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Socialist OUTLOOK

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targets women

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democracy or civil war?

FIGHTING RACISM
Building the March 19 demo

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ALL OUT TO
SMASH
RACISM!

Anti-racists build support for 19 March

By Jeff Lowe and Chris Brooks

TRADE unionists have been leading the united nationwide mobilisation for the upcoming march against racism in East London.

Organised by the TUC for 19 March, over one hundred thousand people are expected - making it the biggest expression of anti-racist sentiment in Britain since the 1970s.

Large amounts of publicity are available from regional TUC offices - their telephone numbers are listed under 'Saturday 19 March' on page 15 of this issue.

Reports from around the country give a flavour of the broad forces united by the demonstration, and the anti-racist struggles that will give the march its militancy.

East London

IN A SPATE of racist attacks in recent weeks, Bengali school-students have been attacked by gangs of 15 to 20 white youth. These are planned and organised attacks by thugs travelling around in a mini-bus who pile out when they find a victim.

These attacks have all taken place away from the electorally sensitive areas where the BNP is standing candidates. However on the Isle of Dogs, where the BNP won a council by-election, even the police admit that there has been a four-fold increase in racist attacks over the last year.

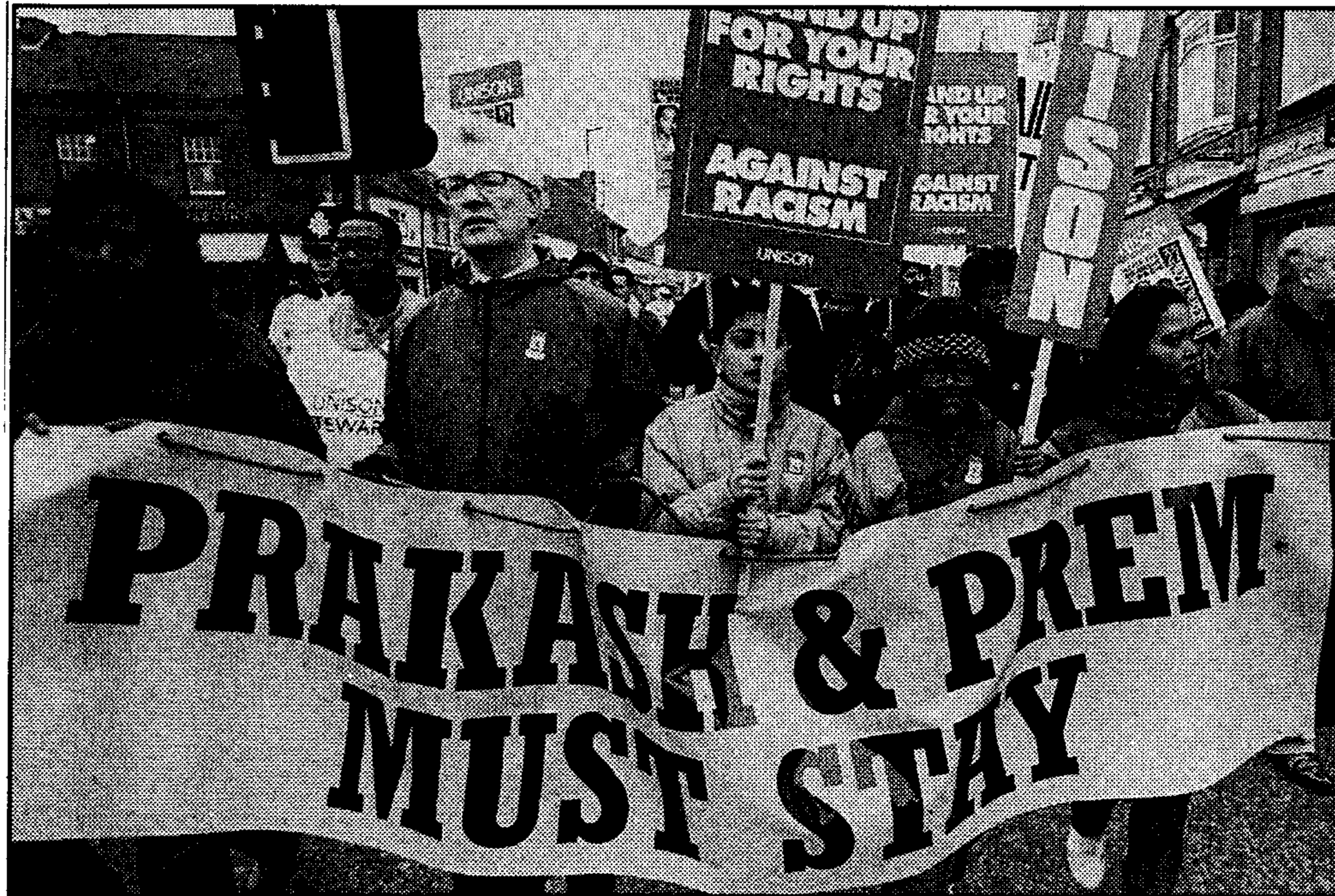
The BNP are trying to push the idea that Derek Beackon is a 'local councillor' who is available for 'local people' in an attempt to portray him as an upright citizen.

Sensitive

Whilst the TUC march goes through East London it is avoiding all 'sensitive' areas, with the sole exception of the place where Qaddus Ali was viciously attacked. Tower Hamlets Trades Council is building for the demo but, unfortunately, there is no organised campaign across the borough.

YRE called for a school students strike on 9 March to protest both against racist attacks and the way in which some school managements have portrayed these attacks as 'inter-school rivalry'.

In February 70 people took part in a petitioning campaign, organised by the local Labour Party, demanding that unused land belonging to the London Docklands Development Corpo-



ration be made available for social housing at affordable rents and that the government should make money available to build the houses.

The BNP are planning to stand candidates for the local elections in Millwall, Wapping, Stepney and Canning Town - the areas which will form the new Parliamentary constituency of Docklands and Stepney.

It is quite likely that if the council elections were held now the BNP would win all 3 seats but they can be beaten if there is an organised campaign for Labour. The Labour Party is campaigning on the Isle of Dogs on 10 April and needs active support. There is a strong possibility that one of the Labour candidates will be from the Bengali community.

Brighton

IN JANUARY, after the racist murder of Sudanese refugee Ali Ibrahim, 500 demonstrators took to the streets in Brighton. Money was raised for funeral expenses by public subscription after an appeal by Brighton Council's Equalities Committee.

Meanwhile the plight of homeless Sudanese refugees in Brighton is ignored by the Labour council. After the Millwall by-election the leader of the Labour group Steve Basam pandered to racist prejudices, saying that the Council's policy was 'Brighton homes for Brighton people'.

There will be coaches and a chartered train going up from Brighton to the TUC 'Unite Against Racism' demo on 19 March.

A meeting with George Silcott from the Winston Silcott Defense Campaign was re-

cently held by Brighton Young Labour. More than 20 people attended and will continue to take up issue of state racism.

Top fascist Tyndall, who lives locally in Hove, has attempted some 'respectable' meetings in Brighton and has been met with pickets by anti-fascists every time.

For example he tried to hold a meeting in the Royal Albion hotel on the same day as the demonstration against the murder of Ali Ibrahim, which was prevented from going ahead by the demonstrators.

Leeds

THE SOCIALIST Campaign Group agreed at its AGM to set up a meeting to try to bring together different anti-racist groups.

Their efforts were rewarded at a meeting on 15 February which brought together supporters of ARA, ANL, AFA and YRE as well as unaligned individuals.

Agreement was reached to leaflet together for the TUC demo. Leeds Trades Council is also actively building for the demo and has organised coaches.

There appears to be a desire to try to continue with the unity in action that has so far been achieved, though no formal agreements have yet been made.

Huddersfield

ANTI-FASCIST activists are campaigning for the sacking of a hospital porter, a BNP activist and member of UNISON, at Huddersfield Royal Infirmary. A campaign is being mounted throughout the local labour movement and demonstrations

are taking place every Saturday outside the hospital.

UNISON is building for the TUC demo. Material has been distributed to every office where UNISON members work and Kirklees Housing branch is paying for people to go. Huddersfield Trades Council is organising coaches.

West London

Coaches for the TUC demo are being organised by UNISON and Southall Monitoring Group. Ealing Trades Council is co-ordinating building the campaign.

Manchester

ARA held a rally on Friday 4 March. Speakers were Joan Ruddock MP, Alan Manning (N.W. TUC), Eddie Newman MEP and someone from the 'Checkpoint Charlie' campaign. This campaign is in response to a violent police raid on 'Checkpoint Charlie', a Black club, a few weeks ago.

Anti-racist activists are mobilising for the TUC demo and for the 'Communities of Resistance' conference on 9 April at the Pakistani Community Centre in Manchester.

This is a national conference bringing together campaigns involved in struggles against a wide range of racist activities by the state.

It is organised by the Rahman Family Campaign. Invited speakers include those facing deportation such as Bayo Omoyiola, Hemlata Patel and Prakash and Prem Chavrimootoo, as well as the Rahman family themselves.

Victims of police frame-ups will be represented by the Winston Silcott Defence Campaign and the M25 Three Campaign.

The Joy Gardner Campaign will take up legalised murder by the state, whilst the Steven Lawrence Family Campaign, Qaddus Ali Campaign and others will deal with racist murders and attacks on the streets.

Bristol

THE SOUTH West TUC has booked coaches for the 19 March demo and has sent out large amounts of publicity to local trade union branches, urging their support.

Midlands

A MOBILISING committee for 19 March has been set up in Leicester, with support from the Trades Council, YRE, Inter-Racial Solidarity, Young Labour and the University Labour Students. Unfortunately neither ARA nor ANL are participating, preferring to organise their own campaigns.

In Nottingham the Trades Council is very active in mobilising support for the TUC demo. The T&GWU and UNISON are organising support throughout the West Midlands.

Birmingham Trades Council, in conjunction with CARF and the IWA, is sending at least eight coaches. ARA is organising its own campaign.

There has been concerted anti-fascist leafletting in Kirkby in Ashfield, near Mansfield, where the BNP are trying to build a base amongst unemployed white youth hit by the run down of the mining industry.

In Coventry the BNP attacked 'Wedge' bookshop, following up their recent attack on 'Mushroom Books' in Nottingham. They have succeeded in driving socialists off a regular papers sales pitch and are now openly peddling their filth on the streets of Coventry in gangs of 30 or 40.

The National Front, meanwhile, is trying to buy a pub in Tipton, Staffordshire to be used as their Midlands' H.Q.

Sheffield

THE TRADES Council and ARA are the main forces involved in building for 19 March. Union branches throughout Yorkshire have been circulated and encouraged to mobilise. Sheffield Trades Council and UNISON are organising coaches.

The Trades Council has decided to resurrect its May Day march (on 30 April) under the theme of 'Sheffield Against Racism'.

Class struggle — the antidote to racism

THE TUC demonstration on March 19 will be a huge show of strength for opponents of racism, race violence and the fascist scum of the BNP.

Socialists will welcome the fact that at least on this one occasion all of the principal campaigning organisations fighting racism and fascism — the Anti Racist Alliance, the Anti Nazi League and Youth Against Racism in Europe — will be participating in a single event, alongside much wider support from the trade union and labour movement.

This very fact will increase the aspirations among many for more initiatives that unite rather than dividing the various active anti-racist forces, at local level as well as one-off national demonstrations.

Others, particularly Labour Party activists, may feel inspired to demand a much more aggressive Labour profile against racism. It is conspicuous that it has been TGWU leader Bill Morris rather than Labour's Tony Blair, who has supported the struggle to close down the Campsfield detention centre.

Local campaigns

The demonstration will underline the importance of building local campaigns against BNP candidates wherever they run on their nazi ticket in May's council elections or in June's European elections.

But the scale and strength of the turnout from the length and breadth of the country on March 19 should also make us take stock of the much more fundamental political problems within the labour movement which have fuelled the rise of racism and hampered the fight against race violence.

As the 1930s showed, the breeding grounds of racist prejudice and fascist currents are recession, depression, frustration and despair. Fifteen years of brutal Tory rule has certainly created these conditions, especially in the crumbling inner cities and economic backwaters of a collapsing economy.

Dumped

Millions of youth and adult workers have been dumped onto the scrapheap, with no future, no hope, and no sign that anyone cares.

Instead of tapping this vast pool of anger and alienated energy, the TUC and

Labour leaders have turned away, dropping any hint of radical policies, and sucking up to the middle class.

The most demoralising factor for sections of the working class has been the abject failure of the labour movement to learn the lessons of the 1930s. Like their ignominious predecessors, they have refused to lead any concerted opposition to the Tory offensive, even as jobs and crucial public services have been destroyed.

Labour councils ten years ago ran up the white flag, surrendering to Tory cutbacks under the ludicrous 'dented shield' policy of implementing 'caring cuts': the result has been a huge crisis in housing, social services and education.

Queues

The queue for jobs and housing, the brutal squeeze on benefits and the austerity regime in schools create the material conditions for racial tensions. Victims of the system search round for someone to blame for their suffering, and too often simplistic racist prejudices fill the vacuum left by a prostrate Labour leadership.

Black workers in public services suffer a double squeeze. Thousands face attacks on their jobs and conditions, while others, such as front line nurses and NHS staff, are obliged to suffer the wrath of racist



racism has in practice left one section of workers after another — steelworkers, printworkers, rail workers, dockers, miners — isolated in the teeth of the Tory offensive. The repeated defeats and betrayals have reduced Britain to the lowest-ever level of strikes, with the NHS and welfare state under renewed attack, and union strength reduced from 51% of the workforce to just 38%.

With an opposition unwilling to oppose, and union leaders too scared to

met by determined union resistance that will link up with a groundswell of public support. Campaigns and mass action must oppose privatisation in British Rail and the civil service, and defend the welfare state.

Fight on

Delegations returning from the March 19 demonstration must also carry forward the fight against racism — building support for the campaign to close Campsfield, building local campaigns and initiatives which aim to link the various anti-racist organisations, building support and solidarity for black communities defending themselves against racist attack, and campaigning to expose the nazi politics of BNP candidates.

But it's not enough just to build opposition: millions of alienated and downtrodden working class people need to be offered something positive to fight for.

The struggle must be stepped up in the Labour Party and the unions for radical socialist policies that can unite opposition to the Tories and the fascists, and offer a means to mobilise the widest sections of the working class to get rid of this vicious government and the system it represents.

It's not enough just to oppose racism: millions of alienated and downtrodden working class people must be offered something positive to fight for.

white patients or relatives fuming at the failings of an under-funded service.

For over ten years, TUC unions have embraced the defeatist politics of 'new realism', abandoning any concept of collective mass action to defend jobs or wages. A symptom of this political collapse was the scandalous March 3 invitation to Treasury minister Stephen Dorrell to lecture a TUC conference on the need for a long-term wage freeze.

The same TUC which today correctly calls on workers to rally together against

fight, workforces have been decimated and working class communities torn apart by the brutal forces of Tory market economics. The fascists have been eager to exploit this situation.

But there is an alternative. Racial barriers can be broken down in class struggle against the common enemy.

Mounting anger among public sector workers over the Tory pay freeze must be turned into synchronised action: opposition to massive NHS cuts in London, Birmingham and other big cities must be

Week 3 of asylum seekers' Hunger Strike

by Bill MacKeith,
President Oxford
Trades Union
Council

DURING January the British government held six hundred people under the Immigration Act.

Most of them are asylum seekers. Hunger strikes by over 30 Algerians have drawn attention to their demands, and many of them have now been released. Others remain in custody.

At Pentonville 13 Algerians

were released after 12 days' hunger strike, the last two days without water. At Haslor immigration prison near Portsmouth, asylum seekers of other nationalities have joined 12 Algerians on hunger strike since 15 February.

Two days later at the new 220 place Campsfield immigration 'detention centre' near Oxford, 10 Algerians went on hunger strike (no solids, sugarless fluids at night only).

A lone woman hunger striker was transferred to Holloway Prison then released after 12 days. On March 4 the hunger strikers were moved to Stockton Hall private psychiat-

ric secure unit near York. After a small demonstration and the intervention of local MP Hugh Bailey they have ended the hunger strike and are being released.

All have been held without charge or trial at the whim of all-powerful unaccountable immigration officers without legal time limit — treated worse than 'criminals'.

Campsfield 'Immigration Detention Centre' is by the airport at Kidlington north of Oxford. It opened on 29 November 1993 and is run for profit by Group 4.

Over a thousand Oxford people have signed a petition

to the Home Office calling for Campsfield to be shut. Oxford City Council has called for the hunger strikers to be released and next month will debate a motion calling for the prison to be shut.

Over 100 Oxford university college heads, professors and other academics have now signed the letter to the prime minister calling for the release of asylum seekers published in *The Guardian* on 3 March.

The Campaign To Close Campsfield launched by Oxford Against Racism and Fascism and Oxford Trades Council is backed by local la-

bour movement and student bodies, youth groups and individuals. It is backed by national bodies such as the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants and the National Union of Refugee Organisations.

Raise the demand to 'Close Campsfield now, Stop the Detentions' in local and national organisations. Join the demo outside Campsfield gates at 2pm on Saturday 26 March (and every last Saturday).

Send donations to Campaign To Close Campsfield, c/o 111 Magdalen Rd, Oxford. Tel: 0865 724452.

EDITORIAL

How much longer do we tolerate mass murder?

By Paul Walker

A MEDIA blitz accompanied the showing of John Pilger's film 'Death of a Nation - the East Timor Conspiracy'. A telephone number shown at the conclusion of the programme led to a peak of 4,000 calls per minute at half past midnight.

