that this dispute has been made a major political confrontation by the government in its attempt to enforce the public sector pay freeze.

they've been passed by others instead.

There have been loads of examples of bad practice where its clear that the person in the box doesn't understand what they are doing".

One train driver said, "Everyone feels very unhappy about working but have been forced to do so. On the first day of the strike I refused to work and was threatened with dismissal.

Whilst the union got that threat lifted it was only because they, the union instructed me to work. Although I had the support of other drivers, they weren't prepared to take similar action because their union had instructed them to work and report problems to health and safety executive afterwards".

Safety

Instead of relying on the HSE Railway inspectorate the RMT should rely on their own strength and support their drivers and guards in depots where the workforce wants to take action in defence of safety.

The importance of solidarity from the labour movement cannot be over estimated. The signal workers need messages of support and donations to the strike fund.

The union nationally has written to the Labour Party which still refuses to come out openly in support of the signal workers. This despite 40 per cent of poll commissioned by the party blaming the government for the dispute, 18 per cent blaming Railtrack and only 18 per cent the strikers.

Pressure

The RMT knows that the workers responsible for judging competency are being put under extreme pressure to approve people.

An RMT official said "we know of examples where some managers have refused to pass people as competent and

SMTUC Meeting Solidarity with the SIGNAL WORKERS

An open discussion on how to build
solidarity action

AUGUST 3 7.30pm

Red Rose Club, 129, Seven Sisters Rd N7

Speakers: Jeremy Corbyn MP + RMT
executive member

SIGNAL WORKERS DEMONSTRATION July 30

ASSEMBLE 12.30 Grafton Place, outside EUSTON station for march leaving at 1pm across central London back to Camden Centre for RMT-only rally

Support group offers platform for solidarity

By Helen Shaw

SOUTH LONDON labour movement activists have set up a support group led by local RMT members for the signal workers.

Since its first meeting on 11 July the group has already joined picket lines at signal boxes; leafleted major sta-

tions with a message from the RMT to the travelling public outlining the issues behind the dispute; organised a speaking tour across local labour movement bodies; raised funds for the strike fund from the labour movement and from local events like the Lambeth Country Show and Southwark show and leafleted potential passengers on strike days with in-

formation about the lack of safety.

Local trade union branches and other labour movement bodies have been positive in making donations and in sending messages of solidarity.

The response from the public has always been overwhelmingly in support of the strike. Trade unionists using the rail service have taken information away to raise

money and support in their own unions.

With the likelihood of the government and the media stepping up the arguments against the strike, solidarity work becomes even more important, both within the labour movement and in countering the arguments of the ruling class amongst the public.

The travelling public are

not separate from the struggle — many of them are public sector workers and union members facing similar pay disputes and draconian management tactics in their workplaces.

Above all the support group can play a role in assisting RMT activists to convince the striking signal workers of the support they have and to break their isolation.

Dog eat dog as NHS Trusts fight for survival

It's market madness!

By John Lister

THE KNIVES are out between rival hospital Trusts, as the battle for scarce NHS contract revenue gets seriously nasty.

In EAST ANGLIA, leaked documents have exposed the bitter struggle behind the scenes as the James Paget Hospital Trust in Great Yarmouth goes on the warpath against competitors in Norwich and Ipswich.

Funding cut

With the market reforms set to reduce the funds available for healthcare in East Anglia, one Trust can only grow at the expense of others. James Paget managers have their eyes on increasing revenue by extending their catchment population.

"The James Paget Hospital has to grow - to achieve an optimal size supporting a larger population, and providing a broader range of clinical services. If our hospital does not grow it will die. This is the essential message."

Homing in

Celebrating the abandonment of plans for a new general hospital in Norwich, and eagerly listing the 'publicly known' failings of its Norwich foe, the James Paget management home in for the kill, hoping to snatch extra contracts and revenue.

It sees in 'the current difficulties of the Norwich Acute Unit' what the document calls "a unique window of opportunity for the James Paget Hospital".

Similar ruthless logic is driving the competition in London between Charing Cross Hospital and the Royal Marsden Hospital, each of which is battling for a share of the cancer market.

Charing Cross bosses were embarrassed to be caught red-handed when a leaked document revealed their plans to 'destabilise a competitor' by poaching a top Royal Marsden consultant to help run a new 'head and neck cancer unit' in direct rivalry with the Marsden's, just three miles away.

Weakening

The appointment of reconstructive surgeon Mr Nicholas Breach would, said the draft Charing Cross business plan, "obviously enable Charing Cross to improve specialist cover, but would have the additional benefit of weakening one of our strongest competitors."

While these and other Trusts battle to break into each other's share of the market, the struggle for survival is leading some to put up new barriers to keep out expensive and unwanted patients.

Scandals have centred on Trusts in Brighton and London caught restricting services to patients deemed 'too old', while Sheffield's Jessop Hospital for women cites cash as the reason for banning treatment to save very premature babies.

Across the country, the pattern is the same: Trusts in turmoil are resorting to mergers, rationalisation, expansion of private medicine, closure of A&E and less lucrative NHS services, cuts in community and other services and attacks on staffing levels as they battle with the balance sheets.

Bottom line

But the bottom line remains the same: the market system operates at the expense of planning and proper patient care.

Until this crazy system is scrapped, patients and health workers will pay the price of its failure.



Several thousand joined march on July 5 against the closure of Guy's Hospital

Pollution triggers asthma epidemic

By Barry Gale

BRITAIN is experiencing the world's worst-ever asthma epidemic as high summer temperatures smother big cities, especially London, in petrochemical smog and ozone.

The epidemic began after violent thunderstorms in southern and central England on June 24; at its height hospitals were inundated with people suffering breathing problems and ran out of the asthma-relieving drugs.

One doctor described the effect of the epidemic on medical services as "the equivalent of every major hospital having to

cope with an aircraft".

The epidemic is similar, but on a much larger scale, to those which occurred once in Birmingham and twice in Melbourne during the 1980s.

As afternoon temperatures soared to over 30 degrees, high levels of ultra-violet radiation interacted with fumes from car exhausts to produce a Los Angeles-style smog, including poisonous ozone and benzene concentrations. The number of deaths directly attributable to the epidemic is not known, but is believed to be at least 200.

The asthma epidemic is just one incident in the sustained growth of respiratory diseases in Britain. One in seven British children now has asthma - the

only preventable disease advancing throughout the advanced countries.

Its development is associated not with pollution in general, but with the benzene and nitrogen dioxide emissions from cars in particular. Ninety-four per cent of benzene comes from car emissions, as does 75 per cent of nitrogen dioxide.

Road building

The government's crazy roadbuilding and "great car economy" policy, allied with that of privatising and running down public transport, is directly contributing to the rise in respiratory diseases.

During the asthma epidemic the government Department of the Environment declared that air quality was "good" and the ozone levels as "low". Roger Higman, air pollution campaigner at Friends of the Earth, commented:

"Whoever heard of a level five times higher than the recommended average being described as 'low'? If its own advisers and international experts say pollution over certain levels causes health risks, they should warn people and not disguise the facts."

No government warnings about the danger of melanoma and other skin cancers have been issued during the warm weather.

Scandal of Britain's cancer toll

BRITAIN is the breast cancer capital of the world - yet our cancer services lag behind the rest of Europe.

The NHS has fewer cancer specialists per head than Poland. It is estimated as few as 50% of cancer patients sees a specialist, and that as a result 5,000 a year die unnecessarily.

Over 300 British women die each week of breast cancer, which is the biggest killer of women aged 35-55.

Yet patchy provision and

stretched resources can mean that women fearing they have breast cancer can have to wait three months for a referral to a specialist.

Overall 250,000 new cancers are diagnosed every year.

Different levels of expertise prevail in different hospitals. In Scotland, one teaching hospital achieved almost 50% higher survival rates for women with ovarian cancer than district general hospitals.

Now new government pro-

posals aim to 'streamline' cancer services by concentrating them in fewer, larger units. NAHAT has suggested as few as 28 key centres should carry out complex in-patient surgery in England, with 90% of patients being seen at more local hospitals as day-patients.

The danger is that this could force poorly patients receiving debilitating chemotherapy or radiotherapy treatment to make more uncomfortable journeys to and from hospital.

And with the cash-driven internal market system working to the disadvantage of centres of excellence which carry higher overhead costs, there are serious doubts on the viability of the new policy.

■ This and the article by John Lister above are reproduced from the new issue of *Health Emergency* newspaper, copies available (25p stamp) from LHE, 446, Uxbridge Rd, London W12 0NS.

UNIONS

Now Labour's Eurocrats demand even more perks!

IT IS A TRUTH universally acknowledged that members of the European Parliament are on one of the cushiest gravy trains around.

When Edwina Curry was defeated in June's Euro-elections you could see the tears in her eyes; it wasn't the prestige of person or party which worried her, but those lost hundreds of thousands in salary, expenses, fake travel allowances and super-luxurious entertainment costs.

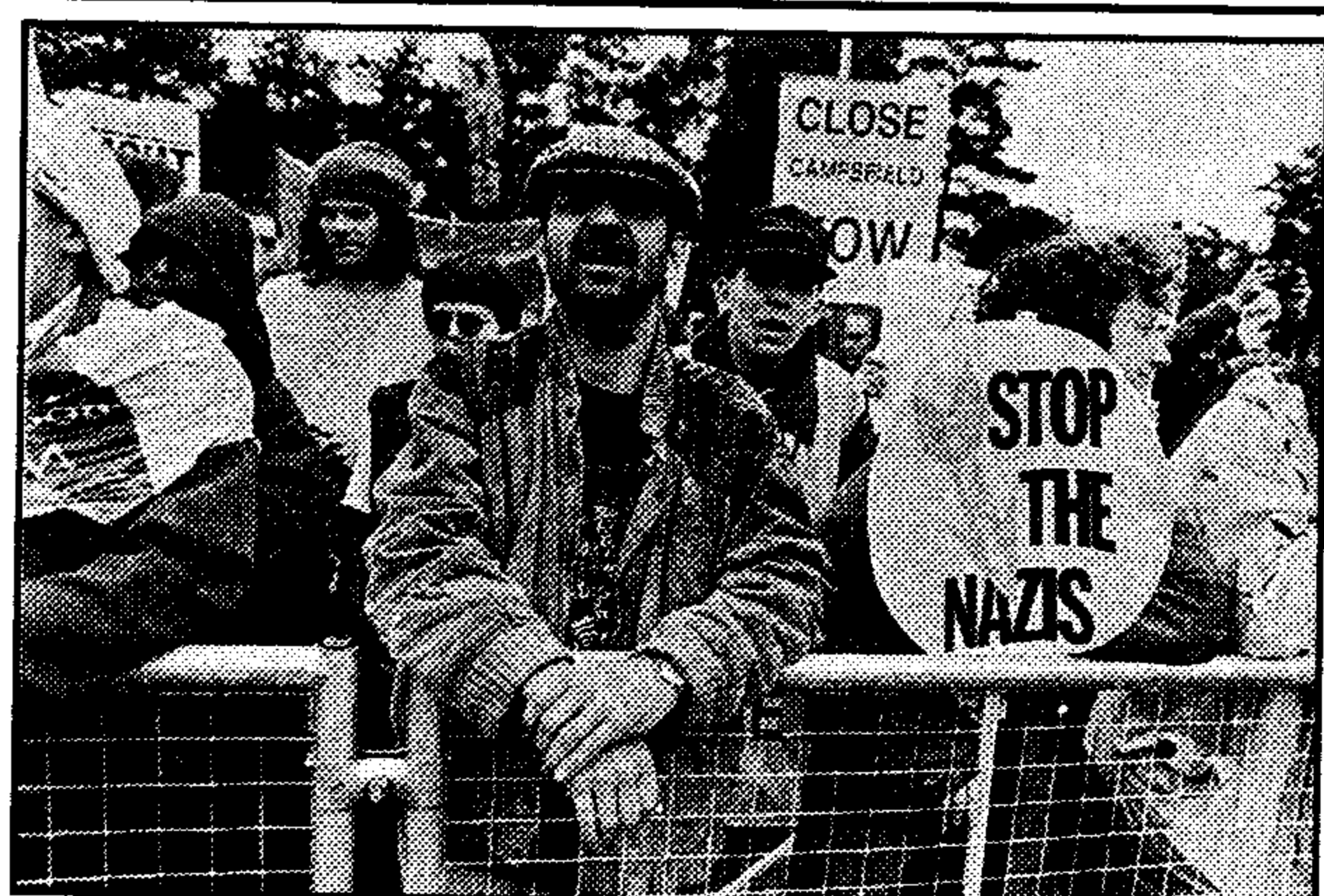
Losing all that and having to make do with the relative penury of Westminster (a measly 32 grand in salary!) would make anyone cry.

Some Labour MEPs give

some of their allowances to their constituency parties. Others apparently think they are living in poverty.

For Labour MEPs have elected as their representative on the committee that runs the European parliament Richard Balfe, whose personal manifesto demands an all-round increase in allowances for MEPs - more money for fax machines and office equipment, more money for "travel", more money for "secretaries".

According to Richard Balfe: "I do not believe that we should apologise for or indulge in lengthy explanations of our resources as Members of the European parliament". Can't really argue with that, can you?



Close Down Campsfield Immigration Prison!

Demonstrate outside the gates

Saturday JULY 30

12 noon

CAMPSFIELD immigration prison, Langford Lane, KIDLINGTON, near Oxford

Campsfield is Britain's first purpose-built immigration prison. As the number of detentions of asylum-seekers and immigrants grows, the government is establishing hundreds of new places for detainees. Join the fight against the racist immigration laws by joining the demonstration - or take your tent and sleeping bag and join the re-establishment of the human rights camp outside the gates on the evening of Friday July 29.

For further details phone 0865 724452/726804.

HOME NEWS

Conference "falls in" behind imperialism's new treaty

By Liam Mac Uaid

"THE REAL division that exists in Ireland is the division in people's hearts and minds". Thus, with a soundbite, SDLP leader John Hume can magic away the border, the British army, imperialism, sectarianism and the Orange state.

Hume was speaking at a well-attended conference on the theme "Towards Peace in Ireland" organised by the former leadership of the Labour Committee on Ireland.

It attracted an impressive platform of speakers ranging from Hume to Sinn Fein's Mitchell McLaughlin, Kevin McNamara and Ken Livingstone.

The differences between the Labour front bench view (as represented by McNamara), Sinn Fein and John Hume are negligible.

Identical

Hostility to the armed struggle is a divisive issue, but their political methods and analysis are virtually identical.

Broadly speaking the political consensus on the future goes as follows: first, with the ending of the republican armed struggle there will be no need



Livingstone says yes

for the British army to patrol the streets.

Should the loyalist terrorists continue their murder campaign, this will bring them into conflict with the British state, putting them into an untenable position - thus their campaign will quickly end.

A local devolved assembly will be established, with elements of power sharing, and anti-discrimination provisions will be made law.

Then, in Hume's words, "the more we work and talk together, barriers start to break down and people concentrate on areas of agreement".

And - naturally - this new era of co-operation heralds the inflow of inward investment from Europe and the United States. Just like on the West Bank.

Even people who one would

have expected better of were taken in by this drivel. Martin Collins, former editor of *Labour and Ireland*, asserted that no return to "Stormont" - a sectarian Orange state - was possible.

In reality, unionism is only able to maintain its mass base by using sectarianism to blind the Protestant working class to its real interests in uniting with the oppressed on the rest of the island.

No amount of legislation will change the bigotry of loyalism; and no bill of rights will alter the anti-democratic character of partition.

Demoralisation

To believe that the demobilisation of the anti-imperialist movement (something much wider than the armed struggle) is the prelude to a new era of justice and harmony in Ireland is the worst political shortsightedness imaginable.

However, the remnants of the Labour left, the withdrawal movement and Sinn Fein are falling in behind the new treaty imperialism is preparing.

Those of us who are still prepared to argue that no nation has the right to rule another, that the Irish people must determine their own future, and that the British must quit Ireland, have a long battle ahead.

Tories make kids suffer

ALMOST A THIRD of children in Britain are living below the poverty line according to official government figures published on July 14. The single most important cause of child poverty is unemployment which is pushing more and more families into penury.

In 1979 "only" 1.4 million children (10 per cent of the total) were living below the poverty line - in families on less than half the average wage.

Now the figure is 4.1 million, or 32 per cent of the child population. The figures also show the amazing figure that 13.9 million people - nearly a quarter of the population - live in poverty.

Once again the figures reveal that the poorest section of



Unemployment causes child poverty

society are families headed by a single parent, usually a single mother. An astonishing 74 per cent of single-parent families

are below the poverty line, compared with 28 per cent in 1979. Yet instead of taking drastic action to aid single mothers, Major's government is harassing them through the Child Support Agency.

The true scope of the onset of poverty is shown by figures that reveal that the poorest tenth of the population have suffered a staggering 17.1 per cent fall in their real living standards since 1979.

The top ten per cent by contrast have seen their incomes, in real terms, rise by 62 per cent. The social security minister, Peter Lilley, said that "increased prosperity was shared by all family types and income groups". No wonder John Major called him a bastard!

NUJ Left branches into new network

By Steve Smith
(NUJ Executive,
personal capacity)

A NEW campaign to defend and resource the union's grass-roots has been set up following the most successful NUI Left meeting for years.

The morale-boosting July 9 meeting laid the basis for a partnership between branch activists and the national executive left minority, which *Socialist Outlook* supporters have long argued is vital to revitalising the union.

Review

Hosted jointly by the NUI Left and Birmingham NUI, the meeting was a response to the review of the union's structures and activity ordered by national conference in April.

The union bureaucracy want a review which is exactly the same as the Labour "policy review" - smash the left, reduce rank and file confidence, weaken or even abolish the branches and reduce the democracy of the annual conference.

The cuts in the union strike fund and soaring legal bills reflect a "new realist" response to derecognition - individualising the union into a range of discrete "services" rather than taking steps to rebuild chapel combativity.

Legal action

Union members in trouble are now routinely referred to Messrs. Sue, Grabbit and Runne rather than their chapel or branch.

The Birmingham meeting had a greater sense of urgency in addressing the union's many problems and a far higher level of debate than any recent national executive get-together (not difficult).

The meeting resolved to set up a high-profile union pressure group, the Branches Network; this will offer the best chance in years to seize the initiative away from the new realist bloc running the union.

While the industrial response to the employers offensive remains fragmented, the meeting heard reports of media workers who are fighting back.

These currently include the joint NUI/MSF chapel at the Consumers' Association, who have successfully held a series of one-day strikes, journalists at the South London Press who are working to rule, and GMPU printers at Arrowsmiths, Bristol, who have been on strike for 14 months.

The high profile NUI/Bectu strike action at the BBC has been suspended for a period of negotiations.



"Now let's get this straight: which one of us is supposed to be leaning to the left?" Can you tell the Tories from the TUC chief?

A SMALL but vocal lobby of the TUC's Conference on Full Employment was backed officially by both of Britain's largest manual unions, the TGWU and GMB on July 5. Star speakers at the Congress House conference were Tory employment minister David Hunt - since reshuffled - and CBI boss Howard Davies.

600 back Sefton UNISON defiance of anti-union laws

UNION members in Sefton, Merseyside, have been dragged in front of the courts by the local council over their decision to defy anti-union laws. The council has no overall control, but the largest group is the Labour Party.

Nigel Flanagan and Martin Murphy, secretary and chair of the UNISON branch, were taken to court after they organised a democratic vote which decided to go ahead with a one-day strike on June 28.

Privatisation

The strike was a response to council plans to extend privatisation under a scheme called "externalisation". This would mean the privatisation of whole council departments.

When the branch asked regional official to organise a ballot for action, they refused.

So the branch went ahead anyway, carrying out in practice the UNISON line of resisting externalisation.

UNISON nationally has repudiated the one-day strike.

More than 600 workers turned up to demonstrate their solidarity when the two branch officers appeared in court.

On June 28 more than 1000 workers took part in strike action. So successful was this action that at a meeting of the day of the strike, the council completely dropped its privatisation

plans.

But the council also decided to pursue the local UNISON branch through the courts for breaching the anti-strike legislation.

When Flanagan and Murphy appeared in court on July 19, the 600 people demonstrating in their support included delegations from UNISON branches all over the country, as well as firefighters, printers, rail workers and BBC workers from London.

At the hearing at Manchester Crown Court, which was adjourned, UNISON national officials gave evidence explaining their repudiation of the strike and how they had worked to stop it.



UP TO 50,000 mainly young people joined the march through London on July 24 against the Tory Criminal Justice Bill

Bob Smith Memorial Dinner - date set

SOCIALIST OUTLOOK'S fund in memory of our supporter Bob Smith, who died in April at the age of 46, has made a good start with £1,600 in donations and pledges already in.

Bob was active in workers' struggles, in the fight against racism and in the Irish solidarity movement. He was hugely popular in the Birmingham labour movement and among Socialist Outlook supporters nationwide.

The fund will be used to produce a volume of writings on the struggle against racism and fascism in Bob's memory and to further his work in building the Marxist movement in Britain.

It has been announced that a memorial dinner will be held on the evening of Saturday October 22, at South Camden Community School, London.

The evening will consist of a three-course meal, speeches from well-known figures in the labour and anti-racist movements, plus entertainments and a disco.

Admittance is by ticket only, price £12 waged, £7 unwaged; for your ticket send a cheque/PO made out to "Bob Smith Memorial Fund", PO Box 1109, London N4 2UU.

The fund will be concluded at the October 22 dinner. Our supporters and friends have contributed generously to the fund, but many have not yet donated.

If you cannot give money immediately, you can make a pledge, to be fulfilled by October 22 - write to the address above.

HOME NEWS

East's health disaster as capitalism cashes in

By Harry Sloan

IT'S OFFICIAL. The free market system is bad for your health. And a growing tide of premature deaths, chronic sickness and plunging birth-rates across eastern Europe bear witness to the problem.

In Russia, Bulgaria and eastern Germany, deaths now outnumber births, often by two to one.

A massive backlog of health problems generated under stalinist rule by industrial pollution, smoking, excessive alcohol and poverty has now combined with a crisis situation in cash-strapped health services to wipe out large numbers of men and women in the prime of life.

Death rates in Russia have rocketed by 30 percent since 1989, while birth rates have plunged by 46 percent. Life expectancy for Russian men has fallen to 59, the same as in Pakistan.

Poland

In Poland, birth rates have fallen 20 percent, in Bulgaria 30 percent.

The biggest fall is in eastern Germany, where birth rates have dropped from a low 12 per 1,000 in 1989 to just 6.5, with the biggest fall coinciding with the re-

moval of the Berlin Wall.

Unemployment levels, reaching 40 percent in some areas of eastern Europe, are helping to trigger an increase in depression and suicides as well as poverty-related diseases. In Russia 1992 alone saw a 20 percent increase in deaths from unnatural causes, making this the main cause of death for people of working age.

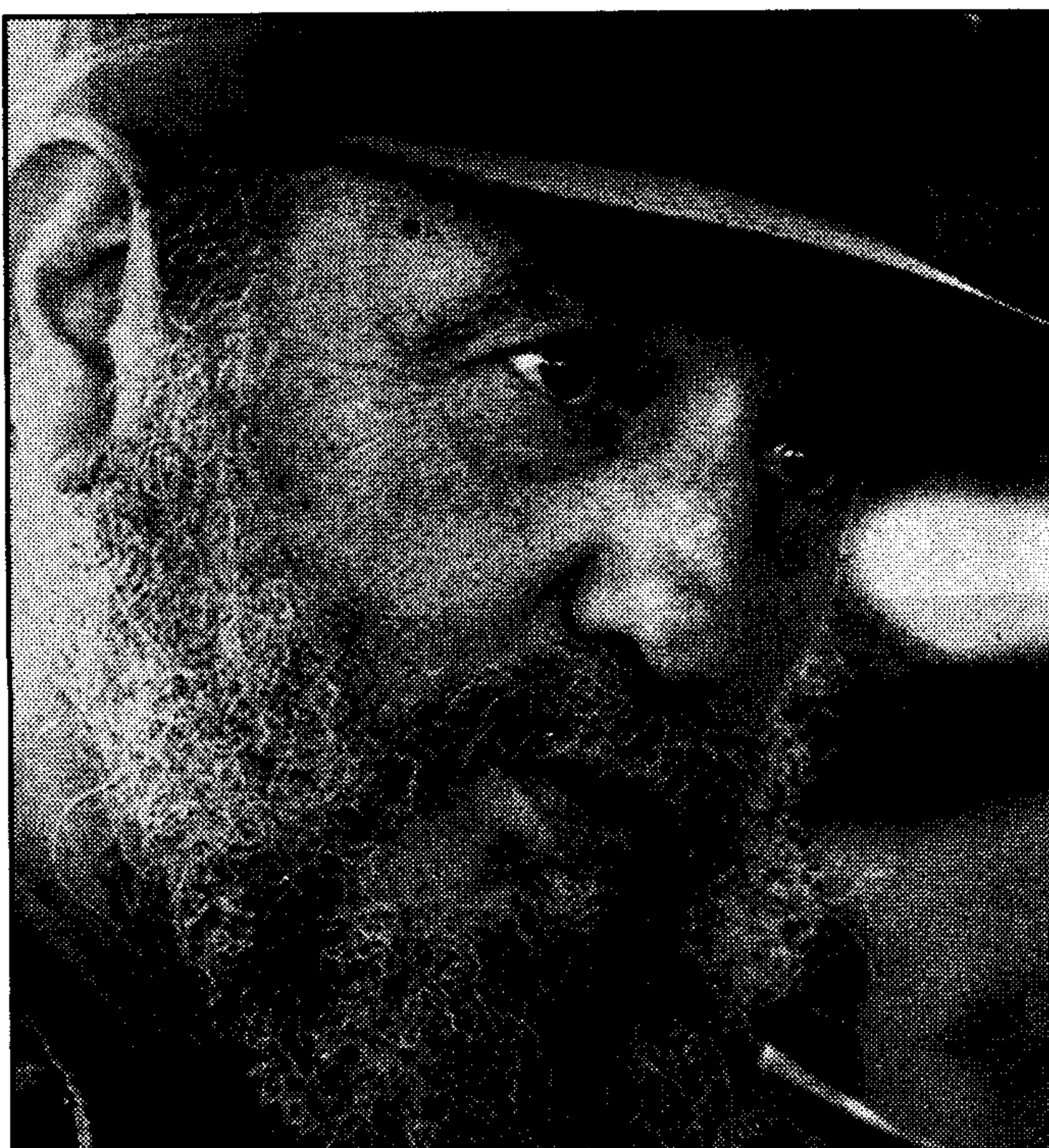
Nearly 60 percent of children born in Russia today show symptoms of rickets or suffer from diabetes.

Unhealthy kids

Russian medical experts warn that only one school-kid in five can be considered 'healthy' when they leave school, and only 13 percent of technical college students.

While the economic collapse has slashed the value of pay packets and plunged working class families into poverty, the inroads of capitalism have compounded historic problems of heavy smoking and high-fat diets.

Sixty percent of adult males smoke in Hungary, and 15 percent suffer from alcohol-related illness. An increase in the fat level of the Hungarian diet from 30 to 38 percent since 1970 has encouraged a 50 percent increase in heart disease. Hungarian life expectancy is falling faster than in any industrialised



country but Russia.

But in the wreckage of stalinist rule, capitalist multinationals are moving in eager to make a fast buck out of the unhealthy habits of eastern Europe.

PepsiCo is investing \$500 million in setting up new branches of Burger King, Kentucky Fried Chicken and Taco Bell, serving extra fat to Poland.

The giant Philip Morris tobacco corporation is investing nearly \$1 billion to increase sales

in eastern Europe.

Ironically, the safest place to grow up or live through middle age is the stalinist state least touched by the market changes: Albania.

Unable to afford much meat, and with a backward economy little changed by the upheavals elsewhere, Albania boasts East Europe's highest life expectancy, and low incidence of heart disease, cancer and suicide.

■ **CUBA's showpiece health services are creaking under the strain of the USA's 32-year trade embargo, and the economic pressures after the collapse of Cuba's sponsors in the Soviet Union.**

Cuba still has three times as many doctors per head as Britain and nearly twice as many as the USA. But with US influence exerted to block imports of vitally-needed drugs and medical equipment, they are forced to struggle against the odds.

Antibiotics and more sophisticated heart and cancer drugs are among a list of 200 medicines which Bill Clinton's US administration is preventing being sold openly to Cuba.

While almost ten percent of Cubans suffer from asthma, inhalers are almost impossible to obtain.

Money for health care is also under pressure, with steadily reducing budgets since 1989.

There are fears that many of the impressive gains in public health and life expectancy made since the 1959 Revolution could be rolled back for lack of water treatment chemicals, soaps and detergents.

ANALYSIS

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Fifty years ago

How the Nazis

crashed to defeat



1944: US and Russian troops meet in Germany

ON JULY 20 1944, a group of German military officers and state officials attempted to assassinate Hitler. Three days later the Red Army liberated the Majdanek concentration camp near Lublin in eastern Poland. On August 1 the Warsaw underground rose in revolt.

These events were all linked to the impending military defeat of the Nazi regime and to the future of Europe. Above all the assassination attempt and the Warsaw uprising were responses to the westward march of the Red Army, reports GEOFF RYAN.

GENERALS Von Stauffenberg, Olbricht and Beck and other leaders of the July 20 attempt were hoping to remove Hitler in order to negotiate a separate peace deal with the western Allies.

While some of them had engaged in oppositional activities most had been quite happy to serve under Hitler when the war was going well.

But while Hitler received the backing of these traditional conservative forces his real support came from the German capitalist class.

From the late 1920s he received substantial donations from German big business, particularly from heavy industry and the banks. Fritz Thyssen (steel), Friedrich Flick (steel, mining and banking), Robert Bosch (electrical goods) and Wilhelm Zangen (banking) were among the most enthusiastic supporters of the Nazis.

The liberation of Majdanek, and later of Auschwitz (near Cracow), by the Red Army, revealed the massive collaboration between the *Wehrmacht* (regular



German officers surrender to French Resistance

army), the SS and German industrialists.

Both Majdanek and Auschwitz were extermination centres and concentration camps. They had an important economic role in supplying slave labour to German industry.

The aircraft manufacturers Heinkel operated a factory at Majdanek whilst Monowitz, one of the three Auschwitz sites, was built by the largest German chemical firm, IG Farben, to produce artificial rubber. Krupp and Siemens also had plants at Auschwitz.

Life expectancy at IG-Auschwitz was three to four months. Workers either died through exhaustion or were sent to Auschwitz-Birkenau to be gassed.

Auschwitz

As the advance of the Red Army forced the closure of Auschwitz Majdanek, and the extermination sites in Poland (Belzec, Chelmno, Sobibor and Treblinka), German industry simply arranged for the transfer of slave labour to camps or factories inside Germany.

An estimated hundred thousand slave workers were employed by armaments manufacturers Krupp. Even the SS were on the Krupp payroll.

The irrational nature of Nazi ideology led to occasional conflicts of interest. The RSHA (Reich Central Security Office) frequently preferred to murder camp inmates – particularly Jews – whilst the WVHA (Central Economic Administrative Office) wanted to concentrate on increasing the productive capacity of German industry.

Despite these occasional conflicts German industry worked closely with the Nazi regime until the end of the war.

The approach of the Red Army and the attempted assassination of Hitler en-

couraged the Polish underground to rise up in August 1944. The Polish Home Army was led by conservative forces determined to liberate Warsaw before the arrival of the Red Army, though they mistakenly counted on Stalin's willingness to come to their aid.

On August 5 German planes began the systematic bombing of Warsaw. The main task of crushing the uprising was given to Himmler and his SS, who were also engaged in liquidating those involved in the plot to murder Hitler, though regular *Wehrmacht* forces were also used.

For nine weeks the Home Army of 25,000 to 30,000 fighters, of whom only ten percent were adequately armed, resisted the much greater combined *Wehrmacht*, *Waffen-SS* and police forces. At least 10,000 members of the resistance and 150,000 civilians were killed.

More than 150,000 Poles were deported to Germany as slave labourers. The central districts of Warsaw, and much of the suburbs, were laid waste.

Contrary to the myths that have surrounded D-Day the real battles of the Second World War were fought in eastern Europe.

Total war

In eastern Europe the Nazis fought a total war, a war of *alles oder nichts* (all or nothing). For Hitler the major enemy was the Soviet Union and Bolshevism – though the frequent use of the term "Judeobolshevism" links together two of the main tenets of Nazi ideology.

The launch of war to achieve a third aim, *Lebensraum*, (living space) resulted in the occupation of Poland and parts of the Soviet Union, the countries in which were found the two largest Jewish com-

munities in Europe.

The conquest of Poland and the initial victories in the Soviet Union also brought into play a fourth aspect of Nazism, Social Darwinism. The Slav peoples, along with the Jews, were reviled as *Untermenschen* (sub-human).

The combination of anti-Semitism, anti-Bolshevism, social Darwinism and *Lebensraum* led to mass slaughter throughout eastern Europe, but particularly in Poland and the Soviet Union.

The massacre at Malmedy in France of American prisoners of war stands out because it was an exception. In the east such massacres were the norm.

Non-Nazi, even anti-Nazi, Generals of the *Wehrmacht* had few compunctions about massacring Slav or Jewish civilians or soldiers, especially if they were also Communists.

The advance of the Red Army dramatically increased the slaughter. The leaders of the *Wehrmacht* and the SS were at one with Hitler's view of the war against "Judeobolshevism": *Sein oder Nichtsein* (to be or not to be).

Stalingrad

The Nazi war machine was stopped in the east. Certainly by the time of the Red Army victory at Stalingrad in 1942 – and, arguably, even by the failure to capture Moscow in late 1941 – the Nazis were defeated. The D-Day landings, therefore, were not so much a question of defeating Hitler but of halting the advance of the Red Army and of saving German capitalism.

The British, French and American ruling classes knew that the victory of the Red Army would unleash revolutionary movements throughout Europe, whatever the intentions of Stalin in holding back such developments.