It is estimated that over 100,000 people picked up a phone in reaction to the film in which the viewing public saw at first hand British complicity in the Timorese slaughter.

The response of the Government - total silence for a day and then limp excuses. Hurd, Chalker and the rest were in retreat for 48 hours, using diplomat speak to cover for the exposure of good old fashioned naked imperialist interest.

Conspiracy of silence

The British ruling class are hoping that the conspiracy of silence around the genocide in East Timor will be maintained and that the Pergau Dam scandal will have covered their tracks on their support for mass murder, repression torture and systematic sexual abuse of the East Timorese population.

There is an opportunity for socialists and their allies to build a broad based campaign to stop the sale of Hawks and thus help the East Timorese struggle for self-determination.

The importance of this issue should not be underestimated. East Asia is the only dynamic sector of a recessionary world economy. There is a fierce scramble for Asian markets - both military and civil. The end of the Cold War and the economic growth in the region has opened up both a new period of economic expansion and regional military instability as the old strategic alliances crumble and new contradictions open up.

Indonesia is at the centre of these developments. The British ruling class' stated ambition is to be the number one trading partner for Indonesia and its 180 million inhabitants. What price

then, 200,000 East Timorese murdered and 600,000 living in an island concentration camp?

Nobody should be under any illusions about the nature of events in East Asia. With expanding markets and imperialist stampede for those markets comes increased regional military budgets.

Every authoritative commentator - bourgeois, liberal, social democratic or Marxist is saying the same thing - there is a massive arms race under way in Asia, fuelled by the major arms suppliers - USA, Britain, Germany, China and Russia.

At the same time the recent

discovery of significant oil reserves in the South China Sea has added a qualitative new turn to the situation. Six countries, China, Taiwan and Vietnam included are making a claim to these reserves. There can be no doubt in which direction this is all leading - inter-imperialist conflict and war.

This explains why every medium size and major nation in the region is on a massive arms procurement drive. This is the real significance of the Malaysian deal and the sale of Hawks to Indonesia.

The cost to the workers and peasants of the region today is

the lack of any social programmes in their interests and the deepening on the ongoing attack on the growing workers organisations. If the whole arms race is not stopped, workers and peasants will pay with their lives on battlefields in the cause of imperialist war.

All socialists must be at the centre of a campaign to stop this war drive. It is possible to slow it at what is one weak link - that of the Indonesian occupation of East Timor.

After almost two decades of repression the East Timorese will not give in. Being bombed and strafed by British made

Hawks has only re-inforced their resolve to resist. It is our duty to aid them in their struggle. The victory of the East Timorese revolution for self determination will be a victory for our class against the interests of British and US imperialism.

April sees the launch of a European wide campaign to stop military supplies to Indonesia and the British left has a crucial role to play in this campaign.

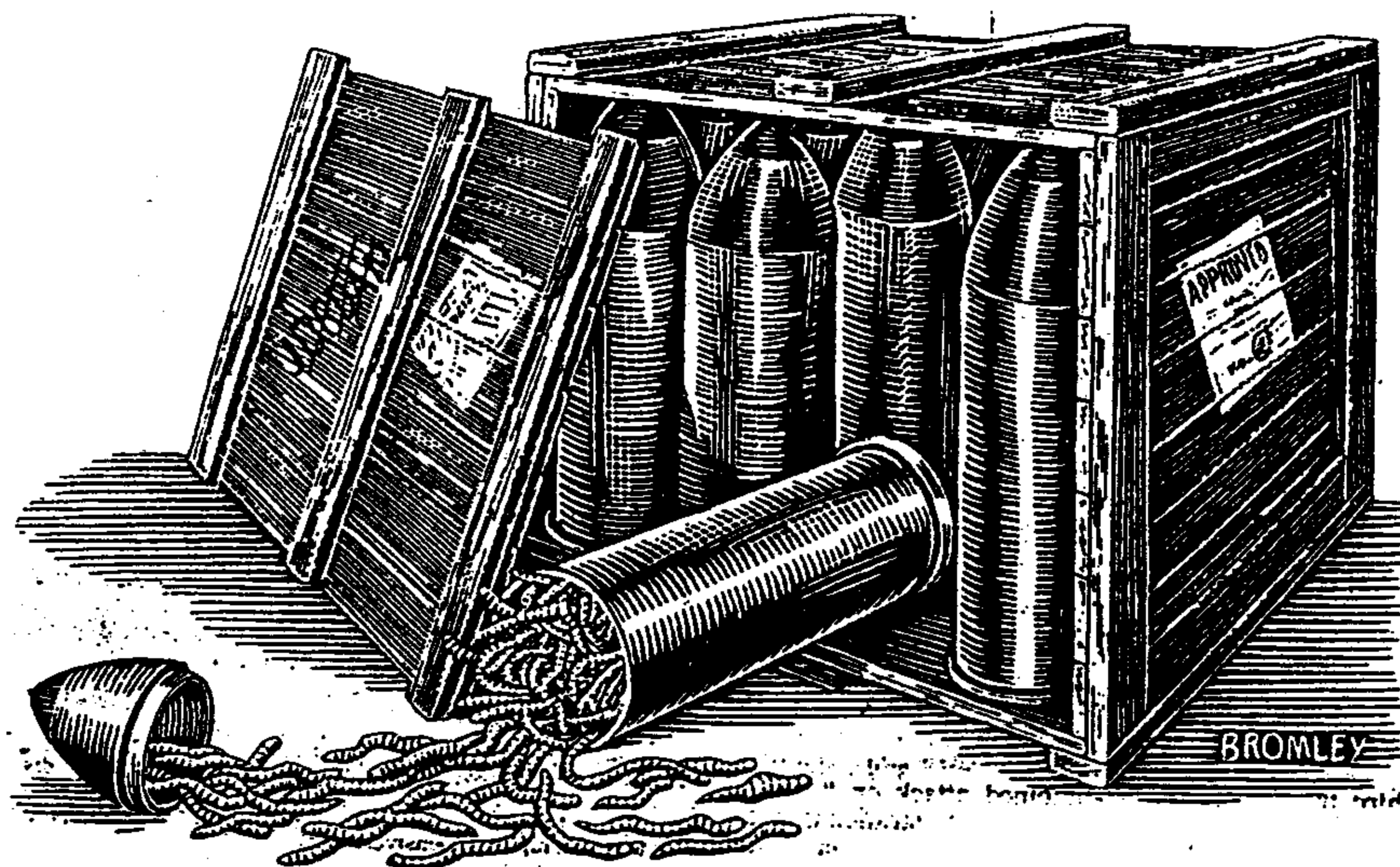
Join the Campaign Against Arms Trade's broad based campaign 'Together We Can Stop the Hawks', which aims to stop all future delivery of Hawks to Indonesia and impose a complete military embargo.

Win labour movement organisations to sponsor the campaign - invite a speaker from the campaign to your trade union student union or Labour Party branch.

If there is a local CND or peace group get them to sponsor the campaign and to invite a speaker.

Sponsor models resolutions, where appropriate, calling for a military embargo on Indonesia.

Contact CAAT, 11 Goodwin St, Finsbury Park, London, N4 3HQ Tel: 071 281 0297.



WORLD NEWS

Support grows for new Tuzla workers' convoy

By Eve Turner

THE THIRD meeting of International Workers' Aid for Bosnia (IWA) in Amsterdam on 26-27 February clearly showed the growing support and international strength of the campaign, with representatives from groups in France, Germany, Sweden, UK, Holland, Belgium and Denmark.

A welcome development was the presence of two representatives of *Paz Ahora* (Peace Now) from Spain, who have themselves attempted to get a convoy into Tuzla but without success. If *Paz Ahora* does join with IWA they will send 9 lorries, with 25 tons of aid on each, to Split at the end of March.

With only 4 weeks to go before the convoy sets off to rendezvous in Split on the 7 April much of the weekend was spent in sorting out the final arrangements.

An estimated 15 lorries will make the journey to Split where they will be unloaded into warehouses and onto 6 specially purchased ex-GDR army trucks, for their final journey to Tuzla.

These trucks, bought by the Danish, Swedish and German Workers' Aid groups are vital to ensure the safety of the drivers and aid on the extremely poor and dangerous roads between Split and Tuzla.

It is envisaged that these trucks will, war conditions permitting, make regular trips to and from Tuzla, providing a

regular flow of food supplies and strengthening the relationship between the workers and people of Tuzla and International Workers' Aid.

All the arrangements for the arrival of the convoy and the transport on to Tuzla are to be coordinated by Mick (Britain) and Ulrik (Denmark) who will staff the soon to be opened International H.Q. in Split.

Discussions have been taking place, despite considerable communication difficulties, with the Tuzla Miners Union to ask that they take responsibility for the equal distribution of aid in the city. One of the lessons learned by the first successful convoy to Tuzla was the need to make sure the aid is both practically and culturally suitable - baked beans are not part of the staple diet of Bosnia.

That is why a 'bread programme' had been launched which aimed to provide the ingredients for bread to be made in the municipal bakeries.

However due to lack of fuel the miners will instead distribute this to individual families to

make the bread in their own homes.

Unlike the first convoy, each Workers' Aid group will be responsible for campaigning in its own country and in towns on route, where no campaign exists.

An extraordinary amount of work and international cooperation has gone into the planning of this convoy.

Countless hours spent raising money to buy trucks and aid, numerous negotiations with officials to negotiate safe passage, detailed consideration of the advantages and disadvantages of different routes, planning the bread programme and, most importantly, discussing and planning the details with the unions in Tuzla.

■ It's not too late to get involved in the campaign. For details of your local group and/or where to send donations contact the National Office at 12-14 Thornton Street, London SW9 0VL. Tel/fax 071 978 8622.

Just Out!
New and updated edition of
ARMAGEDDON IN EUROPE
Why we defend multi-ethnic Bosnia

By Geoff Ryan, 48pp

Send £2.10p (inc p&p) to Socialist Outlook, PO Box 1109, London N4 2UU

Eastleigh rail workers fight

By Paul Wozny

Eastleigh, Hampshire, shot to prominence with the death of MP Steven Milligan.

But local rail workers are also determined to draw attention to their fight for jobs. British Rail plans to close its depot at Eastleigh. Over 500 jobs could be lost, hundreds more transferred to Portsmouth, Bournemouth and Basingstoke depots.

Southampton/Eastleigh Airport, adjacent to the Rail Depot, is undergoing a major expansion. BR's land will shoot up in value.

Railworkers aim to make Rail Privatisation and key issues of Eastleigh depot key issues in the by-election.

Guy's battle rekindles NHS fight

By Terry Smith

VIRGINIA Bottomley's decision to close London's world-famous Guy's Hospital through a "merger" with St Thomas's has been met by an immediate mass campaign.

A broad coalition of local organisations headed by the Community Health Council, and including the Guy's UNISON Branch, has already begun petitioning, posters and a round of stormy, packed public meetings to fight the closure.

Even Southwark's union-busting Labour council appears willing to back the campaign, as does Bermondsey's Liberal Democrat MP Simon Hughes, whose speeches call for links with the unions and a policy of

occupation to defend the hospital against closure.

Predictably it is the Labour Party, always known for its ability not so much to look a gift horse in the mouth as to shoot it in the leg, that is lagging behind in the fight, with neighbouring Vauxhall MP Kate Hoey leading her own campaign of radio interviews and letters to newspapers in support of the closure!

UNISON's London head of health also displayed typical incompetence by failing even to circulate UNISON health branches to publicise the first big union demonstration in defence of Guy's, leaving the field clear for Socialist Worker posters and banners.

Despite these problems, the fight for Guy's, keying in to a strong local working class



population, has tremendous potential for regenerating the struggle for London's hospitals, which had fallen back slightly in the aftermath of Bottomley's decision to close Bart's and her retreat from closure of UCH.

With Hammersmith Hospital likely to be the next announced

for the chop, and other local hospitals under fire in outer London, the scene is set for high-profile struggles on the NHS in the run-up to the local elections in May.

■ Details on the Guy's campaign from the CHC on 071-703-9498.

Now teachers face Section 11 jobs axe

by Emma Teitelbaum

THOUSANDS of teachers' jobs are threatened by a government proposal to cut Section 11 funding to local authorities by about 25%. This will particularly hit schools in poorer multi-ethnic communities.

The bulk of Section 11 funding is provided to local authorities by the Home Office, in order to make special provision for ethnic minorities; 90% is spent on the education of bilingual pupils, particularly the teaching of English as a second language.

Section 11 teaching provides these pupils with the essential access to the National Curriculum. There are currently some 10,000 teachers in England and Wales whose jobs are funded under Section 11.

Officially, only children whose families are from the Commonwealth are funded under section 11. Thus, this money can provide English teaching for Turkish speakers from Cyprus, but not those from Turkey. Nor are refugee children covered by Section 11 provision.

In fact, most schools have been sharing these meagre resources with other, less 'lucky' communities whose country was not part of the British Empire. This practice has resulted from grassroots struggle to include all the children who need the service. The NUT recently took up this struggle.

In November 1992, the Home Office announced its intention to cut and cash limit this funding. The Home Office anticipated the cuts in the Section 11 programme to be 18% in 1994/5 and 25% in 1995/6. In

many areas, however, the cuts will be more severe, with many areas expecting cuts of 25% for 1994/5. Many teachers face compulsory redundancy; in Tower Hamlets, 150 Section 11 teachers are under threat and the local NUT is balloting for a proposed half-day strike on 15 May.

The attack on Section 11 funding is a racist policy, but although the first victims of these cuts will be the minority communities, this attack will affect the whole community. In the first place, the status of those children who need this programme as second-class pupils will be reinforced, and their education will suffer. But all teachers and all pupils are to suffer from this further cut in those essential resources. Resources in multi-ethnic schools will have to stretch even further. This of course, will influence the Tories league tables and tests results.

This is another struggle which we can win. We need to learn from the successful campaign held by teachers and parents, against the Tories' National Tests.

The campaign, and especially the parental support, pushed NUT to support a continuing boycott of the SATS and led to John Patten's humiliating climb-down.

What can we do? Local campaigns, involving parents and other residents, should be established to insist on adequate funding for their schools.

The NUT and local campaigns should support the national conference on Section 11 funding on 12 March in Birmingham.

Only such a mass campaign can force the government to return these essential resources to the schools.

Birmingham NATFHE faces victimisation

by Bob Smith

ON TUESDAY 1 March NATFHE lecturers at Handsworth Technical College, Birmingham took industrial action to defend their employment contracts.

NATFHE has 48,000 members and is resisting the imposition of 'more flexible' contracts which mean cuts in wages, holiday pay and benefits as well as longer hours, extended working days and annually renewable contracts.

Unfortunately NATFHE have backed off from calling national industrial action under threat from Tory trade union laws.

Lord Justice Bingham, Master of the Rolls, upheld that, despite the democratic paper ballot, action was illegal because the names and address of members were not submitted to college management.

Only at Handsworth, South-

wark and Tower Hamlets was the High Court ruling defied, by about 100 lecturers. Disciplinary action (bills for damages and final written warnings) is threatened and sackings are now possible in Birmingham.

NATFHE will not take action against its defiant members but has given no assurances to defend them. Handsworth College Principal Webb alleges lecturers had 'technically dismissed themselves'.

Defiant

Birmingham NATFHE is defiant and says it will defend its comrades. Mick Barr, Birmingham NATFHE branch chair told Birmingham Trades Council

"The 51 of our members locked out after our day of action have now been re-instated but may face further discipline. Anger and frustration at the trade union legislation led us to take action to defend jobs and conditions. The High Court ruling

means it is now virtually impossible to take official action."

Effective trade unionism is impossible under Tory trade union laws and any instant response to sackings would be impossible within the law.

Geoff Woolf, NATFHE General Secretary said 'I do understand the anger without condoning the action'. Rather feebly the only resistance he is now planning is to call on the TUC and civil liberties organisations to give their support.

Birmingham Trades Council gave assurances that it would back any further action by NATFHE to defend its members interests.

■ Messages of support should be sent to NATFHE office, Handsworth Technical College, Soho Road, Birmingham or telephone 021 666 7554, where there is a 24 hour answerphone service.'

NUT hit by NATFHE ruling

By a Sandwell teacher

Following the injunction and court ruling against the NATFHE national strike, the NUT has called off action in the Sandwell borough.

Without even waiting to see if there would be a similar injunction against the NUT's Sandwell division, the proposed strike action against job losses of at least 50 teachers has been postponed.

However, while the TUC along with NUT and NATFHE leadership see ways of challenging the court decision, and a rebalot of Sandwell is being contemplated, waves of

teachers are receiving redundancy notices, with no legal means to defend themselves.

The court ruling springs from the latest anti-trade union laws of last year, which require unions to inform management of the details of members being balloted.

Impossible barrier

Providing accurate names and addresses of members to employers is not only a further barrier and time delay to further action, but probably impossible, under the discredited new national membership scheme.

On top of this, NUT rules stipulate that a two-thirds majority of the total membership must be able to vote in order to

receive strike pay. Also ballot papers have to be sent to members' home addresses and be counted by the Electoral Reform Society.

It was the same Electoral Reform Society that refused to endorse the 70% majority for action, citing illegality.

While the bureaucratic nightmare has been going on teachers have been promised redundancy, huge increases in class sizes, and re-applying for their own jobs but with less pay and promotion.

Sandwell has the money to avoid the cuts. Teachers are willing to fight to get that money.

All that is lacking is the will to fight from the NUT leadership.

HOME NEWS

Age of consent: Back to Basics bites back!

**By Peter Purton,
Labour Campaign
for Lesbian and
Gay Rights**

THE DEFEAT of the cross-party amendment to equalise the gay male age of consent was a victory for Back to Basics and a setback for the lesbian and gay community.

Although the extreme right of the Tory Party, the Ulster Unionists and a tiny handful of unforgivable Labour MPs were opposed even to lowering the limit to 18, and have made much noise of their annoyance, the result is not a compromise but a defeat.

There is fury among lesbians and gay men, illustrated by the unprecedented attempt to storm parliament by thousands of outraged lesbian and gay rights demonstrators when the outcome was announced. They understood that you cannot 'compromise' on equality.

The votes of 39 Labour MPs

brought about the defeat of '16'. Although 212 voted in favour, the whole of Stonewall's strategy must have been based on a naive estimation of total support from the PLP.

There is a severe anti-Labour backlash being orchestrated by both leftists and liberals in the community, which will benefit only the Liberal Democrats.

Key vote

Yet the Labour Campaign for Lesbian and Gay Rights knew well that winning the whole Parliamentary Labour Party to vote for the position of equality won at five Labour conferences since 1985 was not something which could be achieved in a couple of weeks of letter writing.

There were severe weaknesses in the campaign. Although the lobbying was organised with great professional expertise by the Stonewall Group, there was no attempt to mobilise the lesbian and gay community as a whole in public activity which could



The energy and enthusiasm of the Section 28 campaign is needed today

have brought massive pressure to bear on MPs as there was during the campaign against Section 28 five years ago.

There was no time to mobilise through the labour movement. The public activity which did take place were narrowly targeted at the gay male 'scene' in London. So lesbians, black people, and the whole wider movement which supports equality was left out of the picture, reduced to sending letters to MPs whose minds, in most cases, were already made up.

Anger

There will be anger in the labour movement over the result. This anger must be channelled positively. Socialists can get their organisations to discuss the issues of lesbian and

gay equality, to invite speakers, to affiliate to LCLGR, and support the LCLGR model resolution for this year's Labour Party conference.

They can also take up other current attacks on the lesbian and gay community by supporting the Jane Brown Defence Campaign.

We may have lost this vote, in itself not surprising given the odds in the House of Commons, but the issue will not go away and if the labour movement shows a little more interest in lesbian and gay equality, lesbians and gays might show a little more support in return!

■ For speakers and information write to LCLGR at PO Box 306, London, N5 or telephone 081-574 2420.

Scargill slams sabotage

OVER 300 people marched through Maesteg, South Wales on Saturday 5th March to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the start of the miners' strike.

This was an impressive turn-out since the march was organised at only two weeks notice.

Even more people packed a local hall to hear Arthur Scargill attack Neil Kinnock and Kim Howells for their sabotage of the miners' struggle.

Scargill argued that the Trade Union and Labour leaders should have called for national strike action to support the miners, a call which would have met with massive support.

He also criticised those who want to remove Clause 4 from the Labour Party Constitution as being guilty of acting against the interests of the party.

Other speakers at the rally included Tyrone Sullivan and Phil White from Tower Lodge NUM, mayors from 2 South Wales towns and Vi John for the Campaign Against Open-cast Mining, which links support for the NUM to opposition to destruction of the countryside.

There were also anti-fascist speakers. The BNP is making serious efforts to build a base in some of the former coal-fields.

Middlebrook Mushroom struggle wound up

By Keith Sinclair

The Middlebrook Mushroom dispute is over. Meeting on Thursday 24 February the majority of sacked women workers voted to accept the offer of a total of £50,000 'compensation' from Booker plc, the parent company of Middlebrooks.

It is a tragic and entirely avoidable end to a bitter dispute that was fought bravely by the 89 sacked mushroom pickers from Whitely Bridge, near Selby. The dispute joins the list of struggles, such as Burnsalls and Timex, that have been lost when they could have been won.

The women have waged a vigorous campaign throughout the labour movement to mobilise support.

Pickets have been organised, demonstrations held, thousands of workers have heard the sacked pickers put the case for their reinstatement by the giant Booker empire. The women have waged an energetic campaign that gained respect from all who met them.

What was lacking however was a fighting and therefore potentially winning strategy from the leadership of the Transport and General Workers Union.

In the summer of 1993, serious attempts were made to prevent the scab coach from entering on Saturday mornings. Pickets of up to 3 - 400 fought with the police to stop the scabs. However brave the women and other pickets were, the required numbers were never really there. This was due to the total failing of the TGWU to mobilise for the mass pickets.

Socialist Outlook is in favour of open defiance of the anti-union laws and believes that the TGWU should have called for mass mobilisations. But the mobilisations were left to the women, various left wing trades councils and union branches plus members of different far left groups.

Mass pickets

The issue of mass pickets was very important in this dispute. The geographical location of the farm - down a narrow country lane - meant that a thousand strong picket would have been able to block the scabs and bring victory.

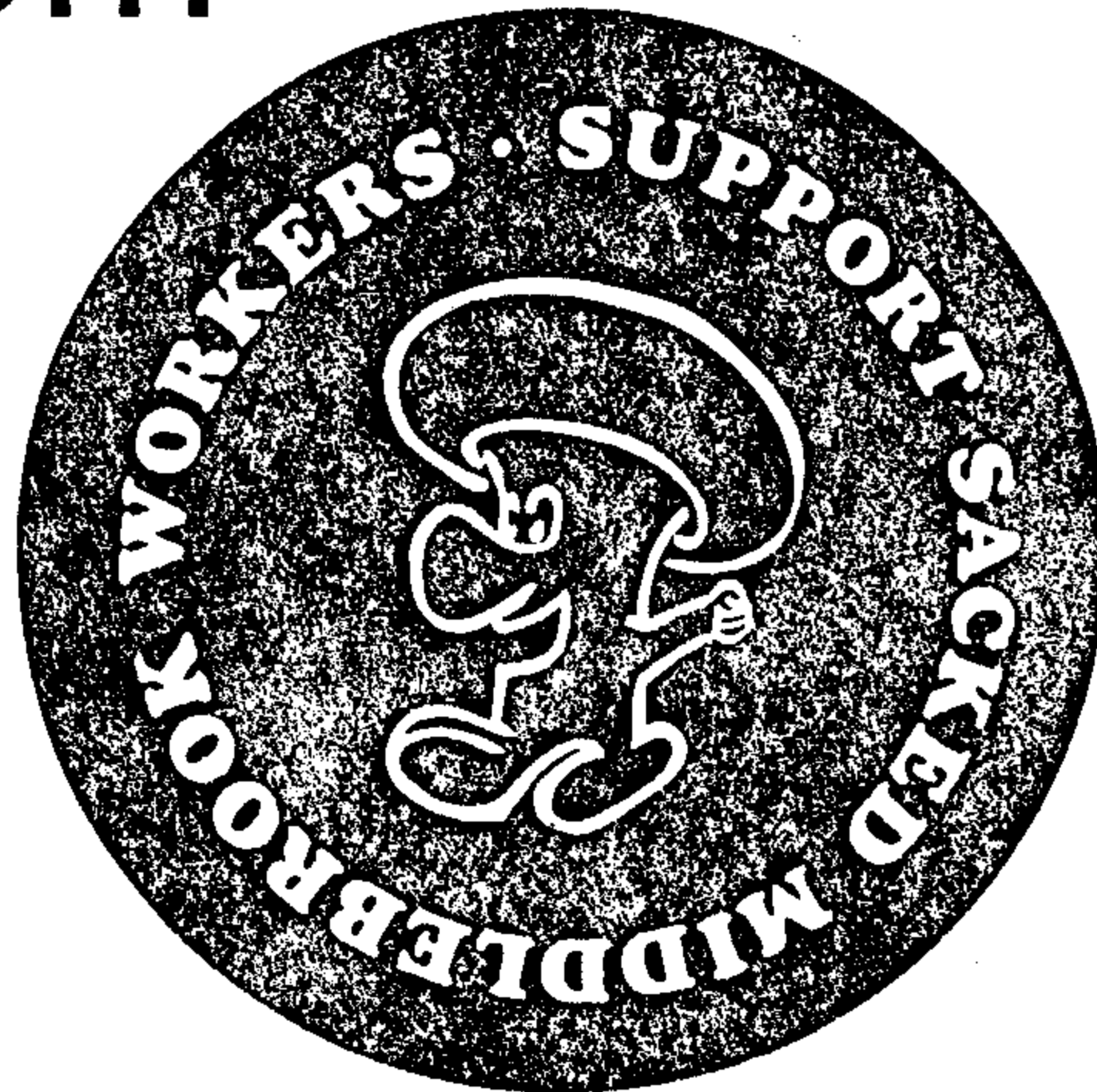
The lessons of the defeat are clear but unfortunately not new. The anti-union laws will be used against workers in dispute, they need to be defied by mass mobilisations.

A dispute such as Middlebrooks shows the urgent need for a rank and file organisa-

tion within the Transport and General Workers Union. There was no national open left organisation that the women could turn to when they needed to go beyond the official line.

Finally, we have seen once again the tremendous capacity of 'ordinary' women trade union

members to mobilise in defence of their interests.



Telecom strike ballot

By a BT worker

THE NATIONAL Communications Union's Telecommunications Industry Committee (TIC) is balloting its 25,000 London engineering members for one day strike action over BT's introduction of 150 outside contractors into the local network.

Last year the union concluded a redeployment agreement with BT which resulted in 1,100 London staff being declared surplus.

BT has refused to transfer most of these staff into shortage areas on the local network,

whilst upping its requirement for 'warm bodies' doing this work, thus 'justifying' its requirements for contractors.

Written into this agreement was a company commitment to 'consider' replacing contractors with direct labour.

Management has predictably not honoured this clause, going in the opposite direction.

Contracted out

This is in line with the real policy of cutting direct labour staff to around 100,000 by 1997, replacing them with cheaper, more flexible contract workers.

The TIC has set the strike for 18th April: balloting opens on 21st March.

branches are organising mass meetings and are demanding a special edition of the union's journal.

Campaign

We will be approaching NCU sponsored MPs and the Labour Party generally to join a campaign against this scandal of the massively profitable BT trying to substitute a cheap and casualised workforce for direct labour.

Many London branches believe one day of strike action will not be enough, given the importance of the issues.

They will, nevertheless, be fighting for the maximum 'Yes' vote and turn-out on the day as a springboard to further action.

Revival of military industrial lobby as rebels released

Yeltsin's Russia: from a tilt to a lurch

RUSSIA'S hard-drinking president Boris Yeltsin must have thought he was hallucinating when he saw his defeated opponents Alexander Rutskoi and Ruslan Khasbulatov walk free from Moscow's Lefortovo jail at the end of February, reports COLIN MEADE.

RUTSKOI and Khasbulatov were the leaders of the disobedient majority of the Parliament in its former incarnation, dissolved by Yeltsin and dispersed under a hail of gunfire last October.

After this blow for democracy, Yeltsin expected new elections to produce a docile legislature.

As a second line of defence, Yeltsin organised a plebiscite to grant himself as president sweeping powers of rule by decree and veto.

Release

In the event the elections produced a parliament one of whose first acts was to order the release of Rutskoi and Khasbulatov along with the authors of the 1991 coup attempt against Mikhail Gorbachev.

Supporters of the release of Rutskoi and co. were able to line up the two thirds majority needed to override Yeltsin's veto and the president's attempts to get the prosecutor general to block the move came to naught.

Recent results in the prolonged series of regional elections now underway have also brought no comfort for Yeltsin, with big victories for former Communists in a number of industrial areas.

Since coming to power in August 1991, Yeltsin has balanced between the so-called Atlanticists, who want drastic free



"Recent results in the prolonged series of regional elections now underway have also brought no comfort for Yeltsin, with big victories for former Communists in a number of industrial areas"

market reforms and a strict alignment with the west on foreign policy, and the nationalist-minded pan-Slav military industrial lobby (MIL).

Real power

A nod towards the Atlanticists would keep the West happy, but there was always an accompanying wink towards the real powers that be.

Yeltsin kept aloof from the Atlanticist camp in the election campaign and its leading lights such as Yegor Gaidar and Boris Fedorov have left his new post-election government.

Fedorov has signalled his assessment of his side's prospects by leaving Russia for a highly

paid job in an international agency.

Nonetheless, despite what is looking more like a lurch than a tilt towards the MIL, strong factions in the western establishments are maintaining their support for the Russian president.

Commentators are urging

policy-makers to show 'understanding' for the need to respond to Russian nationalist sentiment.

Mole unmasked

However, the recent unmasking of Russia's super-mole in the CIA, Aldrich Ames, may signal the opening of a campaign to undermine Clinton's pro-Yeltsin policy by elements of the US establishment nostalgic for the halcyon days of the Cold War.

Despite the jostling for position at the top there is a considerable degree of consensus emerging between Yeltsin's government and the majority in the two houses of parliament.

Virtually everyone who matters in Moscow now talks stridently about the need to defend Russia's interests and embattled Russian minorities in the 'near abroad' - the former Soviet Union and its erstwhile sphere of influence.

All are broadly in favour of sustaining the military industrial complex and keeping national control of the country's massive raw material wealth.

Close contacts

Yeltsin's prime minister Viktor Chernomyrdin maintains close contacts with leaders of the industrial and agricultural lobbies.

The largest parties/blocs in the lower house, the State Duma, are: Gaidar's Russia's Choice and an unstable array of 'pro-reform' factions headed by ambitious individuals, Zhirinovsky's far right National Liberal Party, and the Communist Party and its close ally the Agrarians.

The upper house, the Council of the Federation, is dominated by regional officials, many of them Yeltsin appointees, and is also said to contain a significant number of businessmen.

The chair of the State Duma,

Ivan Rybkin is a representative of the collective farm lobby and his counterpart in the upper house, Shumeiko of big industry.

Assuming there are no further coup attempts, Russian politics will in the immediate future be dominated by the run up to the presidential elections due in 1996. Gaidar, Rutskoi, Zhirinovsky, Chernomyrdin (with Yeltsin's backing?) and many more besides all have at least one eye on the prize.

Zhirinovsky, unlike other anti-Yeltsin politicians, supported the strengthening of presidential powers, hoping one day to exercise them himself.

Protest vote

His strong showing in the elections was partly due to the fact that Rutskoi was in jail and other parties that could have captured the protest vote were banned.

All other parties in the new parliament have been refusing to support his nominees for important committee posts. But, even if he is not about to seize power, Zhirinovsky has a real social base and a programme adapted to growing exasperation with the lack of effective decision making at the centre.

The main reasons given in Russian surveys for supporting Zhirinovsky are the need for a restoration of discipline, strong state controls and the elimination of the threat of anarchy.

At the same time, he denounces both the new Pro-western rich and the old Communist nomenclature, making the telling point that the two poles are not so far apart as they might want to appear.

Zhirinovsky's success is thus a result of the failure of pro-democratic forces in Russia to find ways of challenging the old order that appeal to the interests of the Russian people and its working class.

"Zhirinovsky's success is a result of the failure of pro-democratic forces in Russia to find ways of challenging the old order that appeal to the interests of the Russian people and its working class"



Zhirinovsky's plan for dictatorial capitalist restoration will not end poverty or shortages

WORLD NEWS



Hard-right Home Secretary Howard conspires with sexist Bible-basher Selwyn-Gummer to 'bring back' poverty and strengthen the decomposing patriarchal family system

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

by Gill Lee

JOHN MAJOR's campaign of 'Back to Basics' in British standards of morality and financial probity has been exposed as a hypocritical sham which has rocked the Tory's increasingly weak government. But current 'Back to Basics' Tory policies represent a massive attack on the working class and women in particular.

The fathering of illegitimate children by Tory MPs became a matter for public scandal and outrage because of the explicitly moral nature of the campaign launched by the Tories at their annual conference last October, a campaign aimed in particular at single mothers.

'Back to Basics' began as a clarion call from the right of the Tory Party. While right wingers like Education Secretary John Patten had long been vocal on morality, for example warning against the loss of a belief in sin, defeat over Maastricht prompted the Tory right into an explicit moral campaign.

In the run up to Conservative Party Conference in October, ministers such as Treasury Chief Secretary Michael Portillo, Welsh Secretary John Redwood and Social Security Minister Peter Lilley made a series of speeches calling for a mixture of greater self-reliance, less dependency, more selective welfare benefits and the like.

The problems of the British economy were to be dealt with by cutting taxes and slashing the welfare state. Single mothers became a particular target of Conservative abuse, blamed in a series of speeches for an increase in juvenile crime, falling educational standards and living off the welfare state.

'Back to Basics' was not just a farce in which an ideological attack launched on single mothers and absent fathers collapsed in the popular perception that 'Ministers appeared to have been fathering more children in secret love nests than the medieval popes', as the Guardian put it.

'Back to Basics' was a desperate at-

Major's 'basics' attack women

tempt by a desperate government to paper over fundamental problems for British capitalism in dealing with its historic decline as an imperialist power, and the very real crisis it has been jettisoned into by the economic choices of the Conservative Government. It was an attempt to provide ideological support for a whole series of measures aimed at cutting the welfare state and propping up the traditional family.

'Back to Basics' also represents an attempt by the Conservatives to reconcile the irreconcilable. Long before Major assumed the Tory party leadership the Conservatives had been grappling for a family policy which would reconcile its traditional rhetoric with its increasingly confident free market ideology.

As the Party of traditional values the Tories have governed over fourteen years of soaring crime, crisis in the economy and the erosion of the traditional family: as a proportion of all families, single parent families nearly doubled between 1976 and 1991, from 10 to 19%. Fewer than one in four British households now conforms to the traditional image of a married or cohabiting couple with children. 'Back to Basics' was an ill thought out attempt by the Conservatives to deal with a dilemma of their own making.