Far from de-Nazifying German society they ensured that tens of thousands of criminals who had actively aided the Nazi regime were able to take over the running of the German Federal Republic.

Not one of the 632 war criminals executed by British and American military courts was a General. It was their subordinates who, with much greater justification could plead "orders" who were executed.

The German capitalists who made systematic use of slaves who were literally worked to death were restored to their former positions, or even promoted.

The tiny minority given prison sentences were out within three to four years in order to rebuild the west German economy as a bulwark against the Soviet Union.

MARXISM

Fighting Europe's new fascists

Of the 366 parliamentary seats won by Berlusconi's right wing coalition in the Italian elections in March this year, 105 went to the National Alliance, an openly fascist party, strong in the south of Italy.

For the first time since 1945, a fascist party has become part of a government in Western Europe.

This breakthrough topped off five years of sustained growth for fascist and extreme-right wing parties in Europe, which are stronger now than at any time since the 1930s. What lies behind this resurgence? Are the big electoral parties of the far right fascist? How can they be fought? PAUL CLARKE investigates.

ITALY's fascist National Alliance has ridden into power on the back of an electoral pact with two other parties, Berlusconi's Forza Italia (Go Italy!) and the Northern League, neither of which are fascist. Nor is the new Italian government fascist.

With the exception of Italy's National Alliance, the major far-right parties in Europe have important differences with the classical fascist parties of Hitler and Mussolini in the 1930s.

Those were paramilitary organisations based on organised violence against the trade unions and left-wing parties; their job was to physically crush the mass movement of the working class.

Today the most successful far-right parties, such as the Republicans in Germany, the National Front in France and the Freedom Party in Austria, avoid association with violence and street disorder.

They present a respectable face. They are far-right, authoritarian, anti-democratic parties. But their victory, although threatening living standards, democratic rights and the immigrant communities, would in all probability not institute the fascist military dictatorship and the concentration camps of the 1930s and '40s.

Many of the individuals who lead the new far-right parties have a fascist background. The Republicans' leader, Franz Schönhuber, is a former Waffen-SS officer, with a long history in fascist poli-



Fighting state racism crucial to defeating extreme right

tics. National Front supremo Jean-Marie Le Pen has led several fascist organisations over the past 35 years.

But people like Schönhuber and Le Pen have understood that the ruling classes of Europe had a very bad experience of dictators in the 1930s, which they are unlikely to want to repeat.

Because of the memory of the second world war and the destruction it wrought, it is very difficult for open Nazis to get a hearing.

While forces like the National Front, the Republicans and the Northern League are not fascist, they have on their periphery smaller organisations like the German People's Party (DVP) and the British National Party that do organise racist violence and who are real fascists. And they provide a fertile recruiting ground for real fascist currents.

Making the distinction between fascists and authoritarian parties of the far right should not lead the left to underestimate the task of organising self-defence to defeat fascist and fascist inspired violence of the kind which has resulted in the deaths of Turkish immigrants in Ger-

many. with the growth of state racism, especially new racist immigration and asylum laws. These are part of the "Fortress Europe" policy of the European Union.

Underlying this policy is a decline in the need for immigrant labour from Third World countries in a period of recession, and the fear of Europe being "flooded" by asylum seekers and economic migrants from collapsing economies in eastern Europe and the Third World.

Germany changed its liberal asylum law in 1993, Britain enacted the Asylum Act in November 1992, and France is using existing laws to "root out illegal immigrants".

Harsh new anti-immigrant laws will be imposed later this year in Holland, once the most liberal country in Europe on immigration. A similar switch has already occurred in Austria, as a result of campaigning by the Freedom Party.

The "Fortress Europe" policy also reflects the extent to which mainstream right-wing political parties are being pressured by the extreme right, and compelled to adopt racist policies for fear of

Making the distinction between fascists and authoritarian parties of the far right should not lead the left to underestimate the task of organising self-defence to defeat fascist and fascist inspired violence of the kind which has resulted in the deaths of Turkish immigrants in Germany.

many.

Neither should it lead to an underestimation of the danger of far-right parties coming to power, even if they are not based on fascist mass movements. Wielding the extraordinary powers of the modern state and mass media, they are a grave danger to the social gains and organisation of the working class.

The key ideological weapon of the fascists and far right is anti-immigrant racism. This is stoked up by and interacts

being outflanked.

This is most apparent in France, where the Gaullist RPR (Rally for the Republic) campaigned in the March 1993 elections in a fashion calculated to outdo the National Front in racist hysteria.

Commenting on the situation in Holland, National Bureau Against Racism leader Olaf Stamp said, "Once the Dutch extreme racist party Centrum Democraten was the only one calling for the

expulsion of illegal immigrants. Now the mainstream parties are saying practically the same thing".

Racist immigration policies are reflected in systematic state harassment of, and violence against, black and immigrant communities throughout western Europe.

The Gaullist interior minister, Charles Pasqua, has since March 1993 instituted a regime of harassment against immigrants in France. Everyday dozens of young North Africans are searched by riot police on the Paris Metro, and hundreds have been deported.

Of the social conditions which give rise to the growth of these new mass right-wing parties, the most important is mass unemployment. For example, the growth of the neo-Nazis in eastern Germany cannot be separated from the fact of 25 per cent unemployment, a result of the destruction of east German industries during the reunification process.

There are 30 million unemployed people in Europe today. Mass unemployment gives rise to an underclass, especially of youth. With the destruction of state welfare services, becoming unemployed is often a personal catastrophe.

Where new employment is created, as the old "smokestack" industries close down, it is usually low-paid, low-skilled, insecure and part time work in service industries. In this situation people abandon the old "moderate" political currents and look for more radical solutions.

Corruption

The second major factor fuelling the growth of the far right is disillusionment with the old political leaders, and indeed the entire parliamentary democratic system. Mass corruption in Italy, for example, has resulted in 50 per cent of the parliamentary deputies being under investigation. Nobody believes that such people put ordinary citizens first, or indeed care about their fate.

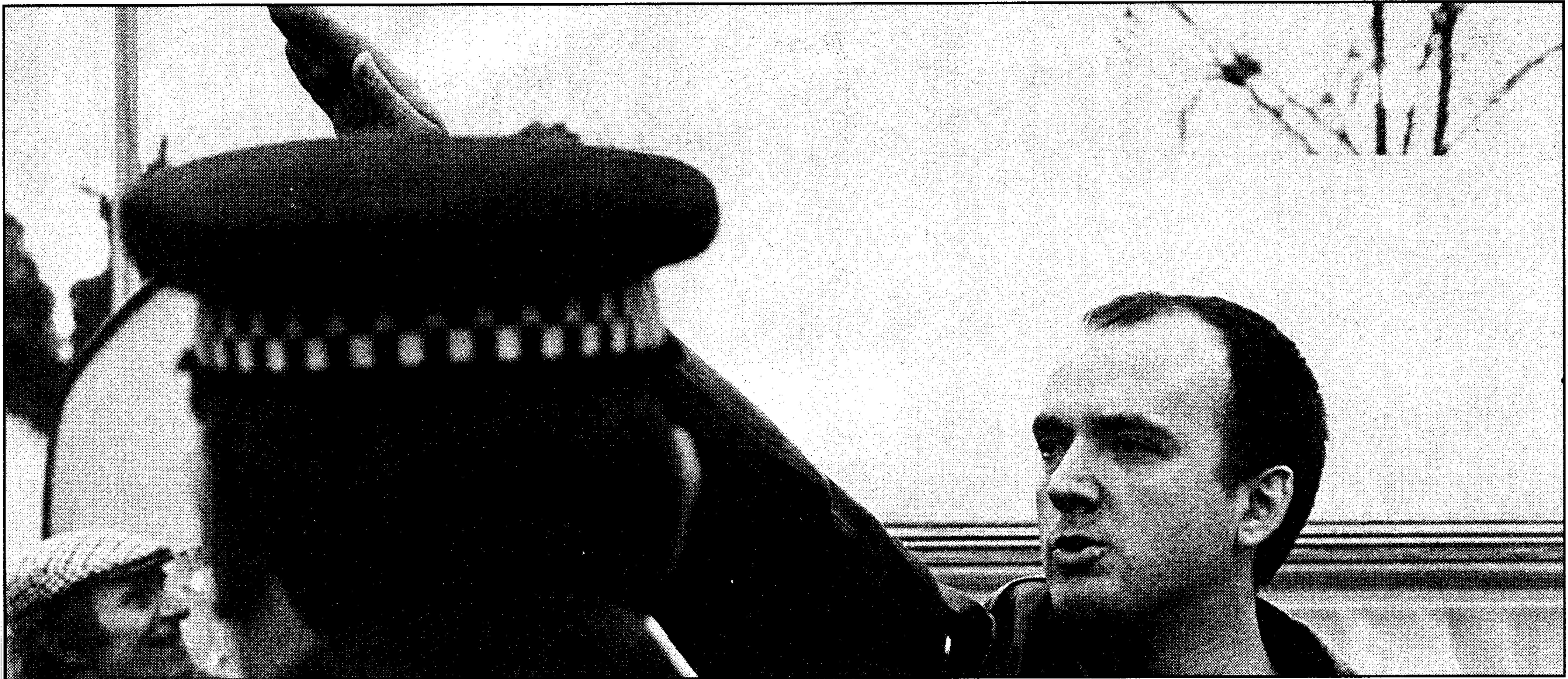
The regionalist Northern League in Italy is one product of this anger with all the old political parties.

There has been a 20-year economic recession in the main industrial countries. The old mixed economy and social welfare consensus has showed itself incapable of overcoming this, and millions of people are losing faith in the established political system.

Disillusionment with the established parties includes disillusionment with the established mass parties traditionally supported by the working class - the social democratic and Communist parties.

Social democratic parties like the French Socialist Party and Spanish PSOE (Socialist Workers Party), in government during the 1980s, administered austerity and attacked welfare services. Confidence that social democracy represents a viable alternative to capitalist austerity and economic restructuring has therefore been severely eroded.

The Communist parties, strong in southern Europe at the end of the 1970s - the high tide of "Eurocommunism" - were devastated during the 1980s both by their support for austerity policies



Growing Nazi menace in Europe

and by growing realisation among their supporters that they had been duped about the reality of Soviet-style "socialism".

The crisis of the social democratic and Stalinist parties has continuously generated critical and left-wing currents both within them and on their periphery. The most significant of these currents was the "Bennite" current in the Labour Party.

In the Spanish state, the "Redondo" left trade union current split with the PSOE in 1986; in France successive waves of "refounders" and "reconstructors" broke with the Communist Party, but most of these have since gone to the right.

But nowhere, except in with the British Labour left in the early 1980s, the Party of Communist Refoundation in Italy today and the United Left in Spain, have these developments led to stabilised left-wing alternatives with mass support.

The European working class movement has suffered substantial defeats at the hands of the right wing austerity offensive over the last decade.

The defeat of the 1984-5 miners' strike was a crucial symbol of how even the best organised and most militant sectors of the working class could be picked off, isolated and dealt crushing blows, in the absence of systematic solidarity action organised by the trade union leaders.

Retreat

It is when the working class movement is on the retreat that the extreme right gets its chance.

The issue being debated now throughout Europe is whether the Italian elections were an aberration or whether they show the future - a general trend towards imposing extreme right wing governments. It is impossible to make absolute predictions. Whether substantial sections of the capitalist class will turn to the extreme right depends on the struggle over the welfare state.

After 20 years of economic recession, European capitalists are confronted with a grave difficulty. Their main economic competitors, in Japan and the US as well as in the newly industrializing countries, do not have the burden of a substantial welfare state, tying down huge amounts of state expenditure.

Europe-wide there is a trend to dismantling free health services, social security and unemployment benefits; even in the social democratic "paradise" of Sweden.

This is a frontal attack on the so-called "post war settlement" between capital and labour, leading to huge class battles

- as foreshadowed by general strikes in Belgium in November 1993 and in Spain in January this year.

If there is sustained resistance to this attack, the temptation will exist to turn to the extreme right to impose "order". In such a crisis situation, ruling class attitudes can change very quickly. Today's staunch opponents of the new fascism can become tomorrow's converts, if they feel they need right-wing authoritarian solutions to impose the crushing of the welfare state.

This creates an extremely dangerous situation for the working class, the trade unions and the left. In Italy, an important taboo - the exclusion of fascists from the government - has been broken. Unlike the 1920s and 1930s, there is no mass revolutionary or radical socialist challenge to the existing order.

In Italy, an important taboo - the exclusion of fascists from the government - has been broken. Unlike the 1920s and 1930s, there is no mass revolutionary or radical socialist challenge to the existing order.

Such a mass based alternative will be built only over a long period. In the immediate period, what steps can be taken to confront and defeat the far right? This is a highly controversial question on the left.

There are four central issues to be addressed: the fight against state racism; organising self-defence against racist attacks; mobilising the labour movement and the community against fascist public activity; building a mass socialist alternative.

State racism creates the social climate which allows the extreme right wing to grow, by legitimising its central campaigning issue - anti-immigrant racism.

State racism and fascism feed off one another; as state racism legitimises fascist propaganda, the fascists get stronger and further pressure the mainstream parties and the government.

The left therefore can't separate the fight against fascism from the struggle against all forms of institutionalised racism, especially racist immigration and asylum laws.

Black and immigrant communities must be defended from the kind of racist attacks which have claimed lives in Germany and Britain. This must be led primarily by the communities themselves. Socialists and the labour movement can help build self-defence, but small socialist organisations cannot patrol the streets.

Organisations like Youth Connections, which developed among Bangladeshis in London in 1993, are the best form of self-defence network. The best defence is always the self-organised the self-organised and self-mobilised community.

The issue of confronting fascist public activity is highly controversial on the left. This should not be constrained by concerns about defending the so-called democratic rights of fascists. Fascists are organised to carry out street violence; they are anti-democratic by definition.

On the other hand, calling on the police and the state to pass laws to suppress fascists and the extreme right is very dangerous. Bitter experience shows that all such laws, whatever their excuse, end up being used against the left

pact.

How *not* to do it was shown by the October 16, 1993, demonstration to the BNP headquarters in Plumstead. Forty thousand demonstrators attempted to march to the Nazi BNP headquarters, amid chants of "burn down the BNP!".

Demonstrators were confronted by 7,000 well armed riot police; only a few hundred demonstrators were prepared to engage in isolated physical clashes with them, and the BNP headquarters was not even reached.

Demoralised

The result was tens of thousands of demoralised anti-fascists and a triumphant police force, with the fascists unscathed. Attempts by socialists to physically "crush fascism in the egg", unless there is a truly massive movement to do so, will not work so long as the state is determined to prevent it.

In his famous writings on fascism in Germany, Trotsky sharply criticised the "minority violence" approach to the Nazis adopted by the Communist party street fighters - which resulted in dozens of deaths in 1930-31.

These tactics, said Trotsky, were a substitute for building a mass united front with social democratic workers and others, for common self-defence against the fascists.

Finally, in the period of mass unemployment and social crisis that exists today in Europe, *the outcome will not be decided in a contest between fascists and anti-fascists, but between alternative, society-wide political solutions.*

Much depends on the evolution of the world economy. A new economic boom could ease unemployment and reduce social tensions. But there is no sign that European capitalism is on the verge of escaping its 20-year cycle of crisis.

Unless a democratic socialist alternative is built which can engage the energies and enthusiasm of millions, the door to fascism and the extreme right will be left permanently ajar.

and the labour movement. Nearly every advanced country has some form of public order act designed to curb "extremists", but in practice always used against the left and labour movement, curbing democratic rights.

The key to challenging the fascists is mass mobilisation, not calls for state bans.

Physical confrontation

Some sections of the left argue that physical confrontation with fascists is a matter of principle. It is not. The only principles are self-defence against fascist violence and the most effective action to politically defeat and isolate the fascists and other extreme-rightists.

In some cases, this will involve physical retaliation against fascist hooligans, but this is always a matter of assessing its chances of success and political im-

**Understanding
RACISM &
FASCISM**

**Socialist Outlook
SUMMER
SCHOOL August
25-29 1994.**

For details see page 8

FIGH TING FASCISM

25 years of British troops in Ireland

By Joe Carter, Irish
Committee for a
Marxist Programme

The bitter lessons we must learn

TWENTY FIVE years ago the British Army was put onto the streets of Northern Ireland. "Acting in support of the civil power" it was to act as a force of persuasion promoting "reconciliation between the two communities" and the re-establishment of "peace". The legitimate grievances of the Catholic population were to be addressed and their representatives given a place in the political process.

Twenty five years later the British state is singing the same song but this time with different backing singers - the republican movement. Pleading for the British to be the persuaders in a process of "reconciliation" and avowing that the unionists cannot be forced into a united Ireland, they have declared their goals as "peace" and "inclusive dialogue" involving all representatives of Irish nationalism.

With such an analysis and programme the struggle against imperialism waged by the Republican Movement is clearly heading for defeat.

That after 25 years the leadership of the struggle for most of that period can see a progressive role for imperialism shows that a new leadership is needed. One that understands the essential lessons of the last quarter century of struggle.

Part of the problem

The first is that there is no progressive role for imperialism in resolving Ireland's national question. It is part of the problem, not the solution. The compromising strategy of the republican movement was born of the belief that Britain does not want to be in Ireland in the first place. Thus in the 1970s victory was promised each year.

In the 1980s it was thought that a long war of attrition in which the British would simply weary of Ireland would lead to a British withdrawal.

Now the exhaustion of the struggle has reduced the republican leadership to pinning its hopes on a united "nationalist family" pressing the British to leave, if not now, then sometime, maybe.

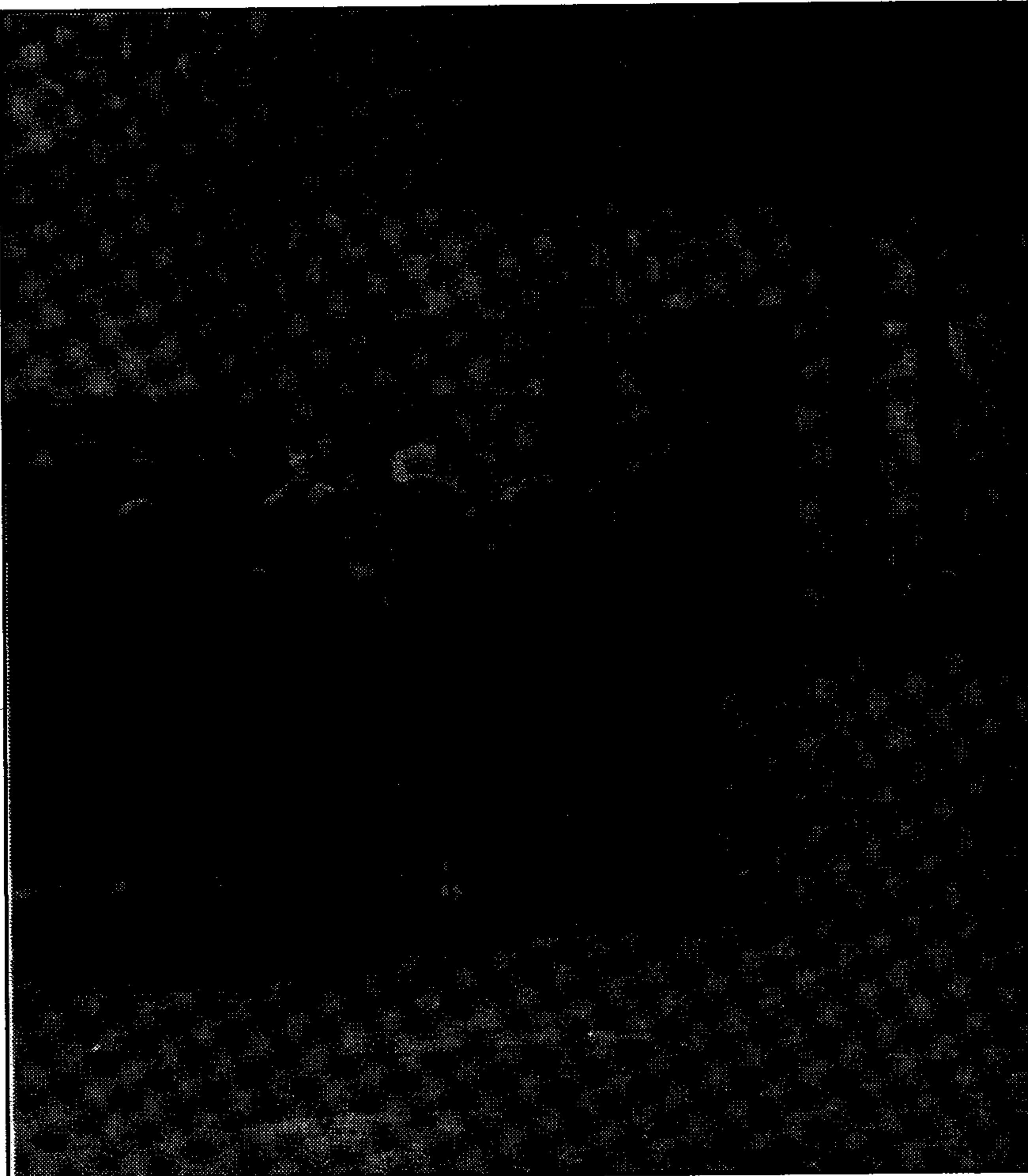
This view of Britain's interests is not uncommon. In fact it is universal. Everyone from the unionists to the Dublin government, SDLP, Sinn Fein and even sections of the revolutionary left in Ireland such as the Socialist Workers Movement (sister organisation of the British SWP) accept Britain's statement that it has "no selfish, strategic or economic interest in Northern Ireland".

Since it is patently obvious that Britain does not continue to occupy part of Ireland for its love of "the democratic wishes of the greater number" of the people of Northern Ireland to remain British it is difficult to understand why it is not clearly understood that Britain is lying in this as in everything else.

The unionists are confirmed in their fear of a sell-out which in turn helps reinforce the arguments of the Dublin government and SDLP that Britain is a neutral referee in the conflict which could work to the advantage of nationalists if only the IRA would stop its military campaign.

What has to be explained however, especially by those on the left who accept that imperialism exists, is why Britain is still in Ireland.

Why has it fought so hard for 25 years, now subsidising the Northern economy to the tune of £4 billion a year, fighting a dirty war which has continually damaged its reputation internationally and proved a running sore



Troops in Ireland: 25 years of repression

domestically if in reality it wants to leave?

If any observer doubts Britain's commitment to staying they should look at the massive rebuilding of British Army and RUC security installations all over the six counties.

Defeat in the North of Ireland would not just be a momentous defeat for the British state, but a defeat of part of the British state. It would be a defeat of that state and its reactionary forces with exemplary powers. The British working class which would be much strengthened by such a blow against its enemies.

It would destroy the colonial and semi-colonial structure in Ireland which safeguards capitalism in that country.

The potential for uniting the working class of Ireland and mobilising it as an independent political force in the country would be immensely increased.

Defeat in the North of Ireland would not just be a momentous defeat for the British state, but a defeat of part of the British state.

In this sense the battle to defeat the democratic struggle in the North is not a side issue but a central part of the struggle against the state which is the key defence of capitalism in these islands. This is its importance, indicating the scale of the struggle that will be required to defeat the British occupation.

This leads to the second key lesson to be drawn. For what is demonstrated is not just the scale of the struggle but also

the nature of the struggle which must be waged to defeat imperialism. It must be one not just confined to the north, but one which includes the whole of Ireland and draws support from the working class of Britain. No such struggle will take place in Britain under a programme which is purely democratic.

This has been confirmed by the last 25 years. The Irish struggle has failed to inspire a mass solidarity movement in Britain: while this failure is in part testimony to chauvinist impulses in the British working class and more generally to the continued strength of British imperialism, the struggle in Ireland has not acted to break British workers from political sympathy with the policies of their own imperialism.

The method and aims, not just dimensions, of the struggle have not and under a republican, nationalist leadership,

could not assist British socialists in breaking British workers from support from their own ruling class.

This of course is not to absolve the Labourist misleaders of Britain's workers from responsibility for this situation. It is to explain how the struggle in Ireland has not assisted in weakening the hold of these leaders.

In the south of Ireland the high points of the struggle in the north have

prompted mass action from the working class who remain supporters of the demand for national unity. However not only has the northern struggle not "spilled over" into the south to create a combined 32-county one but no mass solidarity movement has been created in the south either.

The mass action after Bloody Sunday and during the H-block crisis are near enough the limits to a struggle of a purely solidarity character.

Certainly no combined 32-county struggle will be created under a republican nationalist leadership which can promise only a 32-county Free State capitalism. (Nor should revolutionary socialists in Ireland fight for one.) The derisory vote for Sinn Fein at around 2 per cent is proof of this.

Even in the north republican electoral support is confined to only one third of the nationalist vote. It has proved incapable of rallying all the oppressed around its banner and now seeks to rally them around a "nationalist family" which includes a Catholic middle class in the north which is reconciled to a quite comfortable place in what is left of the empire and a Dublin capitalist class which is decaying in the stench of its own corruption and subordination to the whims of multinationals and handouts from Europe.

A challenge to the northern state must, by its nature, challenge the southern state and only revolutionary socialism can offer such a challenge. Creating a force to present this challenge is absolutely necessary for victory in Ireland's democratic struggle for self determination. Rather, Ireland's socialist revolution is the only context in which self determination will be achieved.

Hope

If our first lesson indicated the scale of the task and the second the nature of it, the third gives us hope that it can be achieved. British rule in the north will remain unstable even should the republican movement end its armed activity and accept the politics, if not the letter, of the Downing Street declaration. The greatest victory of 25 years of struggle - the downfall of the Stormont parliament - is very far from being reversed.

The British have found it necessary to build up the Catholic middle class in the north and draft in Dublin to support a partition solution. It did not need these props 25 years ago and the need for them makes it harder to continue its reliance on unionism which recognises only its own sectarianism as the basis for a solution.

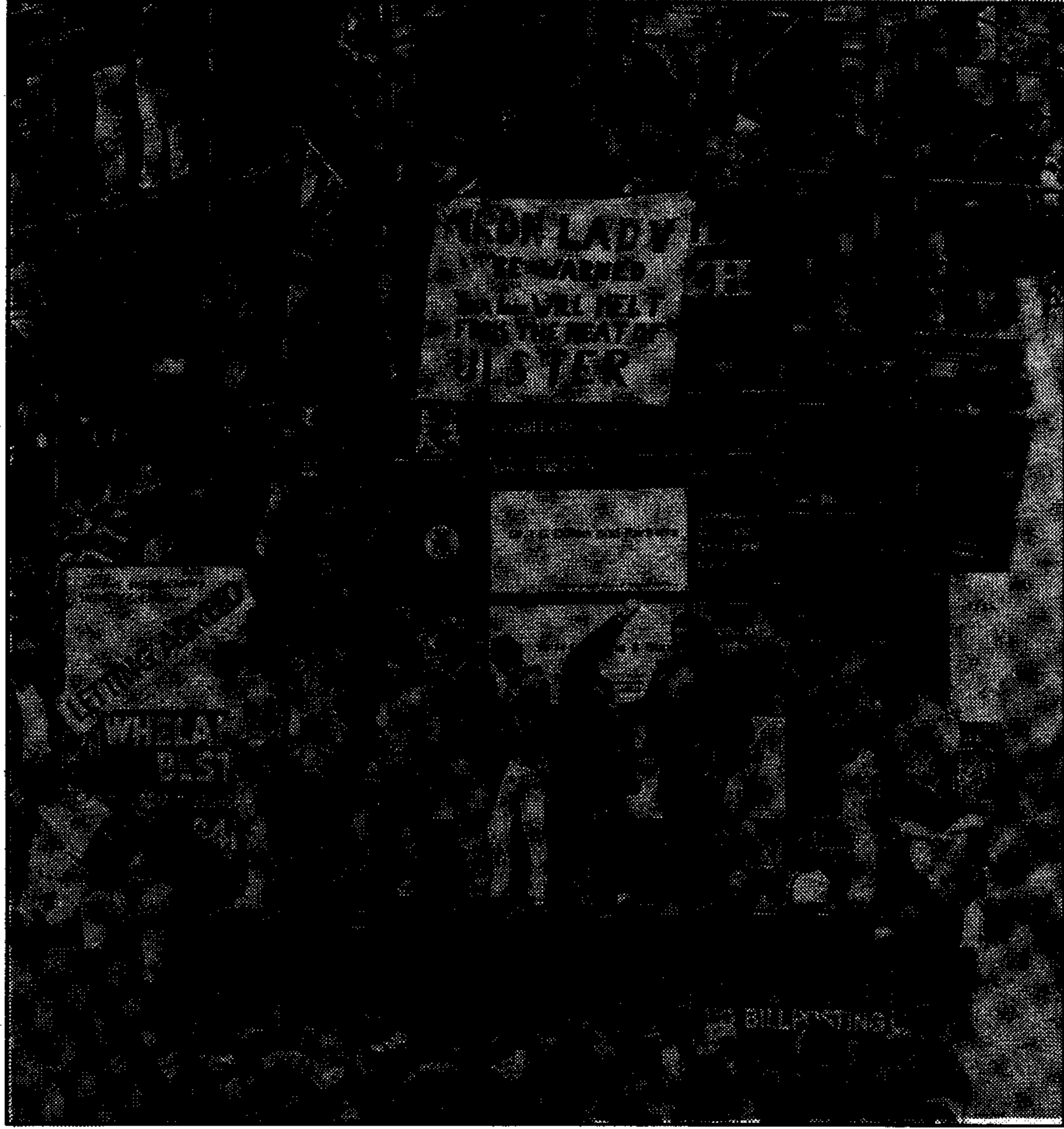
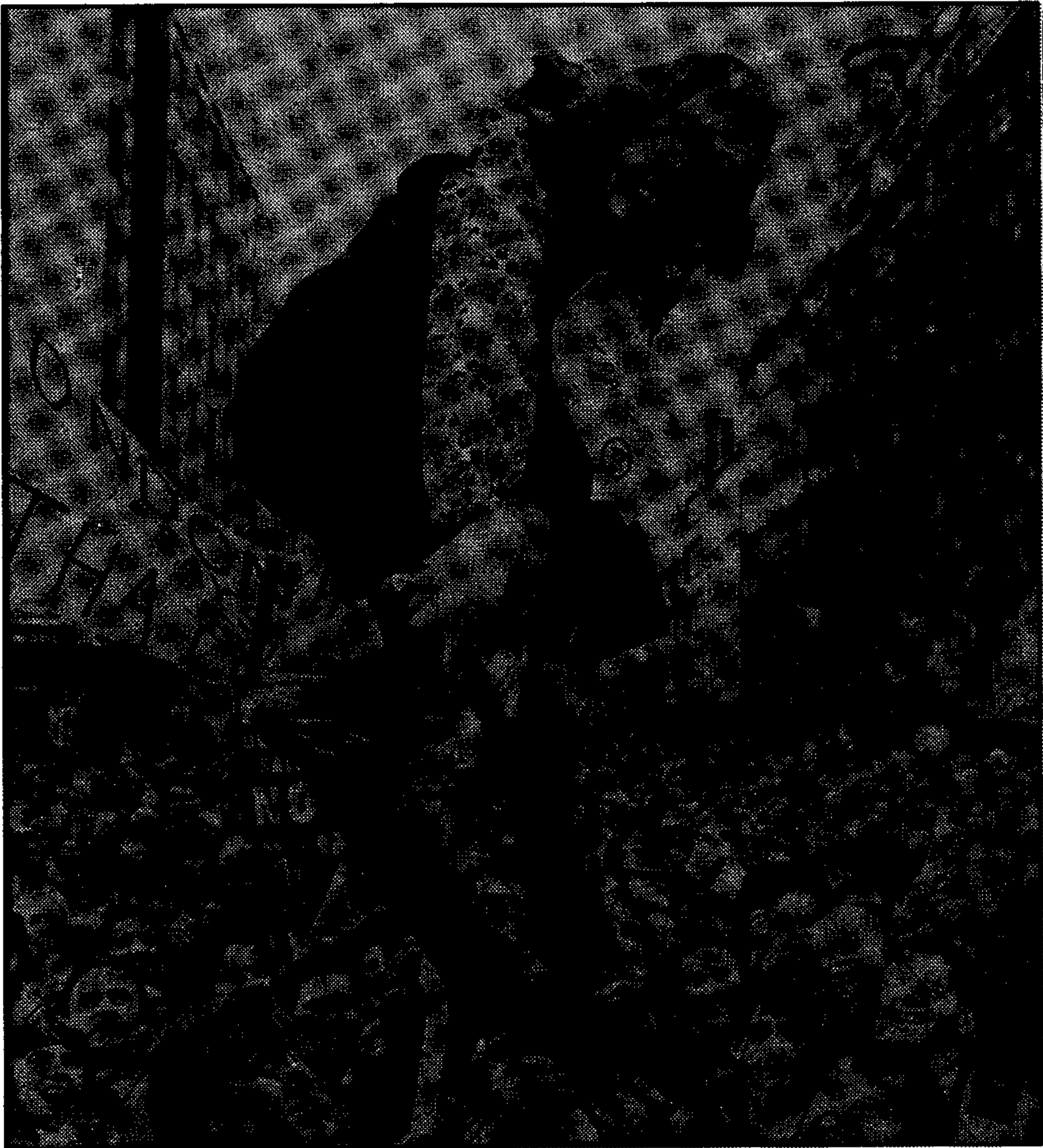
Creating a stable compound out of these ingredients while many Nationalist workers remain unreconciled to British rule is not a recipe for stability. There is little chance of a return to the calm of the early 1960s.

In the 26 counties the working class, despite massive emigration and unemployment, is not totally demoralised and retains the capacity for struggle.

The recent European elections, with increased votes for the Greens and the reduction of the Fianna Fail vote to 20 per cent in the capital, demonstrate the fragility of the existing political framework.

Even in Britain, despite 15 years of Tory rule the institutions of the British state have not gained respect but suffer from widespread cynicism. In Britain to the working class retains a capacity to reverse the tide of Tory victories.

A chapter is closing in the struggle of the working class and oppressed in these islands. The task of Irish and British socialists is to ensure that the new one is written by revolutionary socialism.