Bankrupt

The changes wrought on British society by monetarist policies have left the economy 'technically bankrupt' according to Ken Livingstone MP. They have

produced fundamental shifts in employment patterns which have undermined the traditional family values the Tories claim to support and which many in their constituency base fiercely defend.

The expansion of the service sector after the Second World War, with women as a key component of this workforce, and the erosion of Britain's manufacturing base, in which most men worked, means that women now make up 49% of the labour force. Since 1970 90% of all new jobs created in Britain have gone to women.

The number of women at work exceeds the number of men in 11 regions of the country. Male unemployment is at 14.1% of the workforce, the highest level since the 1930s. By contrast just 5.6% of the female workforce is unemployed, but half of women workers are in part-time jobs, often very poorly paid.

Women's entry into the labour force, and high unemployment among men, undermines the traditional family. Recent television documentaries have shown that many young women in areas of high unemployment, such as the pit valleys in Wales, and the steel towns in Northern England and the St Mellon's housing estate in Cardiff, see little use in having young men live with them and their children.

Single mothers are now a 'normal' part of society, representing 20% of all households. The acceptance by many people that single mothers do a good job looking after their kids and that the traditional family cannot simply be glued together again is shown by the response of a police officer on St Mellon's to Redwood's political attack in July: 'We spend half our time sorting out domestic disputes on the estate, removing violent fathers. The thought of forcing absent fathers back is pie in the sky.'

But the breakdown of the traditional family under Tory policies, and in response to women's increased economic independence, has caused anxiety among some of the more progressive representatives of the ruling classes, who are afraid of a breakdown in society, as shown in the increase in crime.

Even before the outbreak of Conservative hysteria aimed at single mothers, the 'Observer' had said: 'The sad truth (is) that children brought up by a lone parent are more likely to be poor, do badly at school, have a drug or drink problem and end up in jail'.

Single parent families are certainly poor. 42% of single mothers have gross weekly incomes of less than £100, compared to 4% of married couples. Lack of nursery provision makes it very hard for single mothers to work.

The seeds sown by Thatcher's 'economic miracle' are growing into the weeds of economic decay as it becomes increasingly apparent that the problems of the British economy are long term, structural and to do with the basic choice made in the Thatcher years to make a fast buck rather than invest long term in manufacturing industry.

Family in crisis

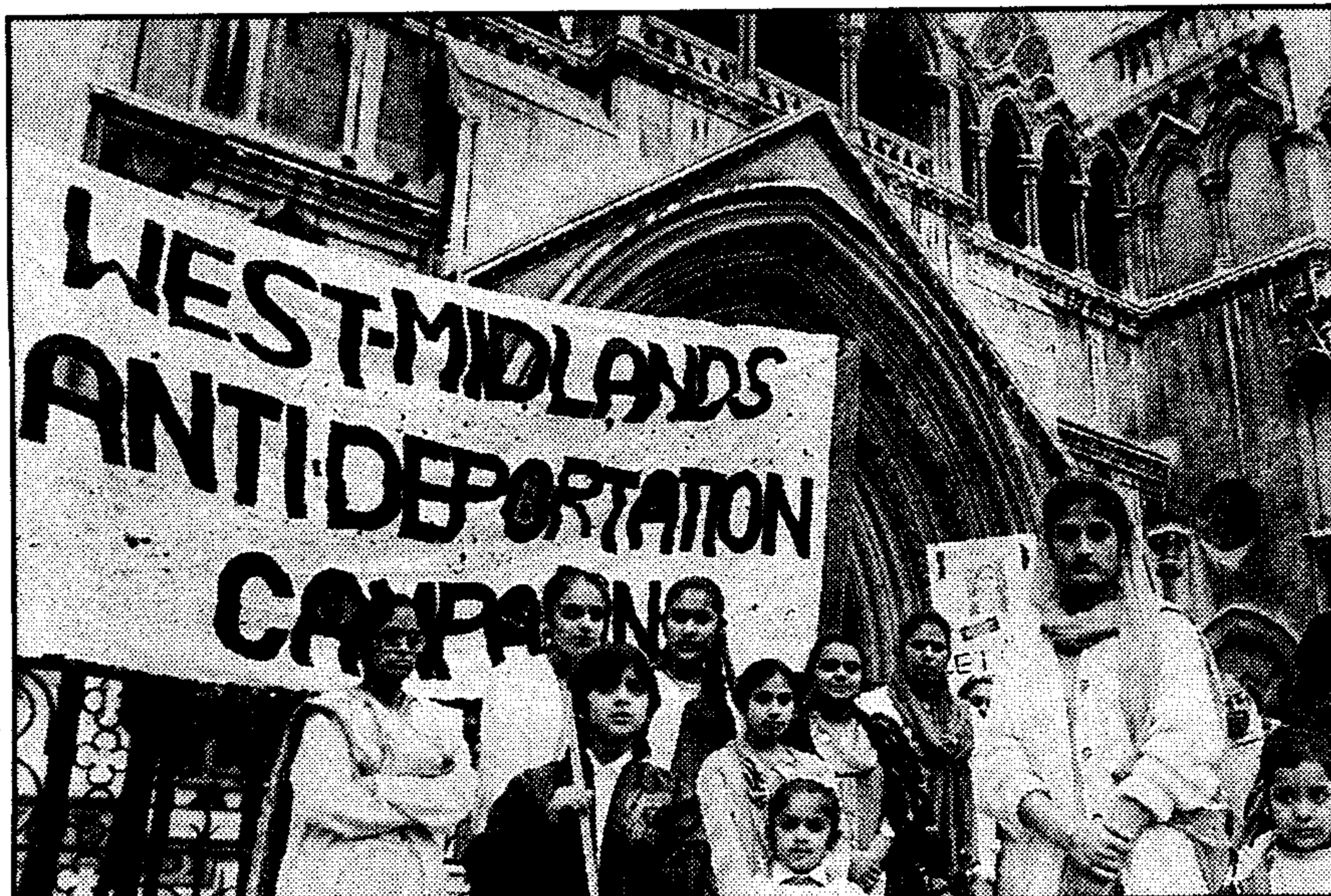
The problems with the economy are closely linked to the crisis of the traditional family. Failure to invest in manufacturing industry, erosion of working conditions, increasing use of women as a cheap and flexible workforce and the attacks unleashed on the public sector and the welfare state have all combined to create a crisis not just in the economy but in society as a whole.

But cutting the welfare state and forcing its caring functions back into the family and onto women is now a financial imperative for the Tories. Spending on social security alone currently accounts for 12.3% of GDP and has increased by 700% since 1950. In targeting the public sector as a whole and the welfare state in particular the Tories are undertaking a massive attack on the whole working class especially women.

Women make up the majority of the public sector workforce and their jobs and working conditions have been eroded as part of the slashing of public sector spending. Redundancies, privatisations and 'marketisation' of services like health and local government have resulted in massive productivity increases for the remaining public sector workforce.

Conditions for the workforce and service provision have been directly pitted against each other eg maternity pay being cut in order to avoid redundancies.

Women have also been massively affected as the main users of public sector services. In order to realise many of the formal equalities laid down in law, especially that of entering the paid labour force on equal terms with men, women have depended on the state to 'socialise' domestic responsibilities, such as care for the old, the sick and the young.



Women fight back against racist laws

"17% of women are carers, saving the state an estimated £24 billion a year"

Cuts in health and social services have resulted in a 're-privatisation' of care back into the family. Psychiatric hospitals have been closed and long term hospital care slashed. 6.8 million people in Britain are carers for adult relatives or friends. 17% of women are carers and the estimated savings to the state of that unpaid caring is £24 billion.

Nursery provision in Britain is amongst the worst in Europe, maternity leave is not a universal right, the state pension age has just been equalised by raising women's retirement age to 65 and wages councils which protected the wages of millions of the poorest paid have been abolished.

Deregulation

'Back to Basics' was to be an ideological justification for further deregulation and cuts in the welfare state, individuals were to take responsibility for themselves.

The attacks on single mothers and irresponsible fathers made explicit in 'Back to Basics' were not new and had been most clearly embodied in the Child Support Act(CSA), introduced the previous April. At the time of its introduction the CSA seemed like an ideal way to link the Conservatives twin aims of cutting social security spending and ideologically reinforcing the traditional family.

Feminist campaigners against the Act pointed out the increased risk of violence to women from their ex-partners and argued that the Act posed the risk of renewed custody battles for lesbian mothers.

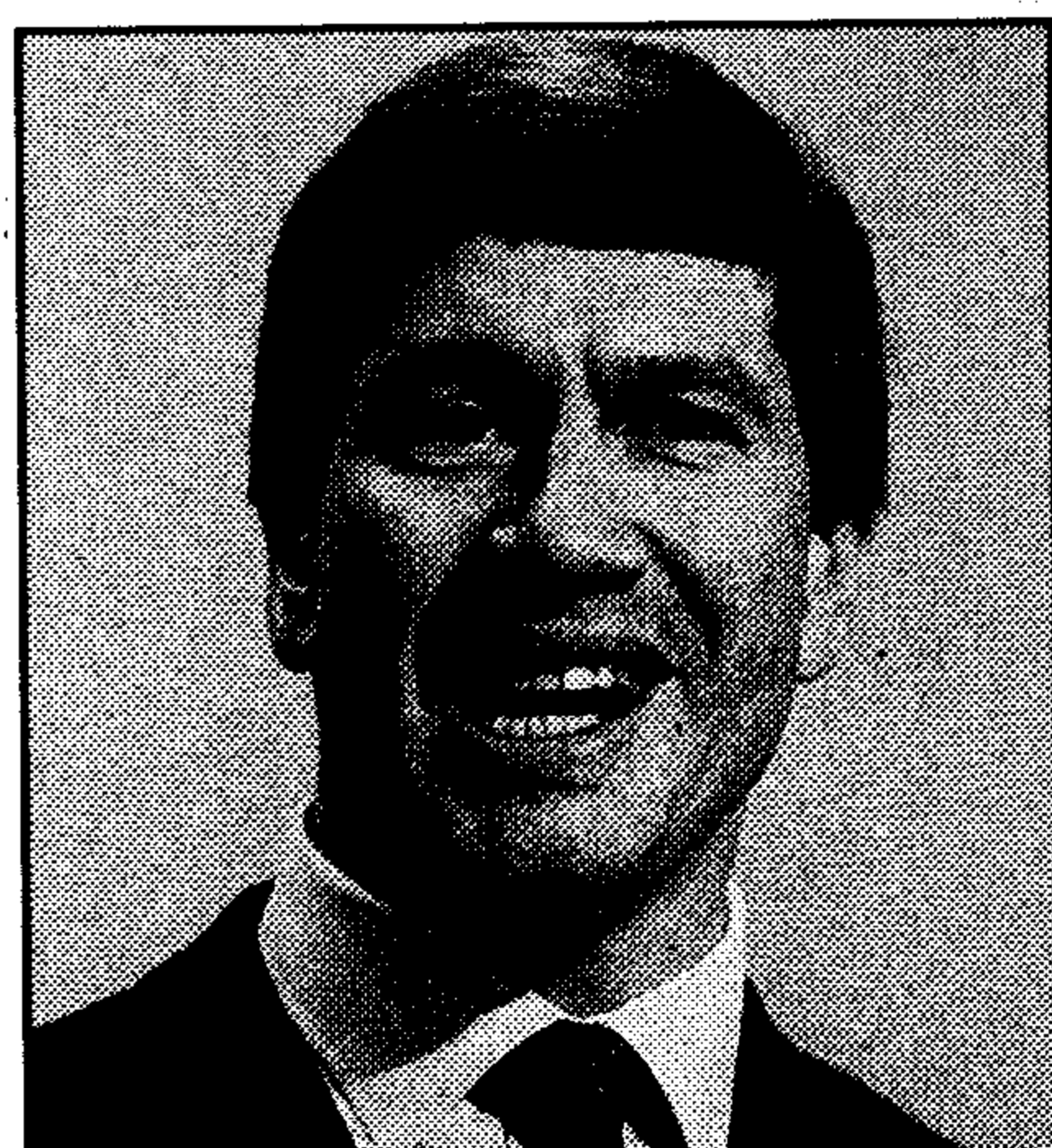
They also argued that the Act was implicitly racist. Half of black families of Caribbean descent are headed by single mothers. Men of African, Asian and Caribbean descent - who because of racism are more likely to be unemployed, imprisoned or on low wages - would be most vulnerable to the Child Support Agency; and 'failure to maintain' could be used as grounds for deportation.

Since the Act came into operation the main opposition has come from affected men and their second families. This partly represents the weakened state of the women's liberation movement but is also a response to the glaring injustices suffered by men on the receiving end of the Act.

A number of suicides have been linked with the Act, two in Sheffield in just one week. In one case a separated father and his two young children were found dead of carbon monoxide poisoning in their car, while in the other the car had been set alight burning to death the man and children inside.



As users and as workers, women are in the forefront of fights to defend welfare state.



Portillo: Deficit crisis drives basics fight

The response of the Labour Party has been lamentably deficient. While there are rumblings of discontent around the CSA, there is little in the way of organised opposition. As with many Tory policies, the Labour Party has failed to offer a coherent alternative. The Labour Party has criticised the working of the agency but refused to commit itself to scrap it.

This reflects a much wider retreat by Labour on the question of the family: 'For too long, the Left has let the issue of the family become the domain of the Right' argued Harriet Harman, Shadow Chief Secretary to the Treasury. Her colleague Marjorie Mowlem told Labour women's conference this year that the party must have policies with a high 'family friendliness' appeal.

Age of consent

The Labour party leadership refused appeals from lesbian and gay activists to instruct MPs to vote for the amendment which would lower the age of consent for gay men to 16 resulting in its defeat.

And Labour is allowing the Conservative right to make the running on 'political correctness' as witnessed by Labour controlled Hackney council launching a witchhunt against Primary School Head Jane Brown.

Education Secretary John Patten used

the incident to slam 'political correctness' and teachers who 'overreact' to 'Little Black Sambo' books.

Failure to oppose the Tories on the family reflects Labour's wider inability to oppose them on the economy and disagreement within the Labour Party on welfare state policy. There is a growing economic consensus between Conservatives and Labour over the need to limit spending on welfare.

Refusal

Labour leader John Smith and his Shadow Chancellor Gordon Brown refuse to make firm spending commitments on Labour's behalf, arguing that spending should be on the basis of what the country can afford.

They are also introducing proposals for private funding of public services in

their recent policy paper 'Financing Infrastructure Investment - Promoting a Partnership between Public and Private Finance'.

'Back to Basics' has represented a further stage in the implosion facing the Tories but has yet to be taken full advantage of by Labour or the working class. For the second year running, 1993 saw the lowest number of days lost through strikes since records began.

However, big increases in taxation and the announcement of a three year pay freeze for public sector workers, combined with the open crisis of the Tories, may yet push the masses into action.

In fighting to defend the welfare state against 'Back to Basics' broad alliances of the working class and oppressed will have to be built and women's interests pushed to the forefront.

Solidarity with women of Tuzla

"OUR LIVES are composed out of thousands of small and big tragedies. Yesterday I dropped a box of matches in a pan of water, I cried for more than an hour from anger and despair. That is our reality."

Everyday reality for a member of the Women's Union of Tuzla (WUT) who met with members of the first International Workers Aid convoy in November last year.

Women in Bosnia have been particularly affected by the war. They have been systematically raped as part of the process of ethnic cleansing. They get lower priority for food than men on the front line. And they have primary responsibility for looking after the vulnerable and for trying to hold their communities and families together.

The Women's Union has 10,000 members and is central in organising aid to the many refugees forced into Tuzla by the war and in organising to support women. The WUT's programme states:

"Victims of the aggression are, amongst others, women whose physical, but especially moral destruction benefits the enemy as a method of war. The women of Tuzla are conscious that their first obligation in the battle for the defence of our native country is, its transformation to a peaceful country and the return of its dignity in the world. After that comes the defence of the integrity of women, as an irreversible factor in society, that no-one will ever dare to threaten."

The women's union of Tuzla, is a non-partisan, non-governmental organisation which unites the women of Tuzla without regard of nationality, belief, age, education or party.

As an organisation of volunteers, the WUT stands open for all women who are deeply committed to Bosnia Herzegovina as a sovereign state and as their native country, to Tuzla as a multinational European centre, as well as to the interests of women within their own spheres of human existence.

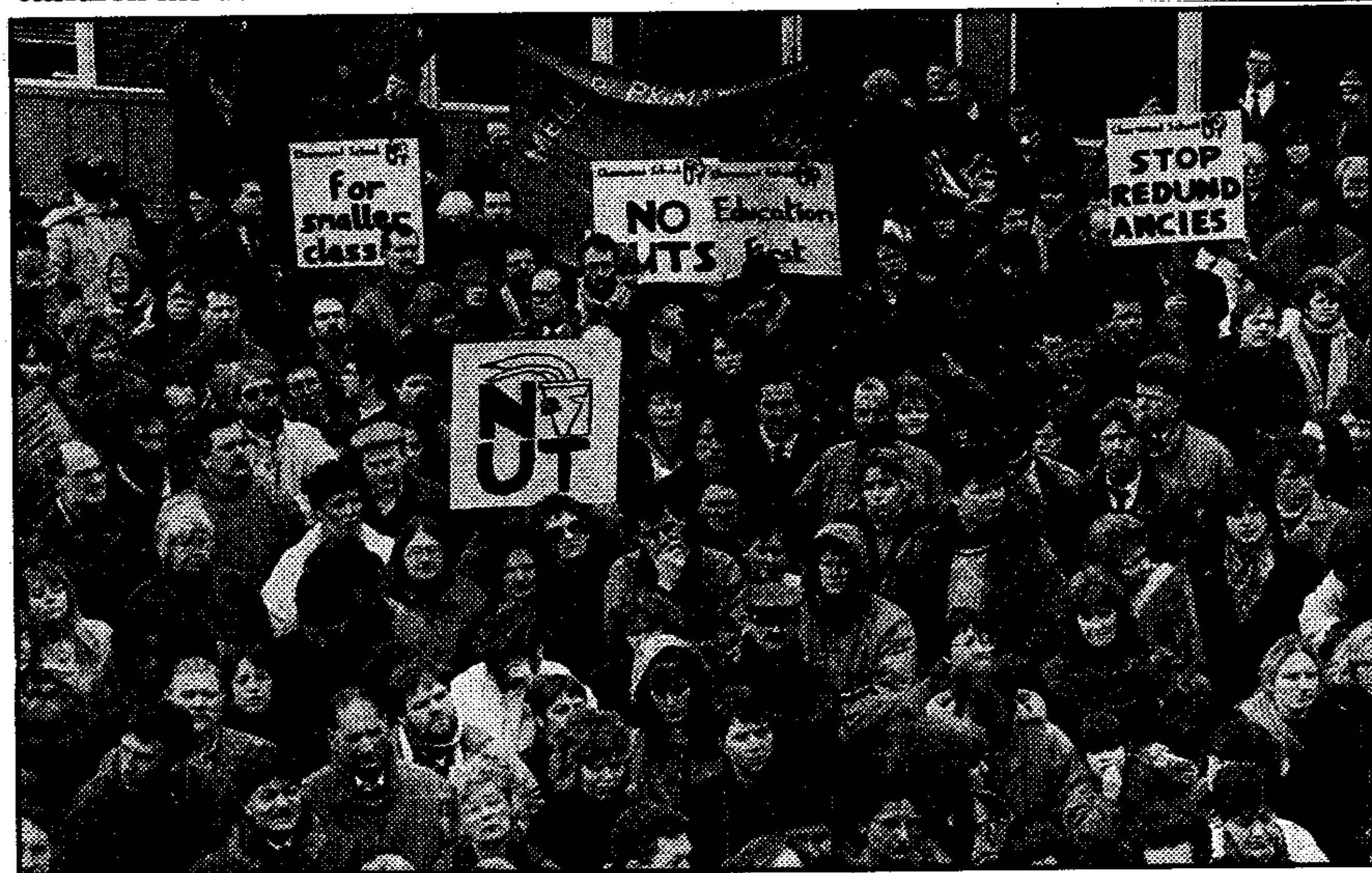
Among its aims are equal rights for women, defence of women and children against violence within society and the family, the 'exclusive right of women in deciding over abortion, family planning, the choice of their wardrobe, individual and other questions concerning independence and dignity'.

As one of the women told Jenny Mees in November, 'the most urgent problem here is hunger. We don't have food. Almost nothing is coming through because there's a blockade around our town'. Despite recent developments Tuzla airport remains closed and the need to send solidarity and material aid to Tuzla remains urgent.

International Workers Aid is organising a Women's Appeal to take that aid and solidarity to the women of Tuzla on the next convoy.

The women of Tuzla need solidarity and material aid. Contact International Workers Aid for more information, 12 Thornton St, London, SW6 0VL Tel: 071 978 8522.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY



Teachers must fight Tory's reactionary curriculum

Ten years after the miners strike

Lessons learned the hard way

By Alan Thornett

THE 1984/5 miners strike evokes powerful memories. The tenacity and courage of 160,000 miners out on strike for a year. Massive confrontations and mass pickets – some up to 10,000 strong. The police trap and burning barricades at Orgreave. The 7,500 miners arrested during the strike.

40 were jailed – including two young South Wales miners for life and Terry French for five years. Davey Jones was killed whilst picketing out scabs at Ollerton. Thousands marched behind the coffin of Joe Green, killed on picket duty at the Ferrybridge power station. Remember the cold class hatred of a state which took his house and estate (he was single with his own house) and refused to pay for his funeral out of it.

There was tremendous class struggle leadership given by Arthur Scargill and Peter Heathfield and the historic Women Against Pit Closures movement, which mobilised 10,000 women from the pit villages to march through London in June and represented something new and important in the class struggle in Britain.

Ten years on the picture is very different. Arthur Scargill wasn't just right. He was so much right that now there is no longer a coal industry and only the remnants of the NUM.

Naked class hatred, the Tories' thirst for revenge for 1974, the privatisation of power generation, the dash for gas, and the rigging of the market have meant that the NUM has suffered the fastest decline of any union in history. At the time of the strike the NUM had 210,000 members in 170 pits, now the total labour force has shrunk to 10,000 in just 17 pits – and they are still being closed. Privatisation is through Parliament and private mines are already operating.

Biggest since 1926

The defeat of the strike, in the biggest confrontation between the trade union movement and the state since 1926, was a huge blow to the whole trade union movement.

The attack on the miners was preceded by the NGA's battle of Warrington (and the TUC collapse in front of the anti-union laws) and followed by other militant actions such as Wapping and the seafarers strike. But the defeat of the miners was by far the most important victory for the Tories during the 1980s.

The NUM had played a vanguard role in the modern trade union movement first in the 1920s and again in the 1970s. But the smashing up of the NUM and the mining industry was not inevitable even after the end of the strike – that depended on the continuing betrayals of new realism and the fate of a series of defensive actions which were to follow.

Nor was the defeat of the strike itself inevitable. Far from it. In fact the strike was a potential winner. At the time of the NACODS vote to join the strike the gov-



Thousands marched in defence of the miners in October 1993

ernment was actively preparing for a U-turn – not that many miners held out much hope that NACODS would stand firm. The line was only just held despite the scabbing UDM operation in Nottinghamshire – which was eventually betrayed by its Tory backers.

Arthur Scargill was the most determined national trade union leader the British trade union movement had ever produced. The strike, however, faced

“What lost the strike was the treachery of new realism, the TUC and Neil Kinnock, which ensured the isolation of the strike, and the Communist Party, which in the end organised the back to work move”

from the start a serious problem – isolation from the rest of the trade union movement.

The union leaders had moved to the right since 1979 and new realism – the idea that strikes were a bad thing for Labour's election chances – was gaining an increasing hold in the movement. The Labour Party now had the 'dream ticket'.

Faced with this, the unspoken strategy of the strike from day one was the model of 1972 and 1974 – when the miners could win by their own strength alone, when the lights went out after a few weeks and the government was forced to concede.

This was a difficult road to tread. Apart from the scabbing in Notts the state had learned the lessons of the previous strikes and a repeat of Saltley Gate was not on.

This time the key was an extension of the strike into other sections of the trade union movement – the opening of a second front. Mass picketing was correct and in many ways the life-blood of the strike, but it was not an adequate strategy for victory.

And such a strategy was viable. Throughout the strike repeated possibilities of it spreading presented themselves. In the first stages there were numerous opportunities for other unions to join the miners through pursuing their own wage claims with vigour.

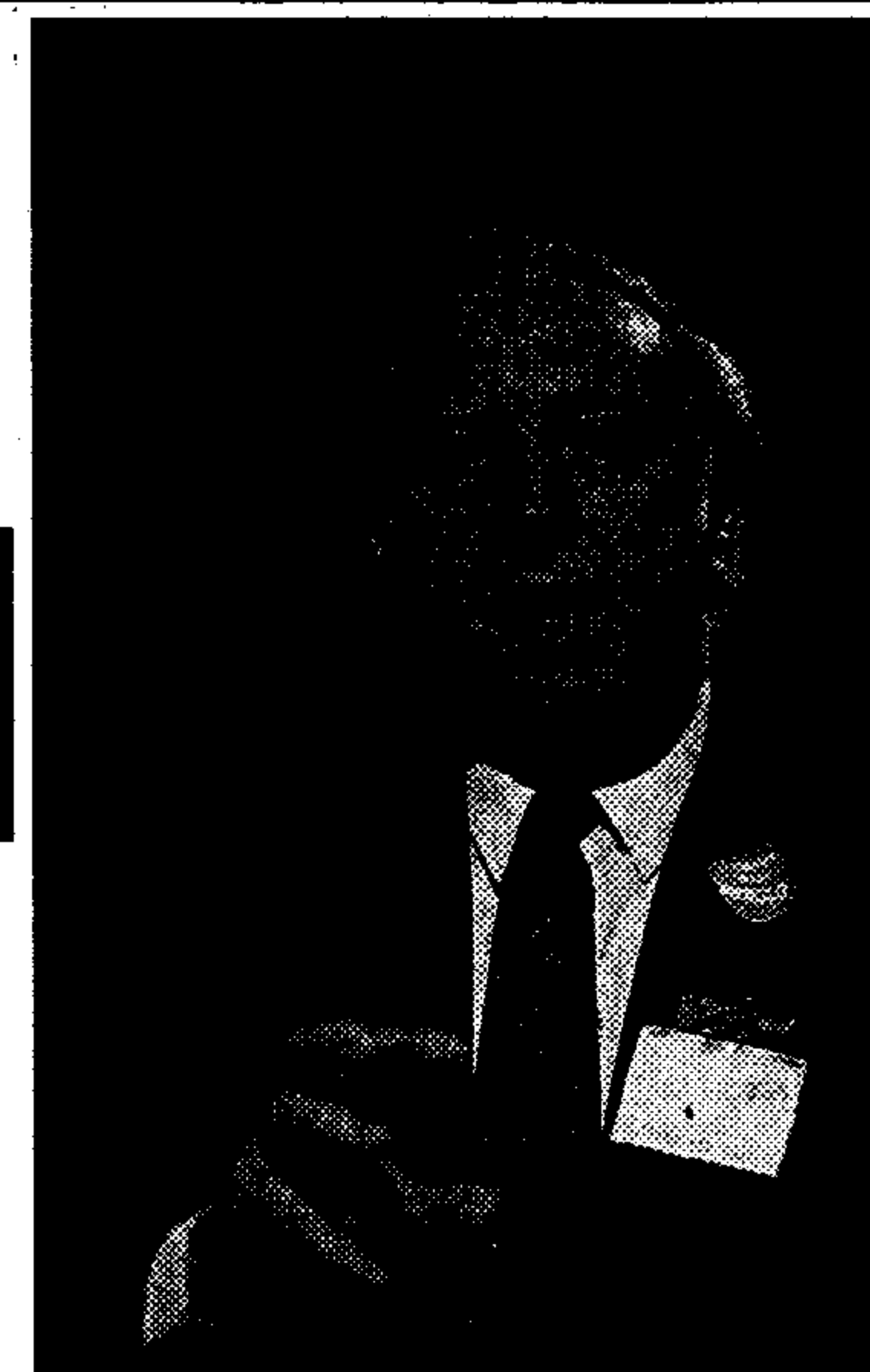
But not a single union took such a hard line and compromise after compromise was reached. The government even intervened directly to broker a compromise settlement on rail and the NUR executive could not grab it fast enough. Some union leaders even argued that it would be a 'bad tactic' to be on strike at the same time as the miners.

Later, two national dock strikes over the movement of coal by unregistered labour presented the chance to break the isolation. It was the perfect issue. Both groups of workers were fighting for their jobs and their industry and Tory ministers were already making it clear that they intended to abolish the National Dock Labour Scheme.

It was in the interests of both groups to fight together (and very difficult for either to win alone) yet the dock strike was called off with no settlement just at the point that the government began to panic.

Arthur Scargill was the inspiration of the strike. He fought it until the bitter end and his defence of militant miners against media attack was exemplary: 'I will never condemn brave young miners whose only crime is to defend their jobs'.

His weakness, however, was his dealings with the TUC and the other union leaders – who held the key if the isolation of the strike was to be effectively broken. The funds of the South Wales Area



Scargill: fought through to the end

were sequestered just before the 1985 TUC congress and demands for solidarity action were at their strongest. The night before the Congress he agreed to the withdraw of resolutions calling for strike action in support of the miners in favour of a disastrous policy of boycotting scab coal going into the power stations – a very difficult policy to make effective even with the will to do it.

These mistakes, however, did not lose the strike. What lost the strike was the treachery of new realism, the TUC and the Neil Kinnock leadership of the Labour Party which ensured the isolation of the strike. Add to this the role of the Communist Party, which in the end was the force which organised the back to work move, which was still opposed by Scargill.

Ten more years

Far from recovering from the defeat of the miners, ten more years of new-realism (with the retirement of Len Murray and the advent of Norman Willis) have compounded the problem. Every chance to turn the tide has been squandered. 'Stop strikes to get Labour in office' has remained the clarion call of the right-wing – yet they still have no Labour government to show for it.

The Tories recognised that the defeat of the miners was the green light for wave after wave of anti-union laws which have been introduced without a finger lifted from the TUC.

Ten years on we have seen the loss of four million trade union members, the lowest level of strikes in history and the employers pushing in massive changes in the workplace with the wholesale introduction of new management techniques and a huge army of low-paid and unprotected workers.

With the miners strike, as with so many other issues, the left have been proved to have been right. It was a watershed issue which would determine the political and industrial situation for the next decade or more.

Support movement

A victory for the NUM would have meant a big rise of a Scargillite left in both the unions and the Labour Party. The possibilities of this were shown by the support movement for the miners – a real rank and file movement – and the development of many of the miners themselves, for example NUM banners on the 1985 gay pride march. A defeat on the other hand has left the movement fighting its way back.

Though the results were worse than the left had thought, that did not make them wrong. Those who were wrong were the new realists who have created this situation and now have no answer to the monster they have created.

The future lies not with them but with new generation of militant workers who can rebuild the movement and repair the damage which has been done. They are already there in the background. Their time will come.

OUR HISTORY

Angola's bloody killing fields

by Bala Kumar

ONE THOUSAND people will die in Angola today and every day in the human tragedy which evades our television screens and therefore our awareness.

Since UNITA forces began their murderous bid for power in October 1992, an estimated 250,000 have been killed and two million displaced out of a total population of 10 million.

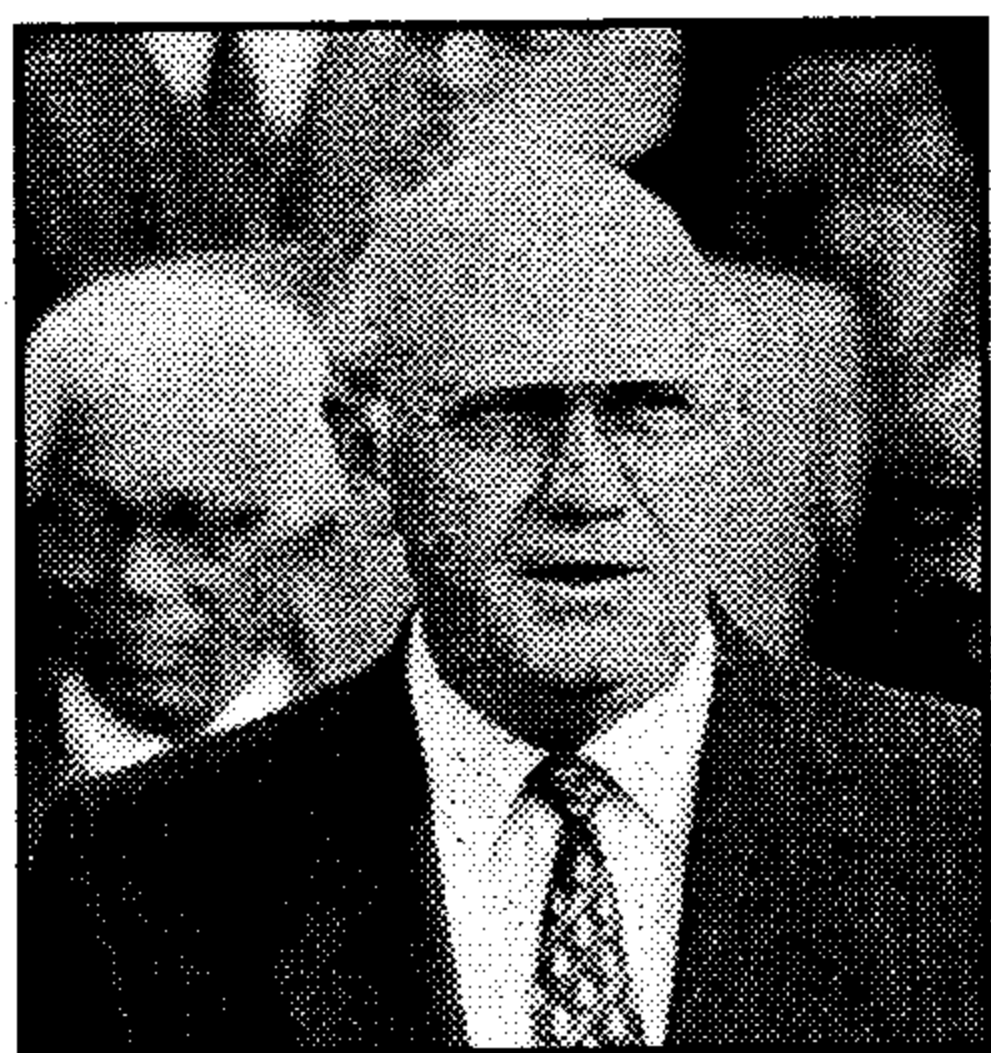
About two thirds of the country is controlled by UNITA: much of the humanitarian aid like food and medicines has to be channelled through them.