Loyalist bigots fight united Ireland

Hume is key “fixer” in new Irish treaty

By David Coen

IN MAY 1974 a strike organised by the Ulster Workers Council brought down the Sunningdale Agreement. The key to the strike was the Ballylongford power station which provided most of the electricity for the North of Ireland.

The Wilson Government, which had just defeated Heath's Tories in the "who governs?" election of February 1974, couldn't persuade the army to intervene against the loyalists and the "Power Sharing Executive" set up by Heath and Whitelaw collapsed.

General Frank Kitson, a key theorist of "low intensity warfare", was Northern Ireland commander at this time.

Not surprisingly, this was also a high point of the campaign of sectarian murder by loyalists.

However the "framework document" being negotiated at the moment between London and Dublin is not another Sunningdale, being, in the words of one SDLP activist, "less than what we were prepared to accept in 1974".

Twenty years after the "Power Sharing Executive" and the never-convened Council of Ireland, the British, with the able assistance of Albert Reynolds and John Hume, are inching towards an agreement resembling the 1921 Treaty

which partitioned Ireland.

Previous efforts at an internal settlement, which complemented the counter-insurgency strategy, have foundered either on loyalist opposition, as in 1974, or more often because the nationalists, and particularly John Hume's Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP), refused to participate.

Now, the unionist bloc has broken into its class components and the bourgeois elements, for the most part back the new deal. The decisive change has come on the nationalist side.

Doubtful

Having failed so often in the past, the British were doubtful at first that what they were offering - a "democratised" Six-County state - would be enough to win over the nationalists and to bring an IRA cease-fire.

Hume and Reynolds persuaded them otherwise. Apart from his belief in the "European Union dimension" and in the clear desire of capital on both sides of the border for some settlement which brings closer cross-border co-operation, Hume's trump was in delivering Adams.

The Hume-Adams statement, which has never been made public, even to Sinn Fein members, is simply Hume's strategy for delivering Sinn Fein's key demand - Irish unity.

In essence, Hume asks Sinn Fein to

become "persuaders" of the unionists that a united Ireland is in their interests. The British, possibly surprised at how easily political gains can be plucked from what looked like a 20-year-old political and military stalemate, seem determined to go for a Treaty Mark 2.

Mayhew recently upped the stakes, saying in an interview in the Daily Telegraph that Articles Two and Three of the South's Constitution were an obstacle to progress and that there would be no joint authority over the North between London and Dublin.

While Hume was the fixer in the whole process the political current which has carried the process along has come from Dublin.

The Dublin bourgeoisie, now economically less dependent on Britain, shares Hume's belief that national unity and independence is less relevant in a "Europe of the Regions".

It got a bad fright from the rise of Sinn Fein combined with the economic crisis in the early 1980's, and went along with the 1985 Anglo-Irish Agreement for that reason.

Its strategy for defeating the republicans is, it believes, more subtle than that of the British, especially the Europhobic right wing of the Tory Party.

The 1921 Treaty originally established the unionist veto, though the promise to nationalists was that it was a

stepping stone to a independent 32-county state.

Dublin is happy to change Articles Two and Three of the Constitution as part of an overall settlement which gives them some role in guaranteeing the position of the nationalists in the North. They are looking for the right form of words to sell such a deal in the South.

Dilemma

The dilemma for republicans is acute. For some, the answer will be to continue the military struggle which many accept is not sufficient, on its own, to drive the British out. On the other hand, a cease-fire, would remove their main leverage in any talks which followed.

It was the mass mobilisations around the question of the prisoners which put most political pressure on the ruling class in London and Dublin during the period 1977 to 1985. Relying on Albert Reynolds and the US Government to press concessions from the British in return for a ceasefire is a disastrous strategy which will destroy the gains of the last decade and a half. There can be no return to 1921.

The campaign against any return to the rotten, sectarian Orange state, or any modern version of it must be stepped up. Self-determination for the Irish people as a whole!

IRELAND UNFREE

“Deep” postmodernism shows its nasty side

You can hear the jackboots marching

The Balkanisation of the West by Stjepan G. Mestrovic, Routledge, £12.99,

Reviewed by Phil Hearse

IN 1989 State Department academic Francis Fukuyama shot to fame proclaiming the “end of history” in the wake of the fall of the Berlin Wall. For Fukuyama the “collapse of communism” signalled the final fall of the last great repressive ideology.

The whole world was now set for the endless dominance of liberal democracy and the market, harmoniously boosting living standards, peace and freedom everywhere.

In his later *The End of History and the Last Man* he even speculates that boredom with the lack of conflict will be the main danger.

The last five years have not been kind to Fukuyama’s thesis. The Gulf war and the Yugoslavian conflict have been the tip of the iceberg of a world deep in turmoil.

The collapse of “communism” has failed to stabilise world capitalism; and liberal democracy and affluence have hardly been the fate of the post-communist states.

Stjepan Mestrovic, a Croatian sociologist teaching in Texas, thinks he knows why. Self-consciously situating himself in the postmodernist framework, he declares that capitalism, and its derivatives like liberal democracy, aren’t the answer to building stable and sane societies.

Rather we have to look to “culture” and tradition - by which he means ideologies like nationalism and religion (what he calls “habits of the heart”) which can bind together a caring society. Top of his list of candidates for this role is Islam.

Mestrovic represents an important trend in postmodernism; his work is symptomatic of the utterly reactionary direction in which postmodernist thought is travelling.

He starts off with a vicious attack on the whole Enlightenment tradition - all those theories and ideologies stemming



Nazi's posed as both anti-capitalist and anti-communist

from the bourgeois revolution, and especially the French revolution.

For Mestrovic the problem with much postmodernist writing so far is that it fails to make a complete break with the Enlightenment world of rationality and progress: something deeper and more fundamental is needed.

What is slick in Mestrovic is his accurate portrayal of why capitalism is not the answer to Soviet-style state “socialism”. Capitalism is an individualistic creed which naturally promotes conflict.

Mestrovic represents an important trend in postmodernism; his work is symptomatic of the utterly reactionary direction in which postmodernist thought is travelling.

It’s a system which originates in a tiny corner of north-west Europe - and after all isn’t it a little bit imperialistic to think that it’s the solution to humanity’s problems?

Even here Mestrovic, because of his violent anti-communism is compelled to engage in apologetics: “It is true that capitalism has not resulted in Gulags”. But of course it has resulted in the Holocaust, Hiroshima, mass slaughter in world wars, mass starvation and ecological destruction - all of which have

passed Mestrovic by.

So if Soviet-style communism and capitalism are not the answer, what is? Unfortunately a precise answer “lies completely outside the scope of this book”.

But the general pattern is clear enough. The Western Enlightenment tradition with its concerns for democracy, liberalism and even communism believes in the “perfectibility” of humanity. It believes in “coerced compassion”.

But a compassionate society cannot be coerced. It needs to be deeply rooted in traditions

which bind people together. Which is why of course Mestrovic’s “deep” postmodernism ends up looking backwards:

“I have argued that the Western postmodernist discourse is not very different from a revival of the Enlightenment project, as opposed to the more genuinely anti-Enlightenment, and therefore genuinely postmodern movements to be found in Islamic, Balkan and other cultural movements opposed to the West”.

Here we have it: an ideology

like Islam, which developed in the seventh century in a small corner of Arabia is...postmodern!

Stjepan Mestrovic is a perfect example of the maxim that if you ask a stupid question, you get a stupid answer. His complete identification of Stalinism with “communism”, thus writing off any democratic socialist alternative, is par for the course.

More insidious is the idea that communism, or other Enlightenment traditions, viewed humanity as “perfectible”. You will search high and low in Marx or Lenin for any such notion. In any case, what can it possibly mean? How would you know when you’d got there?

Isaac Deutscher’s classic little pamphlet *On Socialist Man* (sic) explains that humanity will never liberate itself completely from basic constraints of the species (like sex and death).

Socialism couldn’t possibly eliminate every form of human unhappiness (and if you were happy all the time how would you ever know that you were... happy?)

But perhaps it might just liberate humanity from war, hunger, disease and exploitation. In fact a very modest claim. This is nothing to do with the “perfectibility” of human kind.

The scenario which Mestrovic paints is one of the capitalist West cracking up, undergoing its own form of

“Balkanisation”. This will take the form, in the advanced capitalist west, of increasing conflict between *individuals*.

His concerns here are revealing: students attacking their lecturers for not being “politically correct”, teenage drug abuse, the break-up of the family, individual crimes of violence - all those things which deeply concern middle-aged sociology lecturers teaching in Texas!

Alternative

Now all this could be dismissed as not very serious. Alas it is. Postmodernism can either end up offering nothing but incomprehension of the world and thus resignation; or it can start to put forward its own social alternative, rejecting capitalism and communism simultaneously.

The fascination of post-Marxist and postmodernist political theorists with Nazi legal theorist Carl Schmidt is a straw in the wind.

In the 20th century we have already seen mass urban movements which furiously attacked both communism and capitalism - movements which appealed to nationalism, religion and tradition, to eternal values like the land and the folk.

None of them actually succeeded in replacing capitalism in practice. But many of them did succeed in producing something pretty nasty. You can hear the jackboots marching.

Masculine images for sale?

A NEW range of magazines for men has invaded the news stands. Sporting trendy titles – Esquire, GQ, FHM and Arena – they all retail for £2.20 to £2.50 and appear targeted at a specific group of men. Worried that he might be one of them, JOHN LISTER plucked up courage to buy them and report.

IT HAS been said that women's magazines fall into three categories. *Vogue* tells women what an orgasm is; *Cosmopolitan* and *Options* tell women how to achieve orgasm; and *Women's Own* tells them how to knit one.

Men's magazines, as one might expect, are rather cruder in their subdivisions.

There is the no-nonsense soft-porn wank mag on the top shelf (often categorised as 'male interest' by John Menzies).

And for those 'do it yourself' fans with more specialised and demanding hobbies there is an immense variety of practical guides, covering everything from angling to clock-making, ferret-keeping, traction-engine maintenance, photography and of course home

improvements.

Some of these hobbies carry their own built-in macho status; customising cars, for example, boosting the power and altering the external styling to win gasps of admiration from other men, and, some hope, from easily-impressed women.

But the four new glossies featured in this review are clearly targeted at a new audience. They don't care much about the outside world, and are satisfied with twelve-line reviews of books and CDs.

They don't appear to make or mould anything themselves. There is no practical advice on anything whatsoever. The flashy motors on display are the ready-made variety.

These readers are well-off but rather sad and insecure men, who seek social acceptance and status not by doing things or knowing but by *buying* things, ready-made, which they are told are trendy. The sort of man summed up, I think first by Alexei Sayle as a LOMBARD (lots of money but a right dick-head).

Lavish

The target audience is plain not only from the lavish production on heavy-grade coated paper, but from the adverts, plugging expensive 'male fragrances', over-priced watches (depicted worn by smoothies embracing scantily-clad beauties, with the slogan 'designed



to perform'), designer clothes and crappy pretend sports cars like the Ford Probe.

Indeed there is a lot of pretending, posing and verballing going on in these magazines, without much serious content.

To judge from the covers, which with the occasional exception tends to feature an inviting but coyly attired photo of a supermodel or female film star, they sell on the titillating hint of sex, but inside, the pages are conspicuous for the lack of naked women. These

magazines can be left out in the car or at home, while the porn is safely hidden away.

Even a *GQ* feature on the woman from the Wonderbra adverts, and an *FHM* feature on Elle Macpherson ("The woman they call the body. And why") manage series of semi-clothed photos which keep rude bits artfully concealed.

Of the four, *GQ* magazine (Gentlemen's Quarterly) aims slightly higher in the market, with property ads at the end for Belgravia flats at

£795,000 and 298 acre mansions.

It also typifies the formula of all four, in offering a combination of the trivial, superficial and apparently street-wise without ever actually telling its readers anything of any substance. A classic example is in a feature on sex as 'a substitute for conversation. Why go to all the trouble of talking to someone when you can shag them?', which includes a memorable piece of advice:

"Sex is a substitute for humour. If you say the word "SEX" often enough, people are sure to snigger.

Suggested cure: replace the word "SEX" with the word "BOSNIA. No one's going to laugh at that."

For sad *GQ* readers who know nothing and care less about Bosnia or anything other than their own image and pulling power, this will no doubt be a handy contemporary reference. Of course the flip can be funny even as it teeters on the edge of the offensive.

A spoof survey on 'What kind of man are you, anyway' asks for readers' reaction:

"26. A woman who is uncomfortable watching you masturbate:

(a) Is uptight and a waste of time.

(b) Probably needs a little more time before she can cope with that sort of intimacy.

(c) May need glasses.

(d) Shouldn't have sat next to you on the bus in the first place."

Esquire claims to have conducted an opinion poll of women (interestingly only those aged 20-35) with a strange mix of questions, such as which government minister would they choose for a one-night stand (strangely Michael Portillo came top!) and 'Would you rather gain five stone, or be run over by a truck?' (a staggering 35% opted for the truck).

Long-dead

But for all the acreage of print on sex and sex objects it is impossible to escape the view that the readers of these magazines aren't getting much, and that the reason is because they are as boring and superficial as the articles they are served up. Features on the long-dead Steve McQueen and Brigitte Bardot in her heyday are hardly breaking any new ground.

Perhaps the funniest features in each of them are the fashion spreads, which appear to show gawky and over-paid readers how to spend hundreds of pounds – to look like a prat or a wino.

A nerd in a £1,000 suit or a £500 jacket is still a nerd.

But when will they produce a men's magazine showing us how to knit one?

Republicans at war with themselves

INLA - Deadly Divisions - The Story of One of Ireland's Most Ruthless Terrorist Organisations by Jack Holland and Henry McDonald (Torc) £9.99.

Reviewed by Dianne Moore

A SENSATIONALIST title for a book which tells a sensational story in a remarkably readable and accessible form.

In 360 pages the authors trace the 20 year history of

the Irish Republican Socialist Party/Irish National Liberation Army (IRSP/INLA) from its inception in 1974 as a split from the Officials to the present day.

The history of the IRSP/INLA is full of tragedy. They were in the vanguard of the hunger strikes campaign, stood and won seats on Belfast city council four years before Sinn Féin, discussed and made prominent in their organisation questions of abortion and contraception as far back as 1975 and women played a more prominent and leadership role in their organisation.

After such a promising start combining the national question with a socialist, anti-imperialist politics the organisation went rapidly down hill, heavily infiltrated by the security services who

played a provocative role in the subsequent violent feuds.

Militarism became supreme as various factions descended into murderous feuding - with some involved in drug dealing and other criminal activity.

Break-away

Founded on 8 December 1974 by 80 ex-members of the Officials led by Seamus Costello the IRSP was formed because, in the words of Bernadette McAliskey, "The Provos are concentrating on getting rid of the British in a military campaign without any policy on the class war. And the Officials now have no policy on the national question. We will agitate on both the national and class issues".

Relying on primary source material – one of the book's

strengths – it addresses the fundamental question of the relationship between political and military wings of national liberation movements. A question answered in the IRSP by the dominance of the INLA – which was to prove disastrous.

Already by the end 1975 there was a split from the IRSP by a left bloc of eleven central committee members around McAliskey.

As McAliskey put it in an essay entitled 'Revolutionary republicanism?':

"The building of a working class movement requires mass organisation on an open basis... Because of its clandestine and militaristic nature, participation in 'the Movement' demanded the exact opposite.

Since the survival of the organisation, the safety, at

times, of its members, depended on personal loyalty, secrecy, unquestioning observance of directives from above, it was virtually impossible to envisage the development of a democratic mass organisation from within."

From very early days it was also dogged by the tension between its members in the north and those in the south.

The frustration of the youthful paramilitaries in the Divis Flats, known as 'the Planet of the Erps' with the older, more experienced members from Dublin played a part in the disintegration of the organisation.

Read this book for the history and the questions it raises rather than the analysis it presents.

An immediate, accessible and essential book.

Bent history

Stonewall 25: The Making of the Lesbian and Gay Community in Britain, edited by Emma Healey and Angela Mason. Virago 1994 £6.99

Reviewed by Peter Purton

TWENTYFIVE years of the lesbian and gay communities in Britain following the explosion of the liberation movement after New York's Stonewall Riots is a great story. Everyone who has been part of that history could write their own version.

This collection of articles, unfortunately, fails to do justice to the story, and in its pur-

suit of a single political strand ends up presenting a grossly distorted version.

Tedious though this was, it was the "politics" - both overt and hidden - which bled the blood of a reviewer who has played a part in the struggle for nearly two decades.

Leave aside the slanderous errors - like Michael Mason's statement that the IMG denounced homosexuality as a "bourgeois deviation", when actually it was the first left-wing organisation to support lesbian and gay liberation (1972).

Missing side

What is missing is a whole side of the history. Some of the most spectacular gains for lesbian and gay equality have made in the labour movement.

The work of lesbian and gay groups in the Unions, which has been built on with the work of LCLGR in the La-



Mass action key to lesbian and gay rights

bour Party, is of fundamental significance to the future. It is ignored.