Hospitals outside of the capital, Luanda, are poorly equipped and stocked and increasingly perform amputations on many who lose their limbs to mines planted by UNITA.

There were reports last year from the town of Menongue that people were eating cats, dogs and mice to keep alive as food either doesn't get through or is pilfered by UNITA soldiers.

The Angolan Armed Forces (FAA), loyal to the democratically elected Government, have regained the military initiative in recent months following substantial arms purchases and a recruitment drive.

Their strategy has been to cut off UNITA's supply routes from the Zairean and Namibian borders to prevent restocking of food and arms as well as cut off



De Clerk arms UNITA murderers financial support.

UNITA's control of the oil and diamond producing areas and its involvement in ivory and timber smuggling net it an enormous income to purchase arms, lobby western governments and secure South African mercenary assistance.

Not that it needs more arms: the considerable stockpile given it by the South African regime could keep the war going for another ten years.

Rural strength

Traditionally UNITA has been strongest at rural guerrilla warfare. Having encircled the countryside around a city or town it lays siege and, having worn down the defences, captures it.

The FAA are now trying to turn the tables by pursuing this strategy against UNITA-controlled towns like Huambo, the base of rebel leader Jonas Savimbi.

They have been frustrated by active collusion between the Zairean dictatorship and sec-

tions of the South African military in supplying arms to UNITA and allowing a conduit out of Angola for illegally mined diamonds. (See SO 39)

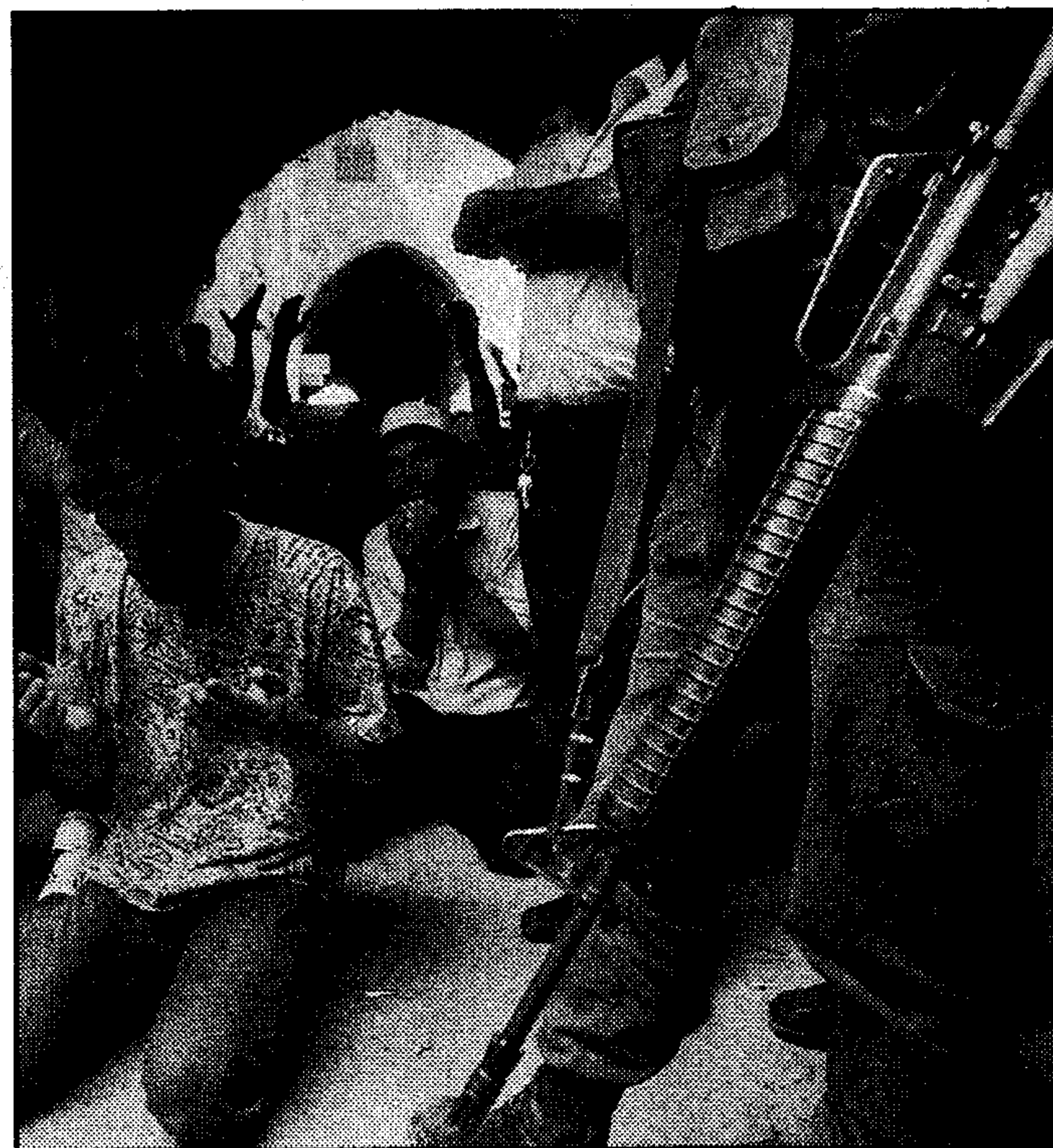
United Nations sanctions on sale of arms and fuel to UNITA have therefore been ineffective and Angolan solidarity activists in Britain have been demanding more severe measures, including the freezing of UNITA funds in western banks and its political isolation through closure of its offices abroad.

The swing in opinion against UNITA has forced it to the negotiating table in the Zambian capital, Lusaka, though little progress has been made over the last three months.

Savimbi knows he is unlikely to take control of the whole country but he also knows that the evenly matched military strengths of the two sides means a political deal will have to be struck sooner or later.

While even some Angolan cabinet ministers are resigned to giving Savimbi a fiefdom in order to stop the bloodshed, the military leadership of the FAA is against any concessions. They believe they will soon have UNITA on the defensive and Savimbi in a weaker bargaining position.

Meanwhile in South Africa and Mozambique, where elections are due this year, politicians and people alike are scrutinising the lessons of the killing fields of Angola.



Israeli soldiers block way into Jerusalem mosque

Zionist extremists get back to basics

AFTER the Hebron massacre, in which an Israeli settler murdered some 50 Palestinian worshippers in a mosque, Israeli troops shot dead dozens more in renewed clashes.

In scenes reminiscent of the early days of the Intifada, Palestinian citizens of Israel took to the streets in mass demonstrations.

Many were injured and at least two shot dead by Israeli police, the first Palestinians to die in demonstrations in the state of Israel since Land Day in 1976.

PLO leader Yasser Arafat sought minimal concessions from Israel in a desperate attempt to restore his waning popularity and the flagging credibility of the September

agreement.

But Israeli PM Yitzhak Rabin made it clear that there would be no disarming of the quarter million settlers in the occupied territories, and no dismantling of the settlements.

Massacres, expulsions, genocide and ethnic cleansing remain the essence of Zionist colonisation of Palestine.

The latest events show the true nature of the agreement, in which the PLO accepted the legitimacy of Zionism and of the state of Israel, and undertook to collaborate in the control of the occupied territories, while receiving no concessions from Israel on the central demands raised by the Palestinian people in the Intifada.

Sinn Fein 1994 Ard Fheis keeps key document secret

Rank and file left in dark

by Liam Mac Uaid

JOE CAHILL, one of contemporary Republicanism's most famous names, suggested at this year's Sinn Fein Ard Fheis that the fulfilment of the Republican dream was 'close at hand'.

On the surface his optimism appears well founded. Gerry Adams went to America and was treated like a superstar; Sinn Fein members can now be heard on Irish television and radio after twenty years; the party's deliberations are scrutinised as closely as those of a government; and it is surfing on a wave of cautious tolerance from the serious bourgeois press.

It may have to wait rather longer for a wave of enthusiasm. It seems to be setting the pace for the British government and the Irish bourgeoisie is treating it with unaccustomed deference. Things seem to be going its way.

There was an expectation be-

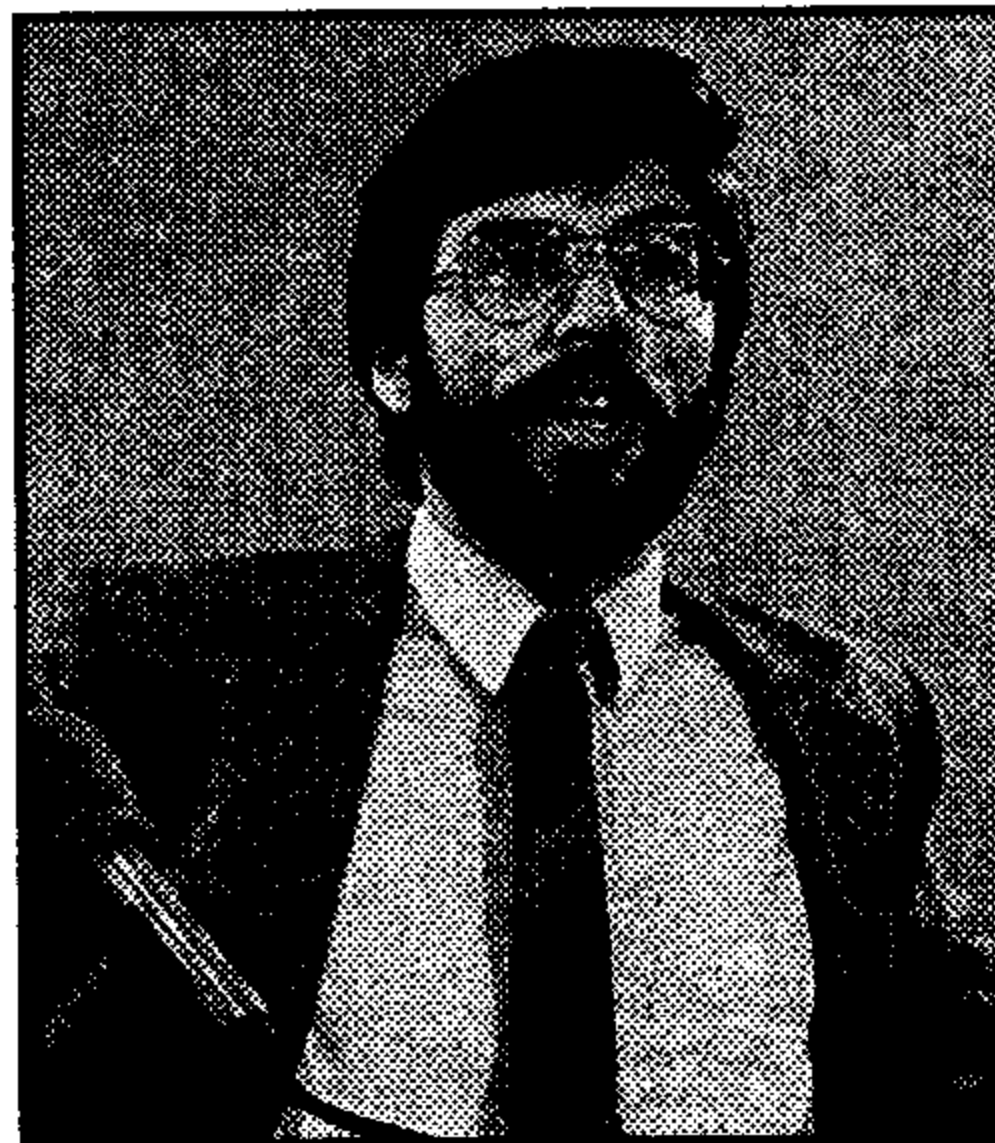
fore the conference, which the Republicans did nothing to discourage, that they would finally state their attitude to the Downing Street declaration.

The point for the bourgeois press was that they did not accept it. The point for anti-imperialist socialists is that they did not reject it. The Hume-Adams talks, references to the 'nationalist family', the attempts to identify themselves with the SDLP and Fianna Fail all signal the capitulation of the present Republican leadership to bourgeois nationalism.

Dividing line

A crucial dividing line has not been crossed. For Sinn Fein, Irish unity remains an immediate demand. For Albert Reynolds and John Hume it most definitely is not. Nevertheless the republican trajectory is obvious.

The Ard Fheis was a defeat for the Sinn Fein rank and file. A strong demand in the pre-conference discussions had been for the publication of the Hume-



Adams document.

This was not conceded, and so the party's supporters must back a process, the details of which they do not know. A gap is emerging between the base and the leadership.

The majority of the base is opposed to what it correctly sees as a possible sell-out in the making. But its only alternative is more armed struggle.

That is why no opposition current emerged which could force publication of the secret agreements nor offer perspectives to revitalise the struggle.

The Republicans continue to demand that the imperialists

clarify what they see as ambiguities in the Downing Street document. These sort of word games have a precedent in Irish history.

The Treaty that created partition was accompanied by similar discussions.

Inability

Eamonn De Valera, who fought the British and the 26 county state created by the Treaty (before he became its President) used a lot of ink explaining how a Free State and a Republic were the same thing really.

They show nothing except an inability properly to understand or defeat imperialism. The Downing Street document, no matter how well it is clarified, leaves the border and imperialist domination of Ireland intact. It should be rejected, not clarified.

Those who meet him say that the man with the biggest smile in Irish politics at the moment is leader of the Official Unionist Party, James Molyneux.



"It is no longer a question of 'majority rule'. Whatever the outcome of the April election, the largest party has to include all parties which obtain more than 20% of the vote in the government"

Whilst this violence is not carried out by 'official' forces it is only made possible, indeed is reinforced, because of complicity by the state. Now that the AVU is threatening to prevent the holding of elections they are getting worried.

As in the story of Frankenstein the creator is at risk of losing control of his creation - hence the apparent and potentially violent split within the ranks of the Whites and between the government party on the one hand and Inkatha on the other.

The battle in Natal

Inkatha is the other piece in the game. Buthelezi, who runs his Kwazulu fiefdom with an iron hand, is threatening to lead 'his' province to secede unless the project endorsed by the ANC and NP is substantially amended.

The region of Natal-Kwazulu contains more than 25 percent of the South African population; for that reason it is the main battleground. Moreover, in Natal the violence is at its worst, with 53 percent of murders according to the Human Rights Commission.

Inkatha can count on a by no means negligible base of support, most notably in the rural areas where traditional structures and the persistence of a hierarchical power structure (represented by 'King' Goodwill Zwelthini) combine to impose the *de facto* single party state of Buthelezi.

Whilst Inkatha is in a relative minority in the urban areas it has been able to strengthen itself in the last few years by taking advantage of two new factors.

Firstly, the migrant workers who originate from Natal, especially those concentrated in the great mining and industrial centres of the Transvaal, have been 'captured' to a large extent by Inkatha as a result of serious conflicts that have erupted throughout these areas since 1990.

Dumped in 'hostels' and isolated from the surrounding communities these migrants, who were already socially ostracised, have become both the mercenaries of Buthelezi and the victims of attacks by young supporters of the ANC.

The conflicts in certain areas have become partially 'ethnic' in so far as massacres have created and aggravated polarisations between migrants and residents, between Zulus and non-Zulus.

In certain of the worst affected townships, notably Tokhosa (south-east of Johannesburg) the conflict has taken on the air of a sinister 'ethnic cleansing'.

It is in this context that Buthelezi is endeavouring to increase his military capabilities whilst trying to consolidate his political base.

Special training camps have been created in the north of the province to form 'defence units'; several former officials of the police and South African army have taken part. If Buthelezi chose to follow the path of Jonas Savimbi he could seriously destabilise the country. But South Africa is not Angola!

The South African state, with its powerful army capable of rapid deployment into every region of the country, does not suffer the same vulnerability and could, if it wanted, eliminate all armed opposition.

To be concluded next issue

Will it be limited democracy – or civil war?

THE ELECTIONS taking place in South Africa on the 27th and 28th April open up the risk of important political battles during the few weeks of campaigning, reports PIERRE FRANÇOIS

DESPITE the accord between the National Party and the ANC the political terrain remains volatile.

Of course there are some 'nostalgics' dreaming of the apartheid 'their fathers knew' who don't want even symbolic changes in the structures of power and who could derail the process.

In the middle of February, the white right-wing extremists, along with Inkatha, announced their refusal to participate in the elections.

The far-right is not the only cloud on the horizon. Danger also comes from the desire of the political and economic establishment of white South Africa to push the movement of Nelson Mandela into yet more compromises.

However, it is difficult to imagine what more concessions the ANC can make since they have capitulated on virtually everything, particularly in relation to the historical goals of the organisation.

Limited democracy

It is no longer a question of 'majority rule'. Whatever the outcome of the April election the NP-ANC accords mean that the largest party has to include all parties which obtain more than 20% of the vote in the government.

In practice this will lead to an ANC-NP coalition government which will be in power for at least five years. Nor is it any longer a question of creating a unitary state.

The regions, now called 'provinces' will have exclusive powers in a whole number of fields: notably agriculture, primary and secondary education, health, housing, local government and urban development, commerce and the police.

The central government will only have the power to lay down minimum 'standards' whilst the carrying out of them, including the important powers to raise the necessary taxes, are granted to the provinces.

The spokespersons of the NP have no worries about asserting that, in essence, their federalist vision has prevailed. The constitution, to be finalised after the April elections, will protect the power of the regions unless two thirds of the 400 MPs decide otherwise.

A 'necessary evil'

It is in this context that the 'great compromise' with the white establishment is presented as a 'necessary evil' by, among others, Joe Slovo, the historic leader of the South African Communist party and Mandela's principal adviser.

According to the Communist Party leader, the Black liberation movement doesn't have the ability to overthrow the existing power structure.