How does Stonewall Director Angela Mason (co-editor) think we got the votes of 210 Labour MPs for an equal age of consent a few months ago? Through constituents' letters in the weeks before, or through ten years of hard labour in the movement?

Coupled with this omission is the part played by the actions of masses. For the Stonewall Group's leaders, the mass demonstrations against Section 28 (for example) are walk-on parts for extras, to support the real work for equality, carried out by private meetings with the famous and powerful.

The role of all the mass actions of the quarter-century in bringing about change, in influencing opinion, in raising consciousness and solidarity, is virtually written out of this history.

The omission is no accident. The undercurrent in the book is that the lesbian and gay future is won by lobbying. It is bizarre that this argument is constructed under a title which celebrates a riot!

The whole tenor is one of achieving acceptance by integration into late twentieth century capitalist society, winning the votes of politicians for legal change, with the rest of the community kept waiting by their wordprocessors for the next letter-writing campaign.

Mass action

But to end the oppression of lesbians and gay men requires fundamental social change, and to win that requires the participation of masses - of lesbians and gay men, and of the working class.

The strategy which underlies "Stonewall 25" is not new, even if it is more inclusive of lesbians and of black people than previous incarnations. Anyone following it is doomed to disappointment, as is anyone buying this book and hoping to read the inspiring story of lesbian and gay struggle in this land!

Poll Tax rebel

A Time to Rage, Tommy Sheridan with Joan McAlpine, Polygon, £7.99

Reviewed by Roland Wood

A WEEK OR SO after Tommy Sheridan polled 12,000 votes in the European elections a friend at BBC Glasgow gave me a copy of *A Time To Rage*.

My friend is life-long Labour voter, but I have a sneaking suspicion that on this occasion his cross went next to the box with the prefix "Scottish Militant".

I won't speculate further as to whether *A Time to Rage* was influential in this regard, other than to say that it is a book which is clearly aimed at the likes of my friend.

Sheridan is telling the history of two Scottish movements. On the face of it, it is the origins and development of the anti-poll tax movement,

and the subsequent success of non-payment (throughout Britain) which is the dominant strand.

In this respect Sheridan is reasonably objective and balanced, although it is noticeable how the debates inside the All-Britain Federation are often only referred to very obliquely; he clearly prefers to concentrate closer to home.

This is certainly an omission (possibly a diplomatic one) but not a great weakness. The universal lessons from the anti-poll tax struggle are not lost.

'Scottish turn'

Interwoven (with reasonable subtlety) with the first history is the second: the origins, development and ultimate adoption by Militant throughout Britain of the "Scottish turn" in Sheridan's own words.

Certainly, this is one good reason why the book is not just a history but a polemic (and a good polemic at that) against notions of the "end of history" or the "death of socialism".

Further, and with particular relevance to the anti-poll tax movement, he also takes issue



with anarchism arguing that: "Here we were, involving hundreds of thousands of people in a mass movement for civil disobedience... Unless there's an organisation to give people a clear direction and keep them involved, you will lose them."

I can't disagree with that. Naturally he has Militant La-

bour in mind. Yet when we are given a ring-side seat to Militant's internal debates I for one was left a little perplexed.

One could be forgiven for believing that Militant had always been a public organisation - that the break from the Labour Party was completely trouble-free and merely a logical step.

This retouching, shall we

say, is a little disingenuous to say the least. It is a sanitised history for the first-time reader.

Most will neither notice nor care, but it is a flaw in what is otherwise an excellent fusion of recent working-class history with simple (but not simplistic) socialist propaganda.

Capitalism can't see the trees for the wood

MICHAEL LÖWY looks at the Ecological Programme of the Brazilian Workers Party

HOW CAN we break the barrier between workers' movements and ecologists, which still exists in many countries?

How can we bring about, in theory and in practice, a convergence between the class struggle and the fight against the destruction of nature; between the socialist programme and defence of the environment? The Brazilian experience is perhaps an important step towards this goal.

The struggle of Chico Mendes, leading the rubber workers and indigenous communities in defending the Amazon rainforest against the destructive actions of the big landowners, is well known. Mendes was a local and national trade union leader (he was elected to the leadership of the CUT trade union federation in 1988) and a founder of the Workers Party (PT).

His courageous battle, which inspired both socialism and ecology, cost him his life: in December 1988 he was murdered by hired thugs of the big landowners.

The exemplary struggle and sacrifice of Chico Mendes have left their mark on the political culture of the Workers Party, though not without resistance, notably from certain economists.

Programme

The governmental programme put forward by the PT for next October's presidential elections represents a considerable step forward.

The PT is proposing Luis Ignacio da Silva, 'Lula', as its candidate: in the last opinion polls he had already won 42 per cent support, leaving his main rival, the right-winger Henrique Cardoso, well behind.

Of course that can change over the coming months, but Lula has a real chance of being elected.

The governmental programme of the PT contains a chapter entitled "The Ecological Basis for a Project of National Development". It proposes to open up a new perspective by going beyond the traditional view of an economy based on the concept of quantitative growth.

The choice about priorities in production will no longer be made on the basis of the logic of the market, but must also integrate the social needs of the



population (education, health) and the safeguarding of the environment.

It is not a question of rejecting technological progress but of breaking from all technology that destroys nature, opting for methods of conserving resources, avoiding harm to the environment and creating socially useful products.

In short, it is a question of transforming the current mode of development, which is responsible for the degradation of the environment and growing social inequality, into a *model of sustainable development* resolving the problem of poverty.

Agrarian and urban reform are two of the central points of this programme.

Industrial products

The former military regime had imposed on the countryside the "Technological Package for Agriculture", a model of development which was strongly dependent on the massive use of modern industrial products: chemical fertilisers, pesticides, agricultural machinery.

It resulted in considerable ecological havoc, a worsening of the living standards and health of rural workers; and the accumulation of power in the hands of the big agro-export businesses, leading to a rural exodus and the concentration of

people in the miserable shanty towns on the edges of the major cities.

The intensive use of pesticides has been responsible for the pollution of rivers and the atmosphere and the poisoning of the food chain.

In contrast to this mode of development the agrarian reform programme seeks to establish a solid economy based on peasant cooperatives, alternative technologies, redistribution of profits and with priority given to the production of food and other goods destined for the local or national market.

The cities present an increasingly severe problem from an environmental point of view.

Industrial pollution, accumulation of domestic, hospital and industrial waste, lack of drinking water, lack of drains in poor neighbourhoods, a bad transport system etc.

These problems are intimately linked to the unequal urban structure which concentrates the whole infrastructure in the rich areas.

Radical urban reform is therefore a necessity. The process of production, appropriation and consumption within the urban space must be subject to social and ecological criteria.

Priority must be given to policies of sanitization which guarantee the population control of atmospheric pollution,

provision of drinking water, a drainage system, regular collection and treatment of urban waste, development of green belts, urbanisation of the shanty towns without displacement of their populations.

The programme also proposes specific measures for different regions of the country, particularly Amazonia. The last great tropical forest in the world is under attack.

Highway

The trans-Amazonian highway, military projects, deforestation for the production of charcoal, pollution of the rivers with mercury, destruction of the forest for cattle ranching or for mining activities etc.

These activities are always accompanied by violent aggression against the rural workers, the rubber tappers and other small-scale producers, as well as indigenous populations.

It is necessary to break with these practices and reorientate investments towards ecologically and socially useful activities, such as the extraction of natural wealth by craft workers, rubber tappers, chestnuts, fishing etc.

Extraction of minerals and the search for gold must be strictly controlled by ecological considerations. Official credits and financial incentives for the

export of minerals (that is, non-renewable resources) must be prohibited.

In addition local iron production, based on the massive use of charcoal, should suspend its activities. Finally, the territorial and cultural sovereignty of the indigenous peoples in their lands should be recognised.

This chapter on the ecological bases of development in the governmental programme of the PT is impressive because of the richness and diversity of its concerns as well as the concrete and realistic character of its proposals.

The main criticism that can be made is the absence of any reference to capitalism in its analysis of the eco-destructive mode of development that currently exists in Brazil.

It is the very logic of the capitalist system, which knows no other necessities than the maximisation of profit, no other laws than those of the world market, which leads, in a blind and inevitable fashion, to the plundering of the environment and the disruption of ecological balance, not only in Brazil but on the level of the entire planet.

That is why it is impossible to have an effective ecological policy without attacking, to one degree or another, the interests of capital.

Rwanda's blood on France's hands

The rebel victory in Rwanda is turning into a human catastrophe. Propaganda by the now-defeated government has led two million people from the majority Hutu ethnic group to flee the country, fearing that the victorious Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) will massacre them.

The two million refugees are dying of starvation and disease. Persuading Hutus to flee the country was the last grisly act of the military regime, whose defeat is well-deserved.

Here FRANCIS CAZALS explains the background to the war, and the role which France, whose troops are now in Rwanda on a "humanitarian" mission, played in keeping the old regime in power.

AFTER THE DEATH of Rwandan dictator President Juvénal Habyarimana on April 6, his regime descended into blood and barbarism. But these events were not simply tribal clashes.

As the RPF army, composed mainly of troops from the minority Tutsi ethnic group, moved into the country, the government army and presidential guard launched a huge massacre. They killed a large part of the Tutsis in the capital Kigali, and hunted down anyone supporting democracy.

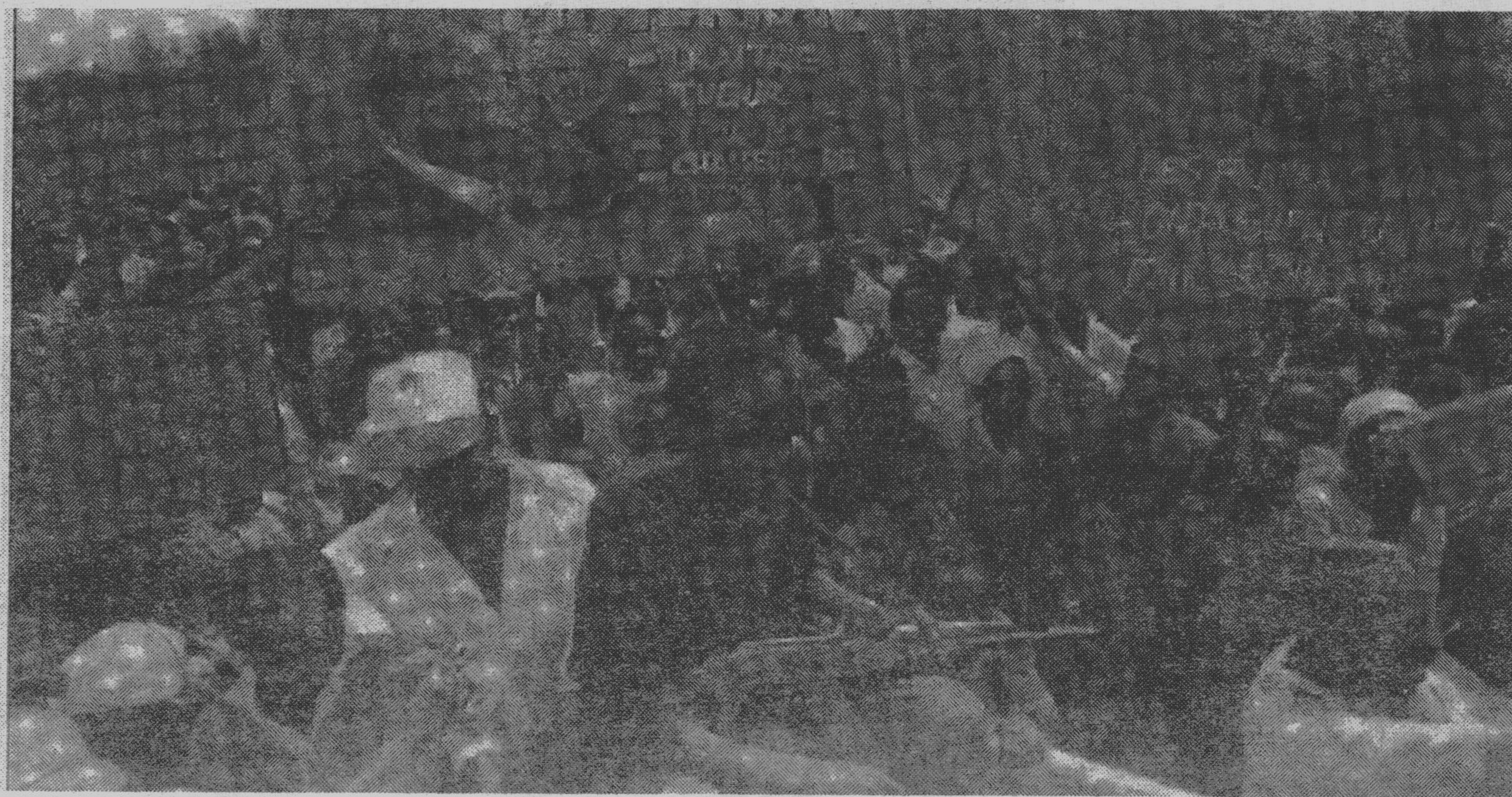
In order not to fall into the government's ethnic trap, the RPF leaders tried to impose strict discipline on their troops to ward off reprisals against Hutu civilians.

President Habyarimana was in power for decades, opposing all attempts at democratisation. But a 1990 RPF insurrection forced his regime into tolerating civilian opposition and negotiation with the RPF.

Originally the RPF was formed by Tutsis who had fled to Uganda, fleeing massacres in their own country. In Uganda they enrolled in Yawwri Museveni's National Resistance Army which captured power in Uganda in 1985.

Since then many of them have held leadership positions in the Ugandan army.

Hardened by years of fighting in the rebel movement in Uganda, the RPF launched its offensive in October 1990 against an army which had until then



confronted only civilians. The regime was saved from falling only by French military support.

The rebels were pushed back into northern Rwanda, and then into Uganda. But their action had destabilised the Kigali regime and opened the way for the appearance of a democratic opposition, which also included Hutus. Thus the Rwanda regime was forced to accept the entry of some oppositionists into the government, and to negotiate with the rebels.

Sabotage

However behind the scenes the government sought to sabotage this liberalisation process through a strategy of terror aimed at all democratic forces.

Meanwhile the RPF kept up military pressure in the north, while the French army trained and organised the government army. In these conditions, long and difficult negotiations led finally to an agreement in August 1993 providing for a ceasefire and the entry of the rebels into the government. But the projected government of national unity never happened.

On the way back from a negotiation meeting in Arusha, President Habyarimana's plane exploded as it landed, probably shot down by a missile.

The plane had been carrying several hard-line military commanders and quite accidentally the president of neighbouring Burundi.

Following this attack, massacres and looting were unleashed by the army, mainly by the presidential guard.

Rumours were widespread that the president had been killed by Hutu military officers and not by the RPF. In any case, his death was the excuse for the launching of massacres and a descent



into chaos.

The media has tried to present the war as purely an ethnic conflict, without trying to figure out the political conflicts involved. Stephen Smith commented in the April 11 issue of *Liberation* "It is wrong to reduce every clash between Hutus and Tutsi to 'tribal slaughter', an umpteenth expression of an atavistic hatred whose motives are lost in the mists of history".

He pointed out correctly that these bloody days "show that in the midst of looting and the settling of all sorts of

accounts, the violence is being directed, without regard for their tribal affiliation, against all the supporters of sharing power with the Tutsi minority."

Before massacring Tutsis, the presidential guard went after liberal and democratic figures who were challenging the

Habyarimana regime.

Thus a minister was killed who belonged to the oppositionist PSD. She was a well-known human rights activist who had contributed to the December 1992 report exposing the "Zero Network" racist death squads.

Others assassinated were the presiding judge of the Supreme Court, church leaders who defended democratic rights, and a liberal Rwandan businessman.

In the light of facts about this war, what is the justification given by France for backing the regime? It is clear the French government was tempted to use its troops in Rwanda for their "humanitarian" mission to intervene against the RPF, but that their intervention was too late, in the light of the rapid collapse of government forces.

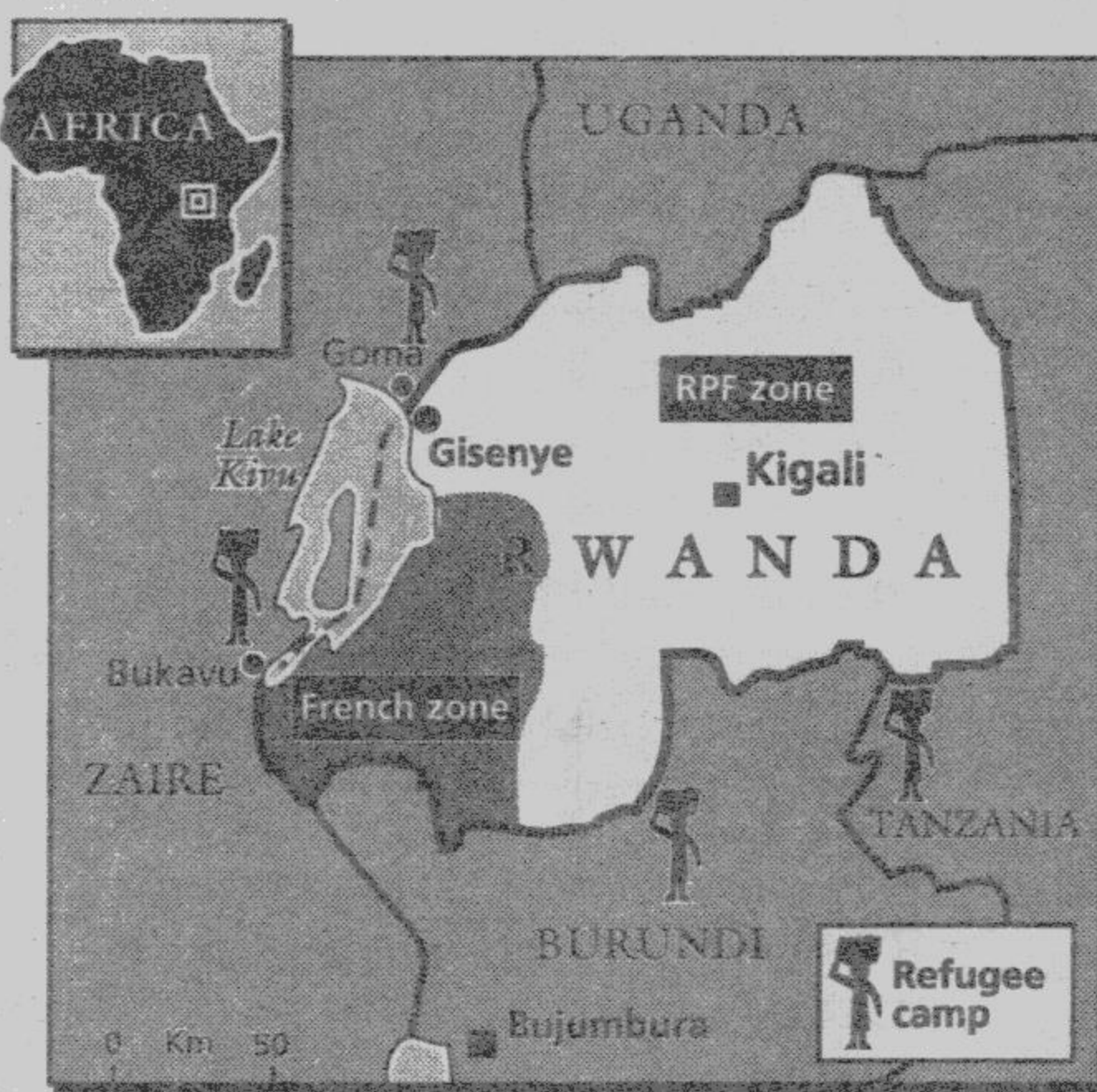
France claims that they backed the Habyarimana military regime because only representatives of the ethnic majority could ensure stability.

In pursuing this policy France went along with the most extreme Hutu faction, which originated in the president's home region of Gisenyi. When the Socialist Party came to power in France it made no change in this policy.

Arms sales

In reality France's links with the regime were about consolidating its influence in the region and carrying out lucrative arms sales. The Rwandan military chiefs responsible for the deaths of hundreds of thousands were all trained by France or Belgium.

However the French government ministers deeply involved - including the current defense and foreign aid ministers - can sleep peacefully. The scream of the dying in Kigali and on the Ugandan border will not reach them, and no court will charge them with crimes against humanity in Rwanda.



WARSAW—The recent election victories of ex-Stalinist parties are the direct result of the misery inflicted by the dismantling of welfare provisions, and the slump in living standards, which has accompanied the project of restoring capitalism.

Voters chose the only path open to them of registering their rejection of this course.

Yet the assumption of governmental power immediately throws up huge contradictions for these parties. They are totally committed to continuing the programme of capitalist restoration. But their victory represents a major popular protest *against* that programme.

That contradiction immediately became clear after the recent victory of Hungary's Socialist Party (SP). Although they have an absolute majority in parliament, their overwhelming desire to demonstrate their pro-capitalist credentials has led them to form a coalition government with the Free Democrats, the most fervent enthusiasts of *laissez-faire* capitalism.

Hungary's reform Stalinists justify this by saying that "there are no basic differences in economic programme" between the two parties. This is quite true.

Both are for a privatised capitalist economy. Yet in an election-day opinion poll, in reply to the question "What should be the dominant form of economic ownership?" only 18 per cent of SP voters gave the answer "private ownership" - indeed it was chosen by only 46 per cent of Free Democrat supporters.

This tells us a lot about the yawning gap between the new political elites and the working people of eastern Europe.

In Poland the ex-Stalinist SdRP (Social Democracy of the Republic of Poland) has now been in power for over half a year. What conclusions can we draw from these six months?

Since winning the elections, the SdRP has embarked on a wildly erratic path of political manoeuvres designed to gain the approval of the West and forge alliances with the reactionary right. The effects have been disastrous.

Firstly they approached the largest of the rightist parties to establish a coalition government. When this offer was rejected, they formed a coalition with the Polish Peasants Party, the second largest party in the parliament.

Wooing Walesa

Worse, the reform Stalinists set out to woo president Walesa, who was open to co-operation following the disastrous showing of the party he had backed in the election, which got just 5 per cent of the vote. The SdRP allowed Walesa to nominate his own candidates for the key ministerial posts of internal affairs, foreign affairs and defence.

Since then, Walesa has utilised these ministers to outwit and embarrass the SdRP at every turn. He has also made skilful use of his veto powers: in particular Walesa has used the threat of veto with respect to the government's budget legislation and a bill continuing the hated payroll tax (in effect a partial public sector wage freeze).

The results of all this have been tragic. After last September's elections Walesa was ridiculed. Now the SdRP has given him a new lease of life, allowing this arch-reactionary pawn of the Catholic hierarchy to pose as a "friend of the workers" because of his opposition to the payroll tax.

Over the last month the SdRP has suddenly changed tack completely, provoking Walesa by postponing the parliamentary debate on Poland's concordat with the Vatican, and allowing a private



Stooge of Catholic hierarchy

Do 'reformed' Stalinists offer any real alternative?

The victory of the social democratic wing of the former Communist party in the May 29 Hungarian elections was a recent example of a phenomenon that has already occurred in a number of east European countries - sweeping electoral victories of "reform Stalinist" parties that have adopted social democratic programmes.

One of the most important examples is Poland, where the reform Stalinists have been in power for six months. Here JAN SYLWESTROWICZ looks at what's happening in Poland.

members' bill liberalising last year's draconian anti-abortion law.

All this is evidence of huge confusion among the ex-Stalinists. They face a profound dilemma in attempting to "prove" themselves to the West as "sensible" partners in the transition to capitalism.

They face three major problems. First is popular resistance to the effects of further capitalist restoration. All these effects will deepen - and so will resistance.

Scant capital

The second is the difficulty in imposing the domination of capital when scant domestic capital exists, and while western imperialism, in trouble with its own recession, prefers to dump goods, or speculate on east European markets, rather than actually invest there.

The third problem is the current deadlock in the attempt to restore capitalism. This process has now lasted five years. *Capitalist restoration has run up against objective structural constraints.* Not only is there no more capital for privatisation, but the whole economy is incapable of withstanding a substantial extension of the private sector on the present basis.

At present privatisation is mainly being carried out by the state. It is the state sector of the economy that is materially supporting the privatisation, functioning as a giant life support system for the emerging private sector.

The fundamental problem is that any major expansion of privatisation on this basis (without an immense lowering of living standards) would represent an unsustainable drain on the state sector, producing mass bankruptcies and economic collapse. The resources just do

not exist.

This means that *the limits of "peaceful" restoration have been reached*, although even this has been achieved, although even at the cost of tremendous suffering. Any qualitative advance in capitalist restoration would involve a new and massive onslaught on the working class.

An onslaught of such magnitude would certainly trigger all-out workers' opposition. For the moment, none of Poland's pro-capitalist politicians are prepared for that.

In this situation the reform Stalinists are totally unable to deliver the goods they have promised the West.

Incapable of accelerating privatisation they are ensuring that the state sector continues to nourish the existing private companies.

Payroll tax

All the previous mechanisms for this have been retained, including the above mentioned payroll tax on state enterprises, which private out firms exempt from. Plans for a progressive real estate tax which would hit the wealthiest layers of society have been scrapped.

After a six-month grace period, workers' opposition to the present government is beginning to mount. For some months labour protests had been limited to a well-advertised but ineffectual national campaign mounted by Solidarnosc. The union did succeed in organising several large demonstrations (attended also by the extreme right!) but industrial action took off only in the mines.

There the protest was directed chiefly against the payroll tax and the establishment of "commercialised" companies in coal industry.

Unfortunately the Polish union movement remains fragmented and, above all, leaderless, with no clear socio-economic alternative.

The Solidarnosc bureaucracy has been captured by officials strongly linked to the reactionary right. The other main union, the OPZZ, is aligned behind the SdRP and has remained passive, while the smaller federations, although considerably more militant, present a much weaker organisational capacity.

New struggles

However recent weeks have seen the emergence of some new struggles not subordinated to the national union bureaucrats. Again the common theme has been the payroll tax, but straight pay demands have dominated the protests. At the giant Nowa Huta steel complex in Silesia, a 17-day occupation strike was suspended with a partial victory being won.

At the time of writing, strike action is underway in the two largest industrial plants to have attracted western capital, the Fiat car factory in Silesia and the Lucchini car plant in Warsaw.

Further strikes are likely over the summer. But the current organisational and political disarray of the union movement makes it unlikely they can be coordinated into a coherent fightback against the government.

But they will serve as a reminder to the reform Stalinists and other pro-capitalist forces that any attempt to relaunch a sharper offensive against working people to support intensified capitalist restoration will have to reckon with fierce resistance.

Deck Chair Socialism

THE REVOLUTION began almost as an accident.

Arnold Jenkins — 'Red Arnold' or the 'British Zapata' as he was later to be known, because of his curiously-shaped moustache — had nothing more ambitious in mind than a holiday by the sea. In Eastbourne to be precise.

His fortnight away from the cream doughnut production line at the vast Marvel bakery (slogan: "If it's a fresh doughnut, it's a Marvel") had been booked long in advance.

He had saved up his spending money and reserved his usual B&B room at Mrs Johnson's, not far from the Wish Tower.

As usual, he travelled down by train from Wolverhampton. As they passed each station, he would check progress against his timetable. Arnold was a methodical chap. He was a fund of interesting facts if he ever got chatting to anyone over a few shandies.

His largely nondescript features were enlivened only by cheap dark-framed glasses and the moustache.

He wore cheap, sensible clothes, off the peg from Littlewoods, and a bargain pair of plastic open-toed sandals he had found for £4 in a sale. He had a plastic mac folded in his sports jacket pocket in case of rain.

To his workmates he was Arnold the Sensible.

But they also regarded him as a bit of a Trot. Arnold was a strong union man, and had been known to buy one or two of those small circulation left wing papers that slag off the Labour leaders as too right wing. He could be roused to righteous anger. And his arrival in Eastbourne was to trigger the downfall of British capitalism.

The weather played a role. For a month before his holiday it had been brilliantly sunny, searingly hot. Conditions in the bakery had been so hellish the management had even been forced to reduce the water content in the "cream" for the doughnuts, to avoid it all turning liquid. At one point Arnold led a protest walkout, but his committee collapsed on him when management offered jugs of iced water.

AFTER sweating through this heat, Arnold found the first days of his holiday dogged with heavy cloud, rain and even a splattering of hail. It was miserable. Like many others wandering around Eastbourne, he was pissed off.

In the fish bar he always went to for lunch, Arnold began to moan about the weather. But as a bit of a Trot, he moaned politically. His grumbles about the rain were an echo of his hankering for the good old days of his youth in the 1970s — when you had sunny summers, proper strikes, wage increases, flared trousers and Labour governments.

"We never used to get weather like this under Labour," he would tell anyone in earshot.

"No mate, you're right there," responded one of those old enough to re-

A short story for the summer holidays, by JOHN LISTER

member. It was over twenty years since Labour had last won an election.

"These bloody Tories have ruined everything. Look at the price of fish," went on Arnold. "We never paid this much under Wilson. Fish and chips, mushy peas, two slices and a cup of tea costs me an hour's wages."

"It's even worse on a pension, brother," chipped in a pensioned Stalinist who had once worked the line at Fords.

"Yes, our pensions are among the worst in Europe, you know," added a little old lady in the corner of the cafe, wearing a heavy overcoat, hat and gloves, and steaming in the damp heat.

"Best pensions around are in Italy, they've got a sliding scale there, keeps pace with price increases. Pensioners there have got real political power, and they use it," said a gaunt, white-haired man, finishing a battered sausage.

"Get away with you, you do alright with your bus passes and that," said a

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younger bloke, sitting with his wife at the door.

"That's all you know about it," said the gaunt pensioner, to a rumble of approval from the other diners.

"I'm the chair of a pensioners' campaign, so I know what I'm talking about. Why should pensioners have to travel everywhere by bloody bus? We wouldn't need bus passes if they gave us a decent pension to spend on what we really want."

He paused. The young bloke looked embarrassed. Others were leaning forward to listen.

"Go on, mate, tell us more. The weather's lousy outside, and there are plenty of seats in here," said Arnold.

"Stand up so we can all hear you."

"Well, alright..." said Stan, the gaunt pensioner, standing and clearing his throat for a well-rehearsed speech.

"We fought for Britain in the D-Day landings, and now we can't afford a day trip to bloody Calais. British pensioners are the laughing stock of Europe. Since Thatcher got in these Tories have really taken us to the cleaners, just so as to persuade younger workers to take out private pension plans..." he began.

"I don't want to listen to this political stuff," interrupted Gary, the young bloke.

"Well we do, so piss off," yelled an irate Arnold, confident of support from others in the cafe.

"Come on love, we're leaving," said the young bloke.

"You go if you want, I'm listening," said his wife, Rosa from Redditch. She was a care assistant in a nursing home, and really liked older people.

"Yeah, you tell him, darling," yelled one of the older women.

RED-FACED, Gary got up angrily and stormed out, only to collide with a coach party of pensioners on the pavement.

"Sorry, love, I didn't mean to hurt you," he grunted in apology to the grey-haired woman he had knocked over. He helped her to her feet. "I had to get out of that cafe. There's a whole

bunch of them in there, talking politics."

"Politics?" said a stout, white-haired woman, who had been tempted to hit Gary with her umbrella. "What kind of politics?"

"Leftie stuff, all about pensions..."

"That cafe there?"

"Yeah."

"OK comrades, into the cafe," shouted Elsie, the group leader, a former shop steward and lifelong Communist Party member. "There's a meeting going on. It'll pass the time till it stops raining."

Three dozen or more pensioners, many of whom were already fired up with a few glasses of stout or barley wine, switched course and marched into the cafe, catching one of Stan's more rabble-rousing passages and whooping their applause.

The cafe owner was none too pleased. His seats were filling up, but nobody was buying anything; instead he was caught up in an impromptu leftie meeting.

"Thanks very much, break it up now," he called out ineffectually as Stan paused for breath between sentences.

This annoyed Arnold, who was not only enthused by the speech, but also had his beady eye on Rosa by the window. He wanted to impress her.

"That's just like a bloody capitalist, that is, trying to shut us up," he shouted at the proprietor. Do we want to be ordered around by profiteering buggers like him? Look at the price of fish!"

"You're right, son," said Stan, regaining the initiative. "Isn't he right?" he asked the responsive crowd.

"Yes!" was the bellowed response.

"Hey, steady on..." whimpered the cafe owner.

"Free chips for the pensioners, and a cup of tea each!" shouted Arnold. "Give them something for nothing, you can afford that from the profits you've been making."

"Free chips, free chips..." went up the chant.

The sound spread to the pavement, where the word went round: mass action by pensioners had secured a free meal in Fred's Fish Bar - - in an Eastbourne cafe!

It was a group of wrinklies from Welwyn who next took the initiative — as soon as they heard the rumour. They were peckish from their journey, but didn't fancy fish. Ten of them spontaneously agreed to invade a burger bar and demand a free meal there.

They won instant support from the

SUMMER STORY

The mood was spreading, fanned on by Chinese whisper exaggerations of what had happened. An off-licence was expropriated. Workers' control was established in one, then two hypermarkets. A shoe shop was cleared out by an alliance of pensioners and holiday-making workers.

soggy and ripped-off families already sitting in the wreckage of their styro-foam cups and meal boxes.

"Yeah you've made a fortune out of all of us, you can easily give these old folks a free meal," yelled a formidably huge scaffolder from Liverpool, still reeling from the cost of buying junk food for his wife and three kids.

The Welwyn Provisionals, with their daunting ally, won their demands — McRubbish meals all round — and the word spread further, exaggerated with each re-telling.

The Hackney pensioners (who had eaten earlier) had the bright idea of branching out from cafes to chain stores, demanding free clothing. Hundreds of steaming, knackered and ripped-off holiday families in Marx's cheered them on as they confronted the confused supervisors. Nobody had ever asked for free cardigans, knickers, support tights or corsets before: but why not? Marx and Spender's made a fortune out of ordinary men and women, and could afford to give something back.