Nor, according to Slovo, does it have the strength to confront this power, since a prolonged civil war could only result in leading the country into ruin.

The facts appear to support him. Since the 'liberalisation' of 1990 killings have resulted in more than 9,000 deaths, according to the Human Rights Commission.

Whilst there had been a partial decline at the beginning of 1993, since July of that year violence has increased at an even greater rate, with an average of 18 political murders per day. This violence results from the almost total inaction of the ANC in defending the populations of the townships.

The guerrillas of *Umkhonto we Sizwe*,



who returned to the country as heroes, now find themselves confronted by their own leadership which is determined, above anything else, to demobilise and neutralise them, under the pretext of re-integrating them into 'civilian life'.

Frankenstein's monster, South African style

The threat from the far right is not an illusion. United under the banner of the '*Afrikaner Volksunie*' and led by the former head of the South African Army Constand Viljoen they constitute, along with the Conservative Party (a Parliamentary party which acts as the 'official' opposition to the NP) a considerable force.

But this force depends, in the final analysis, on the evident complicity of the security apparatus. If the army doesn't move against the ultra-right it is because its inaction is, in a sense, part of the strategy of the ruling faction.

Since 1990, with the enticement of negotiations to determine the future of 'post apartheid' South Africa, the NP has skilfully manoeuvred to destabilise the ANC - with the full support of the white political and economic establishment. This destabilisation has largely been based on violence.

ANALYSIS

MR. PORTILLO SUGGESTS THAT WE TRY SLIPPING THEM A FEW QUID.



Facts on Timor struggle

K. Govindan reviews *East Timor: The Silence and the Betrayal*, edited by John Pilger, in *New Internationalist Magazine* No 253, £1.90

ANYONE who missed the Central Television documentary on East Timor, *Death of a Nation*, or who was too engrossed in it to take down all the facts and figures, will appreciate this handy publication.

Guest-edited by our favourite Australian, and in the glossy and readable format that the *New Internationalist* has pioneered, are facts like 200,000 East Timorese were killed between 1975 and 1979 alone; that 160 babies out of every 1,000 will die there before the age of two; that there are 14 distinct languages spoken in East Timor; and that along with coffee, marble quarrying provides a major export.

Entanglement

There's a useful focus on Britain's trade in arms with Indonesia, and the disclosure that in June 1993 British Aerospace obtained a £500 million contract for 24 Hawk aircraft – just two months after Douglas Hurd on a visit to Jakarta gave the Suharto regime a £70 million loan. Could these two deals have become 'entangled', like the Pergau dam affair?

A short article traces the ascent to power of General Suharto in the 1965 coup. Having drowned a million communists, worker militants and Chinese in blood, the regime continues the heavy-handed use of military force to suppress protests against the government.

There is however an important omission from the pamphlet: no mention is made of current attitudes among Indonesian activists, particularly the Javanese, towards the struggle in East Timor.

In Timor, the resistance led by FRETILIN continues its campaign in the rural areas and there has been an upsurge in urban non-violent protests by a new generation of youth. But these brave people cannot hope to match the mighty armoury of the Indonesian regime with its oil revenues and staunch support from Australia, Britain and the USA.

Indonesian opposition

It is vital that those workers agitating for independent unions in Java, students clamouring for political freedom on their campuses, and intellectuals keeping alive the memory of mass-based socialist politics be convinced that Timorese self-determination should be taken up as part of their struggle, too.

In other words, the nascent movement in Indonesia for the overthrow of the military-backed regime must be convinced that they can never be a truly free people as long as they oppress another nation.

Too PC or not too PC? That is the question The 'respectable' face of sexism?

By Zoe Thomas

You can hardly turn on the television these days without hearing some politician or chat show host knocking 'Political Correctness'.

This anti-PC lobby, desperately campaigning to protect the privileges of white, heterosexual men, represents the 'respectable' face of racism and sexism.

PC is accused of destroying freedom of speech, of being narrow minded and dogmatic, and (the ultimate crime) of 'spoiling our fun'.

This is the freedom to tell racist and sexist jokes, to sexually harass women and the fun of deriding and discriminating generally, on the grounds of gender, race and sexuality.

The recent attack on 'date rape' was accompanied in the media by an attack on 'politically correct' ideas.

American college students were ridiculed for issuing sexual conduct charters amidst a concerted effort to place the blame for rape on the shoulders of the victims.

PC cannot replace collective action resulting from a recognition of shared experiences of exploitation. But language is not irrelevant – not only can it reflect oppres-

white?

Developing new terms free from the prejudices of the old, and finding ways to name our exploitation are political acts which can be used to unite people around common experiences of oppression.

Describing the dissatisfaction of white middle class women, Betty Friedan in the

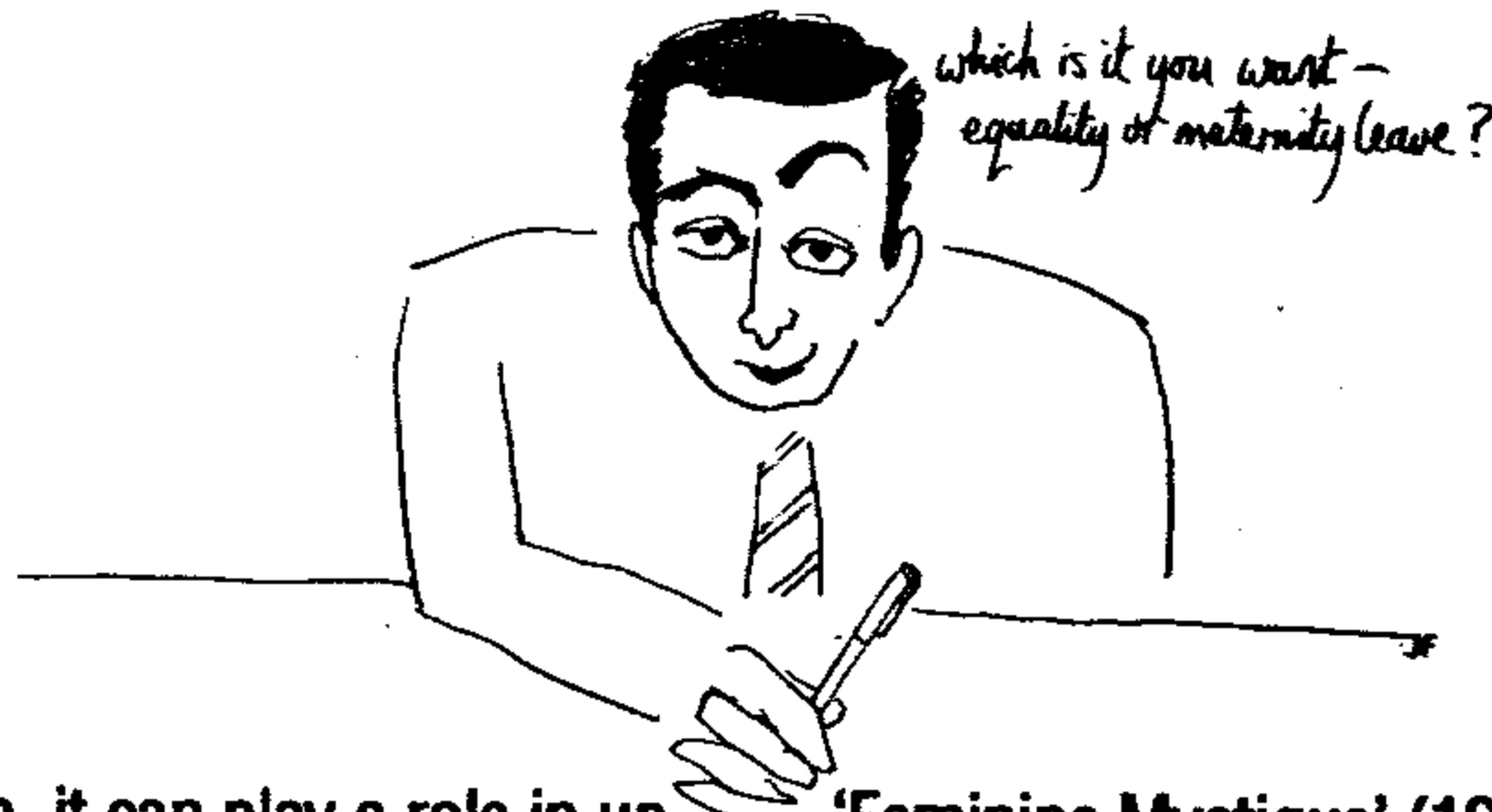
Just as there was 'racism' so there became 'sexism'.

The word 'chauvinism' (used to apply to American involvement in South East Asia) was applied to men – 'male chauvinism'. In developing language that named oppressive male behaviour we gained an empowering weapon in the fight against women's oppression.

PC does not address the material base at the root of our oppression or suggest collective conscious action as a route to liberation.

In fighting for socialism we need to *organise* around shared experiences of oppression not only of class, but of gender, sexuality and race too.

However, moves to make discriminatory language unacceptable *should* be supported. There is an ideology which reinforces and legitimises our oppression, and that ideology must be fought at every opportunity.



sion, it can play a role in upholding, perpetuating and legitimating it.

How many English words are there for a promiscuous female and how many for a male? How many terms of abuse to put down a black person and how many for a

'Feminine Mystique' (1963) talked about the 'problem that has no name'.

Then, tired of being harassed on the grounds of their gender, women campaigning for US civil rights appropriated the discourse of the movement.

The reality of sexual oppression

JODLEY GREEN considers the issues raised by Katie Roiphe's book 'The Morning After'.

KATIE ROIPHE has been heralded by Camille Paglia, Andrew Neil and Living Marxism as the new star of post-feminist politics.

The Morning After, is seen as stunning critique of the feminist orthodoxy on rape and the liberal consensus of political correctness.

But after all the hype, Roiphe's 'unflinching look at today's sexual politics' doesn't live up to expectations.

In place of analysis, is a story tale narrative, peopled by shallow college kids who have walked straight out of novels by Bret Easton Ellis and the like.

Roiphe's overly impressionistic snapshot of American campus politics simply can't answer the interesting and important questions she raises when she says:

'By viewing rape as encompassing more than the use or threat of physical violence to coerce someone into sex, rape-crisis feminists reinforce traditional views about the fragility of the female body and will'.

Roiphe is right to argue for definitions which don't collapse the distinction between consensual heterosexual sex and rape.

She not only takes on radical feminists who view all intercourse as rape but

also more mainstream feminists who question consent as a meaningful concept when women have less power than men. Roiphe correctly argues that if feminism is to fight for women to exercise choice in other areas of their lives, then consent has to be considered a meaningful concept in relation to sex too, notwithstanding power inequalities.

To 'maintain an idea of rape' says Roiphe 'we need to reserve it for instances of physical violence or the

threat of physical violence'. Yet in the very next sentence she contrasts 'real' rape by a knife-wielding stranger with 'bogus' rape by a former boyfriend.

This has nothing to do with the threat of violence (the aggression or otherwise of the 'former boyfriend' is unspecified in Roiphe's example) and everything to do with long-standing definitions of rape based on the relationship of the attacker to the victim.

Does Roiphe really believe a former boyfriend cannot commit 'real' rape, involving the use or threat of physical violence? Or that it is not possible to have consensual sex with a 'stranger'?

Of course not. But in her desire to discredit the feminist orthodoxy, she comes close to endorsing the view that rape is a crime committed only by strangers.

If personal experience of sexual violence defines re-

lations between men and women, and if the dominance of men over women is universal, then it follows that definitions of sexual violence must be inclusive of all women's experience.

Roiphe correctly rejects the notion of rape as the central mechanism of women's oppression, yet fails to give any alternative explanation. Her chief culprit seems to be the attitude of women themselves.

Roiphe accuses the rape-crisis feminists not only of damaging the women's

We cannot throw off our shackles simply by the power of positive thinking.

Thirty years of gains are being eroded by the offensive of right wing governments in Britain and America. This has inevitably reduced the power of women, and divided men and women.

It is not, as Roiphe believes, that political correctness, the anti-pornography lobby and rape-crisis feminism are significant causes of the worsening position of women. But they do pose a danger.

For over ten years they have been placed centre stage of the feminist agenda, dividing and weakening the women's movement, and pushing other issues to the sidelines.

Like Roiphe, I believe that some feminisms are better than others. What we need is a mass women's movement which fights *all* attacks waged against women; which doesn't prioritise the issue of sexual violence on the spurious basis that rape is the cause, rather than a manifestation, of women's oppression; and one which has a notion of sexual freedom which includes the right to say yes as well as the right to say no.

This means taking on the dominant position of the anti-pornography and rape-crisis feminists. But what we don't need in their place is Roiphe's individualistic, 'power' feminism, which says women's oppression is a state of mind and that it's all the fault of 'pc'.



movement, but, since women's oppression is a product of women's attitudes, of causing women's oppression by promoting a view of women as victims.

Roiphe sees the rape-crisis movement as part of American therapy culture, with 'take back the night' being 'march as therapy'.

Yet her own view is simply the other side of self-help – you too could be a powerful lawyer, doctor or executive career woman if only you didn't see yourself as a victim.

Of course women's oppression is not the result of the acceptance of the women's passive status.

Fingers In the TILL

Fingers in the Till – A regular look at the world of business, compiled by Insider Dealer.

Blind faith – or just a blind?

LET'S START with the sad tale of property entrepreneur Nazmudin Virani, once the Conservative Party's main fundraiser in the UK Asian community and now in the dock at the Bank of Credit and Commerce International trial.

According to Mr Virani's barrister, Anthony Scrivener QC, Mr Virani was 'duped' into signing letters that falsely showed that his companies owed loans of over £20 million to BCCI. Auditors Price Waterhouse treated the sums concerned as BCCI assets, thereby inflating the bank's profit figures.

Mr Virani so trusted Mohammed Haque, head of BCCI's London property division, that he appended his signature without closely studying the documents.

For the prosecution, Anthony Hacking QC claimed that BCCI granted Mr Virani a £1 million loan in 1988, on which no repayments had been made before the bank collapsed three years later.

Mr Hacking told the jury: 'You will have to decide whether the £1 million... was a genuine loan or a sham which may be described as a reward for services provided or as a sweetener for future co-operation.'

Mr Virani was a 'willing and essential partner' in the fraud, Mr Hacking argued. Mr Virani denies one charge of conspiring to defraud BCCI investors, one of theft, one of false accounting and 11 of furnishing false information.

The trial is expected to last until April. Mr Haque

has fled to Pakistan, which does not have an extradition treaty with the UK.

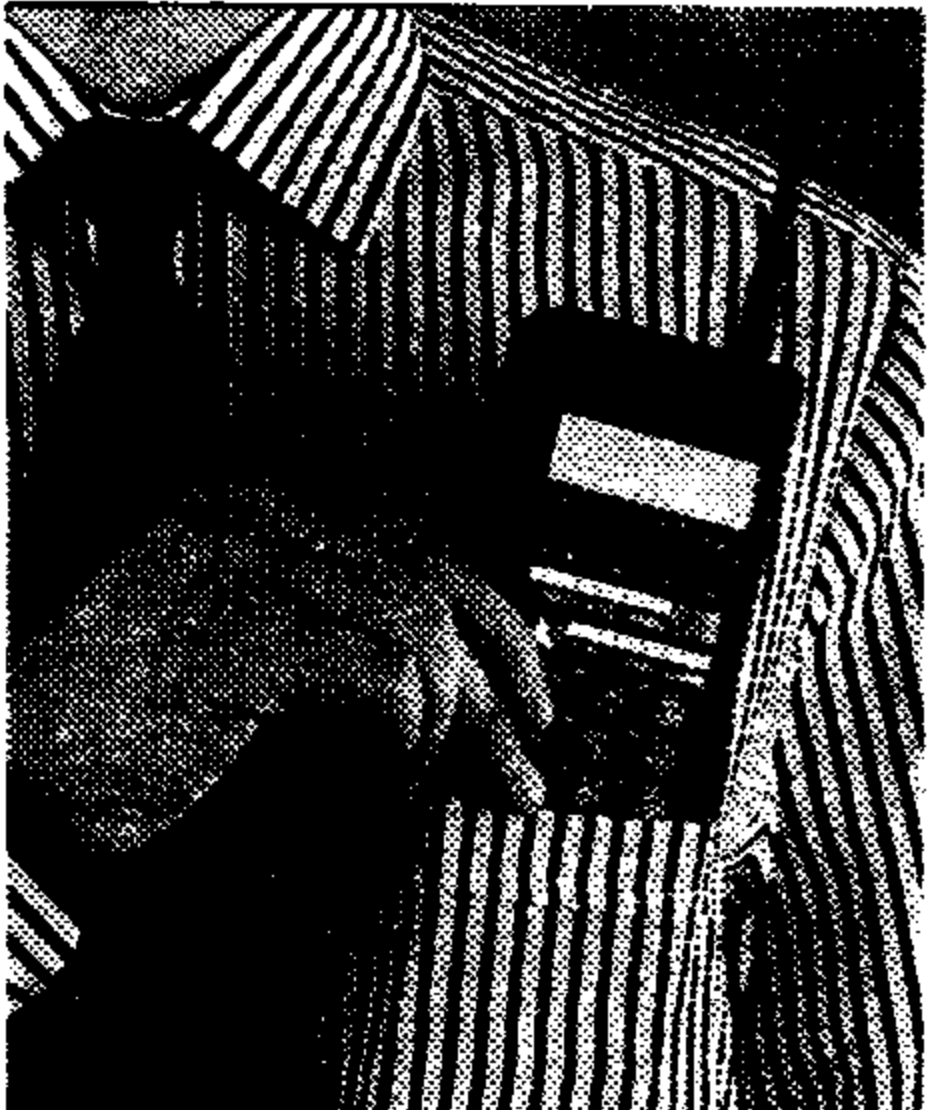
Where are they now?

EVER wonder what happened to some of the thrusting free-market entrepreneurs you have met in past editions of Fingers?

Bent banker Wallace Smith (FITT, 15 January) has been found guilty of taking a string of banks for £100 million, and will be sentenced on March 23. Word is, he could be spending up to ten years as a guest of Her Maj, but I'll believe it when I see it.

It emerged during the trial that, despite the financial desperation that drove him to crime, he was still able to donate £12,000 to pay for a year's rent on the London offices of the Bruges Group, the Thatcherite anti-EC campaign.

Meanwhile, Darius Guppy



(FITT, 1 May 1993) is appealing against the five year sentence and £533,000 fine he received last year for staging a bogus gems raid and then copping £1.8 million on the insurance.

The good news is, he is getting legal aid. The bad news is, the appeal judges have ordered him to reveal the whereabouts of the jewels and the proceeds of the crime. Darius, incidentally, was the best man at the wedding of Princess Di's brother.

They've been quangoed

WHAT do Sarah Biffen,

Janet Dunn, Thomas Shephard and Sheila Taylor have in common? Well, they are all part-time directors of NHS opt-out trust hospitals, picking up £5,000 a year for their endeavours.

Anything else? They are all married to sitting Tory MPs, namely John Biffen, Robert Dunn, Gillian Shephard and Teddy Taylor respectively. Just fancy that.

Ms Dunn was one of five directors recently appointed to Dartford and Gravesham hospital trust. Of the other four, two are councillors and another is chair of a local political party.

I bet you can guess their affiliations. Other NHS non-execs include Lord Wade of Chorlton, joint treasurer of the Conservative Party between 1982 and 1990.

And here is an update on the careers of a trio of former Tory ministers. What are Lord Barney Hayhoe Patrick (now Lord) Jenkin and Ian Grist up to, now that they no longer grace the corridors of Westminster?

Lord H is the chair of Guys -St Thomas's Hospital Trust (presiding over the closure of Guy's); Lord J is chair of the Forest Healthcare Trust, embroiled in cash crisis in Waltham Forest, while Ian is chair of South Glamorgan District health Authority. Each gent picks up a miserly £19,285 for a three day week.

Splashing out

'BUYING A Luxury Yacht' by Gillian Beach, is a 352-page publication jam-packed with 'advice and expertise on every aspect of superyacht purchase and ownership from leading authorities around the world'. At just £40, it is a veritable bargain.

From this invaluable volume, I learned that both Lady Ghislaine, the vessel from which Robert Maxwell went skinny-dipping for the last time, and My Gail III, owned by Gerald 'Guinness trial' Ronson, were built at the same yard. It is currently working on Trump Princess II on behalf of Donald Trump, but apparently you don't have to be a crooked businessman to place an order.

Waste not, want not

REMEMBER David Ashby, the Tory MP who slept in the same bed as a male friend during their hols in France?

Virulently rejecting gutter press insinuations about his sexuality, Mr Ashby insisted that he was motivated solely by the desire to save a few pennies on hotel bills.

FITT took a look at the last available accounts for a company called Drimount Ltd, which lists Mr Ashby as a director and shareholder.

These show annual sales of over £3 million and profits of £118,593, after directors' salaries of course. Drimount's assets exceed £1.2 million, making Mr Ashby a millionaire.

WHERE WE STAND

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Engels, Lenin and Trotsky.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

FEATURE

Socialist Outlook 300 Club

More fun than lending us your rent

Is used to be that supporters of socialist newspapers lent their rent money to help meet the printers bills. Now we'll pay you! In return for a monthly stake in our 300 Club, you get the chance to win a big cash prize or a smart gift. In February's draw the winners are Anne Wackett, who wins £50, and Jim Padmore, who'll be getting Aram Eisenschitz and Jamie Gough's new book *The Politics of Local Economic Policy*.

Just fill in this form and send it back to us.

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What's HAPPENING

WANT YOUR event included?
Send details by **March 18 to What's Happening?, P.O. Box 1109, London N4 2UU.**

MARCH

Saturday 12

The new South Africa, Zimbabwe and the region: open forum 1pm - 4.30pm SOAS Lecture Theatre WC1 details Diane Jeater 071 738 4495

Launch meeting of emergency line for victims of racist and fascist attacks and police harassment with **Unmesh Desai, Tower Hamlets Nine Defence Campaign and National Union of Refugees Organisations** 4pm Room 8 Lambeth Town Hall SW9 Joe Giltrap plays free Frank Johnson social 8-12pm Kennedy Hall Camden Irish Centre Murray Street NW1 Admission £3

Tuesday 15

Start of Operation Roadblock against the M11 link Join the national rota! Bookings and action information packs phone 081 558 2638

Wednesday 16

Liberation! NUS supplement meeting 1pm - 4.30pm London

Thursday 17

Arab women speak out about their women and future 7pm Friends Meeting House 173-177 Euston Road London NW1 open event - men welcome details: Palestine Solidarity campaign 071 700 6192

Friday 18

Free Riaz and Qayyum! Human Rights for Black Prisoners picket the Home Office 10am-2pm Queens Anne's Gate SW1

Saturday 19

National demonstration against racism in East London called by TUC. Assemble 11am Spitalfields Market off Commercial Street E1. Move off at 12 noon. Rally 2pm London

Fields off Mare Street E8. Details North East: 091 490 0033 Yorks: 0532 429696 North West 051 933 6067 West Mids: 021 622 2050 East Mids: 0602 472444 East Anglia: 0233 66795 South East: 071 636 4030 South West: 0272 506425 Wales: 0222 372345 Scotland: 041 322 4946

Africa: Make or Break conference with Susan George, author *The Debt Boomerang* 10am - 5pm South Bank University London details: Oxfam 071 737 7967

Sunday 20

The Patriot Game London Socialist Film Co-op showing 1.30pm for 2pm Conway Hall Red Lion Square WC1 tickets £3.50/£2.00

Monday 21

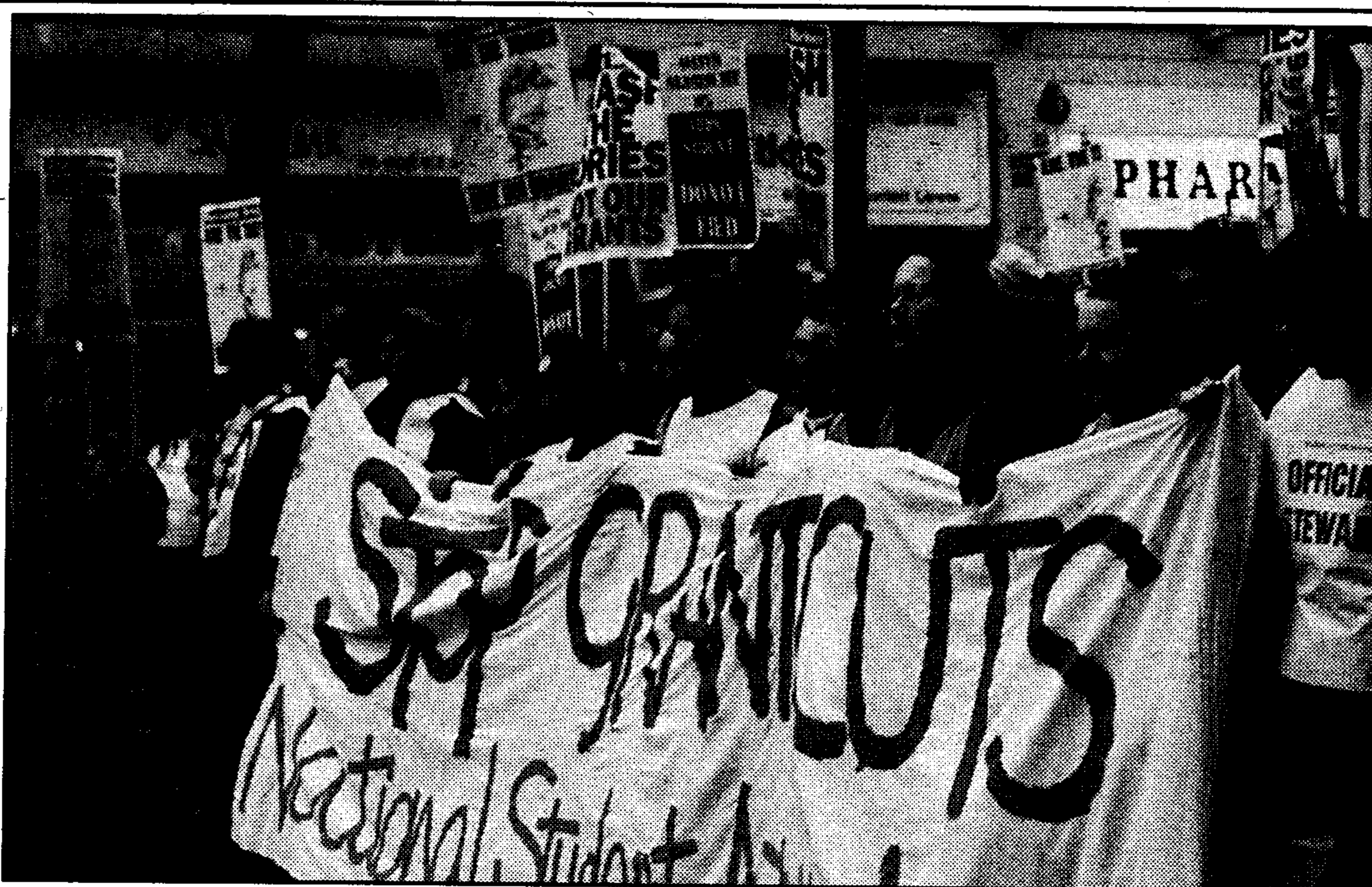
Bullets to Ballots: will elections bring peace to Central America? Camden Nicaragua Association public meeting 7pm SOAS Malet Street WC1

Wednesday 23

Let Bosnia Live! International Workers' Aid public meeting 7.30pm Lambeth Town Hall Brixton Demonstrate against fascist councillor Beacon! picket of Jack Dash House Marsh Wall

Tuesday 29

Tower Hamlets 6 Defence



10,000 students joined rank-and-file march in protest at grant cuts.

Four-page *Liberation!* supplement in the next issue of *Socialist Outlook* will explain socialist strategy to defend student rights and their union

Campaign picket 9.30am Thames Magistrates Court Bow Road

Wednesday 30

Angola Emergency Campaign Lobby of Parliament 7pm Committee room booked in the name of Bob Hughes MP details: 071 387 6771

APRIL

Tuesday 5

Demonstrate against the Child Support Act at CSA regional offices

Saturday 9

Communities of resistance against racism and fascism national rally 1-5pm Pakistani Community Centre Stockport Road Longsight Manchester

Mon 11-Thu 14

National Union of Students conference Winter Gardens Blackpool

Saturday 16

Campaign Against the Child Support Act national conference 10am-6pm Kingsway College Sidmouth Street off Grays Inn Road Kings Cross WC1 de-

tails PO Box 287 NW6 5QU

End the Blockade: Cuba Solidarity Campaign day-school Conway Hall Red Lion Square WC1

Friday 21

Campaign Against the Arms Trade Candlelight Concert 7.30pm St Martin-in-the-fields Trafalgar Square Tickets £12/£9/£6 from 071 930 0089

Sunday 24

Mozambique Angola Committee AGM 11am - 3pm BDAF 22 The Ivories 6-8 Northampton Street Islington N1 tube: Highbury & Islington

Tuesday 26

Lobby of British Aerospace AGM Marriot Hotel Grosvenor Square W1

Thursday 28

March to commemorate International Workers Memorial Day 12.00 Euston Station to Parliament details Construction Safety Campaign 071 537 7220

Campaign Against Hazards in London meeting 2.30pm

- 6.30pm Church House Dean's Yard off Great Smith Street details 071 226 5436

Lobby of Parliament against de-regulation 2.30pm - 7.30pm

Sat 30

Liberation! editorial meeting 11am Manchester

Leeds TUC May Day march and rally 11.30am assemble outside the art gallery

MAY

Wednesday 11

Angola Emergency Campaign Lobby of Parliament 7pm Committee room booked in the name of Bob Hughes MP details: 071 387 6771

Sat 21

National free speech day - picket your local McDonald's details London Greenpeace 5 Caledonian Road N1 9DX

Saturday 28

Anti Nazi League Carnival Clapham Common London Note new date

Indian jute workers take on bosses, state, corrupt unions

By **Kunal Chattopadhyay, ICS, Fourth International**

OVER 2,000 West Bengal workers have occupied the Kanoria Jute Mill since December 1993. The factory, at Phuleswar near Calcutta, reopened under workers' control after management suspended work.

West Bengal's jute industry is remarkable for the massive profits made by the owners, the repeated, systematic and boldly illegal cheating of the workers' dues, and the decades long plea of 'crisis' to increase the exploitation of workers.

The jute industry is also characterised by some of the most corrupt of unions.

Every year owners cheat when it comes to depositing their share of workers' 'Provident Fund' (PF) social insurance payments and resort to periodic lockouts. Currently nine jute mills are closed, involving 37,000 workers. The total amount not paid into the PF accounts is over 809 million rupees (around £20 million).

The four recognised unions at the Kanoria factory had all agreed a plan for 166 job losses, a higher workload, and the financing of the company by a daily 11 rupee deduction from wages. To the workers this unionism came to mean only an added oppression as the union leaders collected un-

ion dues, lectured on the need for long-term struggle, and did nothing in practice. A year ago a majority of workers joined the Sangrami Sramik Union (Militant Workers Union). In November the union called a one-day strike as management had not paid the House Rent Allowance.

Occupied

Workers occupied the factory after management threatened to suspend production, in the face of hostility from the stalinist 'Communist' Party of India, whose Bengali daily *Ganashakti* called exemplary solidarity action by people from 87 surrounding villages "picnicking". But over 50 trade unions and many established left activists, includ-

ing veteran CPI leader Hiren-dranath Mukerjee, came forward in support of the occupation.

Already the occupation has made a permanent mark in the West Bengal. A High Court ruling stopping workers from producing and selling has shown the class nature of the legal system to many.

While the Kanoria struggle is in full swing, other struggles are preparing. Both moral and material support are needed from trade unions, political organisations and mass organisations world wide. Send contributions and solidarity messages to Secretary, Sangrami Sramik Union, Sijberia, Phuleswar, Howrah, West Bengal, India or to Abhijit Roy, 6/9 Bijoygarh, Calcutta - 700032, India.

WORLD NEWS

Socialist OUTLOOK

unite
against
RACISM

Saturday 19 March

Bosnia carve-up won't bring peace



By Geoff Ryan

The American and German sponsored Croat-Muslim Federation is not a change in imperialist policy: it is simply a new form of partition. In some ways it is the worst solution since it includes just over half of Bosnia: Bosnian Serbs control 49%. The federation would be linked in a looser confederation to Croatia.

The deal has been made possible by pressure, sweetened with promises of massive aid, on Tudjman to force him to choose between an alliance with Izetbegovic or Milošević.

John Major made it clear last week that the role of the US government should be to lean on Izetbegovic to get him to make whatever concessions are needed. Boris Yeltsin has also been allowed in on the act, to pressurise Milošević.

Russian troops are the guarantors of partition acceptable to Serbia.

Since both Tudjman and Milošević are being offered considerably more than they could win on the battlefield they will not need too much persuading.

We are still a long way from a peaceful settlement. There is no guaranteed right for people to return to their homes. Indeed the proposed 'cantons' make such a right highly unlikely since they will be *de facto* ethnically based, whatever the promises in New York.

Internal battles inside all three communities are likely, as well as between nationalist forces and those defending a multi-national Bosnia. Former President of Herceg-Bosna Mate Boban was removed by Tudjman to make this deal possible but his Herzegovinian supporters may well reject federation with Muslims.

Moreover the fascist HOS has been in favour of maintaining a unitary Bosnian state - so that the whole of Bosnia could be swallowed up by Croatia!

Fears of the consequences of the deal have already been voiced by Serbs in the Croatian *Krajina* who believe that they will be abandoned by Milošević.

The Croat-Muslim federation would cut off their supply routes from Serbia, while Tudjman has stated he will only al-

low UN forces to remain in Croatia if he is allowed control over Serb areas.

Since Serb gunners continue to shell Bihac from inside the United Nations Protected Areas in Croatia any peace deal would depend on disarming them. Whether done by Tudjman or the UN it would be resisted by the *Krajina* Serbs, increasing the difficulties of Milošević whose authority amongst the Serbs of Croatia is under challenge.

Serbs who fought inside the Bosnian *Armija* or stayed in the cities to defend a multi-national state will now come under pressure from all sides since their position in a Croat-Muslim state is far from clear - particularly a federation linked to Croatia.

The fundamentalist minority of Muslims will obviously oppose the deal since it removes the possibility of an Islamic state in any form. But it is also far from clear that many Muslims would want to live in a divided Bosnia in which they would be under constant threat of annexation by Tudjman.

The imperialists know that the imposition of 'peace' is not going to be easy. That is why General Rose is demanding more troops. But we should be under no illusions what the role of those troops will be: the partition of Bosnia by whatever means necessary.

Should newspapers take sides?



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For your copy send a donation of £30 or more to International Workers Aid, 12-14 Thornton Street London SW9 0BL. Tel 071 978 8622.