The mood was spreading, fanned on by Chinese whisper exaggerations of what had happened. An off-licence was expropriated. Workers' control was established in one, then two hypermarkets. A shoe shop was cleared out by an alliance of pensioners and holiday-making workers.

The press and TV arrived, as did a bewildered constabulary. It was like a huge party. Tills were silent as shop workers helped pensioners and others to find the correct sizes of garments to take away. Wine counters rapidly emptied, and groups of sozzled pensioners debated where to go next for a free meal.

WHERE were the senior management? The relentless casualisation of retail and catering work had meant that none of the biggest stores or fast food joints were staffed at higher than supervisor level that afternoon, and many supervisors, themselves not well paid, had parents eking out life on a pension. None of them wanted to be the one to call in the cops and cause a wrinkle to be banded up.

Now buses were being commandeered, taking flying pensioners' groups to spread the word along the coast — towards Brighton and the pensioners' bastions of Worthing and Littlehampton to the west, and to Folkestone, Dover to the east. The group from Fred's Fish Bar, having enrolled Arnold and Rosa as honorary pensioners, boarded a bus to Brighton.

The TV and radio had beaten them to it: as their merry band clambered off the bus, the streets were thronged with organised groups of pensioners,



Love and revolution in Eastbourne

That night local factories and neighbourhoods all over the country echoed with impromptu meetings setting up representative committees. Factory councils discussed redrawing work schedules to cut working hours and create new jobs for local unemployed — with the costs carved out of the company profits and management perks. "Make the buggers pay" was the popular slogan.

keenly following the Eastbourne example. Stores were doing a roaring trade — but taking no money. Unemployed youth and poverty-stricken parents were joining in, demanding free food and an ever-expanding array of consumer goods.

Managers, alerted by the press reports, had dashed into shops and restaurants — only to find casual staff they barely recognised giving away their stock. Their threats carried little weight against low-paid workers.

"Who the hell are you, baldy? Piss off," one managing director was told by a pimply youth as he obligingly packed cardigans for pensioners.

Production workers were starting to catch on. Arnold helped get the first lot going when he and Rosa burst in on a local bakery as the new shift was starting work. Staff recognised his moustache from the press reports: an instant meeting formed to hear him.

"I've worked in a place like this for twelve years, but the best I've had is crumbs from the bosses' table," he told them. "Today we can change all that. We don't just want a bigger slice of cake: we do all the real work, we want the bloody bakery!"

Rosa spoke too, stirring cheers of support from the women when she told them: "My old man didn't want to join in this movement, so I left him behind in Eastbourne"

After loud applause, the workers voted to lock out the management, and fashioned a banner from flour sacks which proclaimed the bakery "under workers' control".

The rain had stopped, and the sunset was glowing red as Arnold and Rosa walked hand in hand along the prom. Word was that the channel ferries and Channel Tunnel were under workers' control, and that the movement had reached London.

That night local factories and neighbourhoods all over the country echoed with impromptu meetings setting up representative committees. Factory councils discussed redrawing work schedules to cut working hours and create new jobs for local unemployed — with the costs carved out of the company profits and management perks. "Make the buggers pay" was the popular slogan.

When Arnold and Rosa awoke together next morning to a shaft of bright sunlight coming through their hotel room curtains, the world had been transformed.

Bank workers, clocking on early, had grabbed morning TV headlines by publishing embarrassing details of the accounts of the stinking rich and big corporations; some had promised loans to companies under workers' control, others had moved on to announce a cancellation of third world debts.

TELECOM staff declared that domestic users were to be exempt from charges, the costs covered by big business. Power workers soon followed suit.

Police dispatched to picket lines in the midlands where managers had staged pre-emptive lock-outs decided en route not to go. Their Instant Response Unit vans drew up in circle formation in nearby parks, and spontaneous meetings passed resolutions condemning the Tories in general and Michael Howard in particular. When they returned to base they found their soon-to-be-made-redundant senior officers had come to similar conclu-

sions.

Army bases saw parade grounds utilised for mass meetings electing committees from which officers were excluded: but the officer corps, too, disgruntled by Tory cuts was unwilling to move against the growing tide of protest.

Tory ministers arrived to find civil service picket lines uniting all the grades they had been attempting to privatise. Bishops were making inflammatory speeches.

ONLY LABOUR'S right wing leadership and a handful of judges were openly allied with the attempt to restore order. The government had so totally isolated itself by its policies that only the absence of any coordinated leadership could enable the Tories to hang on....

Outside the hotel, Arnold found a waiting pack of news hounds who had tracked down the 'British Zapata'. He hoped Gary hadn't tracked them down too.

"You seem to have the government on the run," the woman from the *Daily Mail* told him. "What are you going to do next, Mr Jenkins?"

"To misquote somebody famous, we have fought them on the beaches, and we have shown them that our Dads' Army is a match for them," he began. But somebody was nudging his arm....

"Wake up, mate, you're snoring something rotten," said a loud voice in Arnold's ear.

With a start Arnold jerked back in his deck chair. Miserably and with a real struggle he opened his eyes. He was on the prom, near the band stand.

Two seats along, the angry pensioner who had woken him from his dream watched him suspiciously. Was it Stan?

It had all been going so well, too.

Oh well, thought Arnold, perhaps there's something in this revolution lark after all. It is the stuff that dreams are made on. Best get some lunch at Fred's....

SUMMER STORY

Bosnia faces another winter of warfare

By Alan Thornett

THE LATEST so-called peace plan for Bosnia - proposed by the "great powers" has come to its sticky expected end with a rejection from Radovan

Karadzic and the Bosnian Serb leadership.

Milosevic has played his usual game of publicly "pressurising" the Bosnian Serbs towards a settlement and then backing them to the hilt when they reject.

The Bosnian Government,

who had earlier accepted the plan in order to wrong foot the Serbs (although it falls far short of what is acceptable to them) have now withdrawn their support as well.

As far as the West is concerned their bluff has been called. They made this plan the "final offer" after which UN forces could well be withdrawn, the arms embargo lifted from Bosnia by the USA, and air strikes used to enforce "safe areas" policed by NATO.

How far any of this will now clear, however, is far from clear. A unilateral lifting of the arms embargo by the US would cause a huge rift with

the EU and pulling out troops and cutting aid convoys may well be every difficult as winter gets closer.

In any case UNPROFOR is the main lever for a settlement, and they will be reluctant to lose it when it comes to the crunch.

New phase

It does, however, mark a new and more protracted phase of the war - the realities of which have been masked to some extent over recent months by the manoeuvre for a settlement - ultimately to the advantage of

the Serbs.

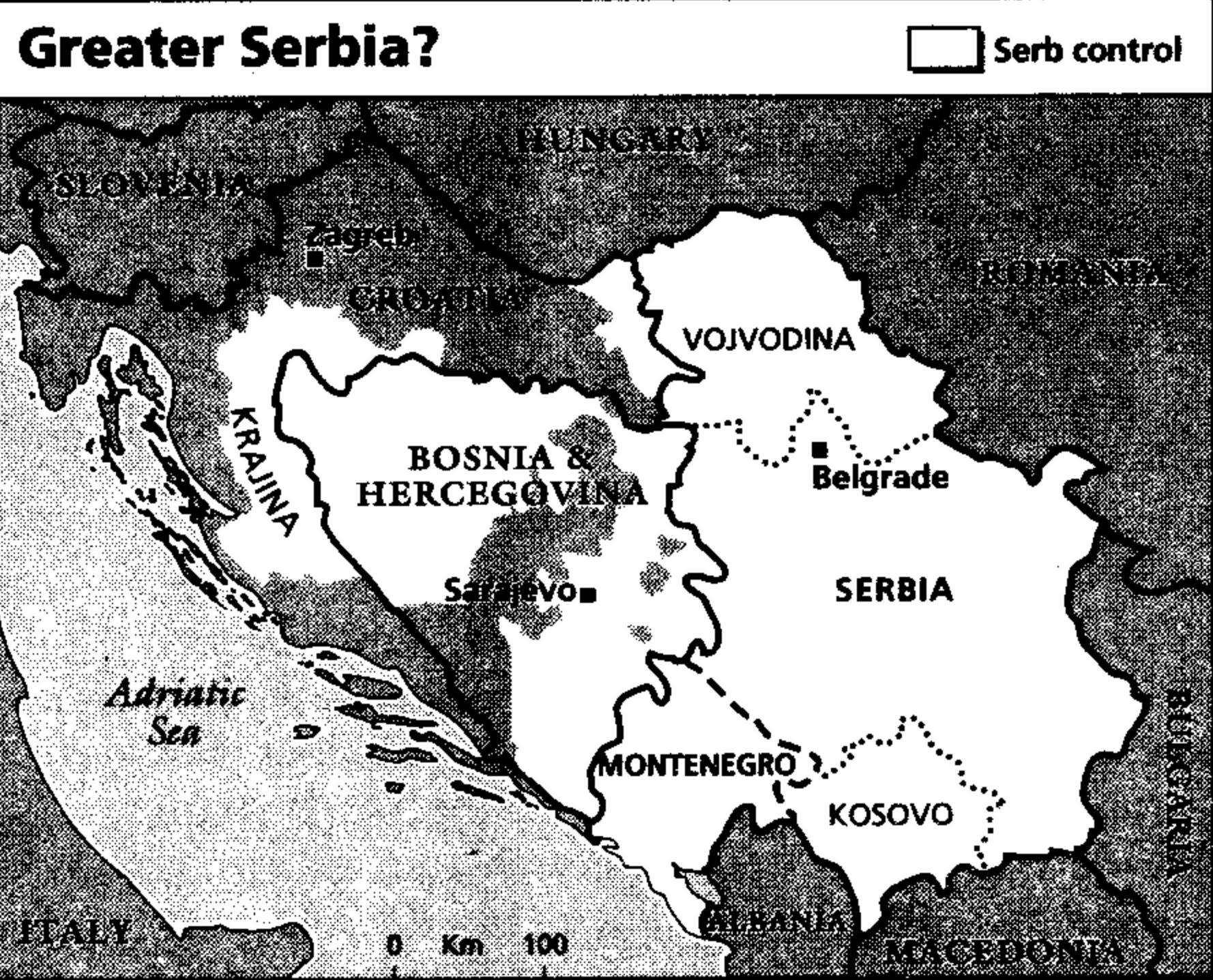
The Bosnian army has improved its armaments to some extent over recent months.

However the continuation of the war under conditions of the embargo has one central logic - that the military advantage will remain with the Serbs, and the Bosnians will fight a mainly defensive campaign under every difficult conditions.

The need for continuing international solidarity to defend a multi-ethnic Bosnia and its right to national self determination is self evident.



How a Bosnian Serb army newspaper sees the conflict: the West punishes a little Serb for misdeeds committed by a Muslim (centre) and a Croat (right)



Will El Salvador's liberation fighters split?

By Paquita Gomez

AFTER the second round of the El Salvador elections, won by the right-wing ARENA party, it only took a week for fundamental public debates to erupt among the five parties which constitute the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) - the organisation which led the 12-year guerrilla war against the right wing death squad regime.

On May 1, when the executive committee of the new National Assembly was elected, a public split before the television cameras occurred between the five parties of the FMLN.

Previously the Political Committee of the FMLN had decided not to participate in the Assembly's executive committee, due to its undemocratic set-up, which guarantees a majority for ARENA.

However, on May 1, seven of the 20 FMLN deputies, representatives of two of the FMLN parties, the National Resistance (RN) and the ERP (Renewal Voice of the People - formerly Revolutionary Army of the People), chose to accept the ARENA conditions and take the two seats in the executive offered to



the FMLN.

To ensure their election to these two seats, the RN and ERP deputies made a tactical alliance with ARENA deputies and voted for the ARENA candidate for president of the Assembly.

Breach

This breach of discipline was immediately denounced by the members of the three other parties - the Popular Liberation Forces (FPL), the Communist Party and the Central American Revolutionary Workers Party (PRTC).

On May 11, a meeting of the

National Council of the FMLN, boycotted by the RN and ERP, decided to withdraw the FMLN mandate from the seven rebellious deputies and suspend them from their leadership positions in the FMLN.

That decision included Jaouquin Villalobos, the main leader of the ERP, held to be the "moral instigator" of the affair, although not himself a deputy in the Assembly.

This clash, out of which the right-wing media made heaps of publicity, shone a spotlight on the internal divisions and political immaturity of the FMLN and revealed to all Salvadoreans the

profound differences in the FMLN.

For several years ERP leader Villalobos and some other ERP leaders have abandoned all reference to Marxism-Leninism (influenced mainly by the collapse of the USSR) and adopted openly social democratic reformist positions.

Social democrats

Since 1993 the RN and the ERP have openly called themselves the "social democratic wing of the FMLN".

Today they justify their attitude on the basis of its "practi-

cality" and accuse the three other parties of the FMLN of being "archaic" and above all "anti-democratic".

However, the ERP is not in a good position to criticise others on this count, since in November 1993 they expelled an important part of their own membership for being in disagreement with the leadership.

These people have organised themselves in the "Democratic Tendency" and have asked for recognition as a sixth formation in the FMLN.

Televised

For a month now, the crisis of the FMLN has been one of the main factors in the Salvadorean political situation, with televised debates between the two blocs, weakening considerably the possibility of a co-ordinated intervention by the FMLN in the National Assembly against the policies of the government.

For the moment there remain two camps, committed to their respective positions.

The "bloc of three" (FPL, CP, PRTC) refuse to go back on their decisions, while the ERP and RN reject the measures taken against their parliamentary deputies. Villalobos maintains that the ERP and RN want to stay in the FMLN, and are not obliged to leave.



Where We Stand

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

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

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

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

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

ion rights.

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

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

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

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

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

We struggle against fragmentation by building solidarity, working to link and unite the various struggles of workers,

the unemployed, of women, of pensioners, of the black communities and ethnic minorities, of lesbians and gay men, of students, of youth – and of those fighting imperialism in Ireland and throughout the world. *Socialist Outlook* is above all an *internationalist* current, in solidarity with the Trotskyist Fourth International, which organises co-thinkers in 40 countries world-wide.

Sectarianism

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

Nor do we believe that the demands of women, black people, lesbians and gays or the national demands of people in Scotland and Wales should be left to await the outcome of a socialist revolu-

tion. The oppressed must organise themselves and fight now around their own demands, which are a part of the struggle for socialism.

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

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

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

Please tell me more about *Socialist Outlook*
 Yes, I want to become a *Socialist Outlook* supporter

Name

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Send to *Socialist Outlook*, PO Box 1109, London N4 2UU

What's HAPPENING

JULY

Thurs 28

JUSTICE for Joy Gardner - End racist deportation laws.
WREATH-LAYING in memory of Joy Gardner 11.30 Topfield Close, London N8 and 1.30 Home Office, Queen Ann's Rd,

SW1. Joy Gardner Campaign, 081 880 9100

Sat 30

RMT Signal workers demonstration. Assemble 12.30 Grafton Place, outside Euston station. March to Camden Centre

DECORATE the prison gates! Demonstrate

outside Campsfield immigration prison, Langford Lane, Kidlington, near Oxford 12noon

BIRMINGHAM UCW March against the Post Sell Off. Assemble 1pm Victoria Square

AUGUST

Tues 9

SOCIALIST OUTLOOK discussion: **Democracy and the United Front.** 8.00pm, Unicorn pub, Church Street, Manchester

Weds 3

SMTUC Meeting 7.30 Red Rose Club, 129 Seven Sisters Road, London N7

BUILDING solidarity with the signal workers. Speakers: Jeremy Corbyn and RMT executive member

Weds 10

NO MORE Divided Families! Linda and Dexter have a right to family life! demonstrate 10am outside adjudicators office Government Buildings Clay Lane Yardley Birmingham details West Midlands Anti-deportation campaign 021-551 4518 or 523 0580

Sat 13

MARCH for British withdrawal from Ireland assemble 12.00 noon Park outside Im-

perial War Museum. North Lambeth Tube.

Thur

25-Mon 29

SOCIALIST OUTLOOK Summer School: **ANALYSING RACISM AND FASCISM.** Residential school in Aberystwyth, en suite rooms, plenaries, workshops and full social programme. £80/£30. Details from *Socialist Outlook*, PO Box 1109, London N4 2UU.

SEPTEMBER

Tues 6

TRADE UNIONS speak out against deportations public meeting with Azize Rahman

and UNISON members threatened with deportation 7.30pm Manchester Town Hall

All night vigil outside immigration appeal court 9.30pm on Aldine House New Bailey St Salford

Weds 7

MASS PICKET of the immigration appeal court 9am-10am Aldine House New Bailey St Salford

OCTOBER

Sunday 16

WORLD day of action against McDonald's and National Free Speech day details 071 837 7557

Simply the best!

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Socialist OUTLOOK

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- Rudy Narayan
- John Pilger
- Leon Rosselson
- Alan Simpson
- Socialist Campaign Group of Labour MPs
- Father Joe Taaffe
- Hilary Wainwright
- Frances Webber

Saturday
13th August

Assemble 12.00 noon at Imperial
War Museum (Lambeth North tube)

For more information and to sponsor the demonstration,
contact **The 25th Anniversary Committee** Tel: 071 609 1743:
BM T.O.M. London WC1N 3XX