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Socialist OUTLOOK

LABOUR CONFERENCE
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As Blair caves in to capitalism ...

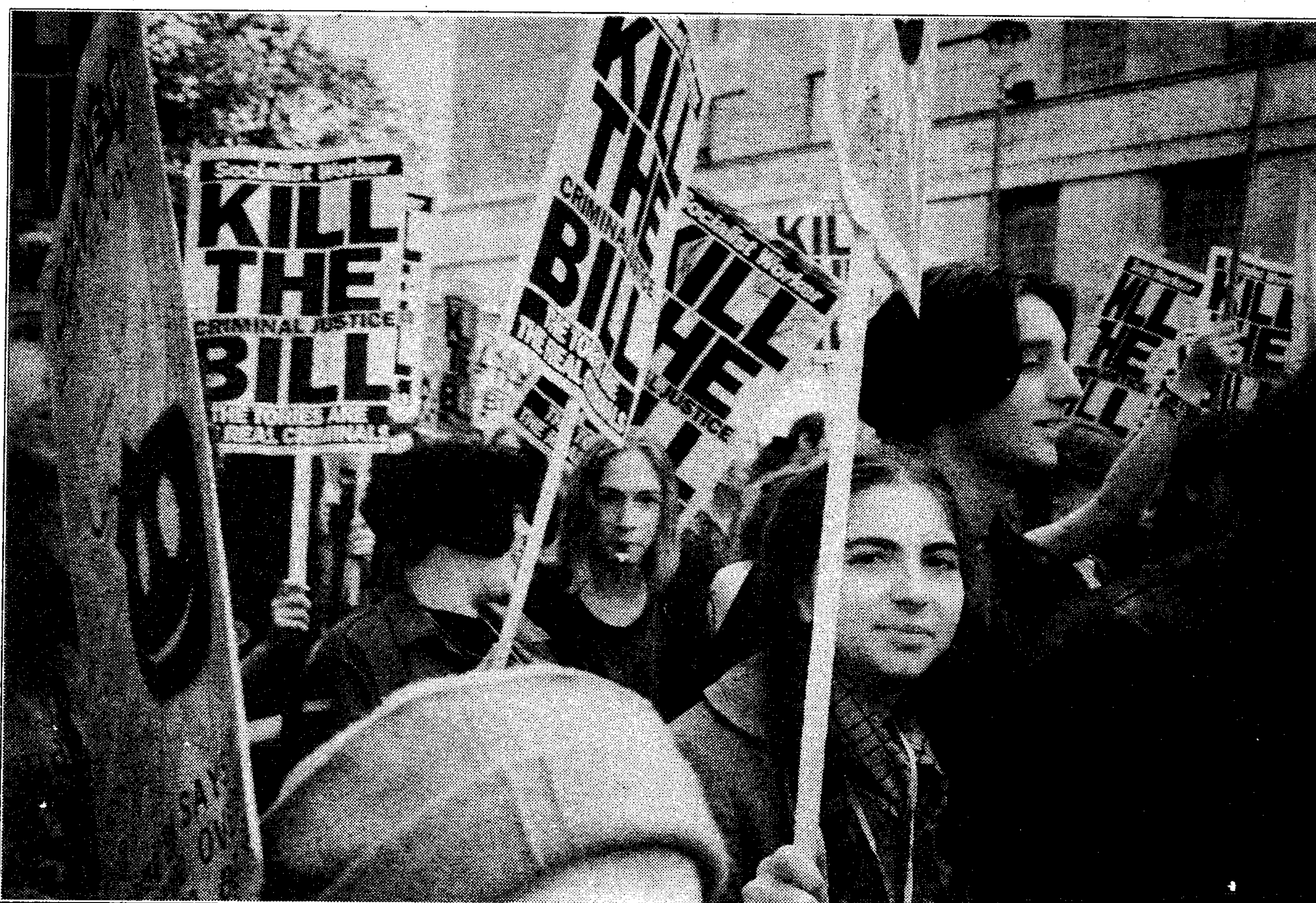
Defend Clause 4!

Fight for



Fighting to save Guy's Hospital: see Welfare State campaigns, page 2

socialism!



They came from all over the country: 80,000 mainly young people joined the national demonstration against the Tory Criminal Justice Bill – and were savagely attacked by police. See back page.

Tories plan to rob blind

TORY ministers are planning to push through new legislation to block extra benefits to blind people, according to a leaked circular.

In April, the House of Lords upheld a case brought by Eric Mallinson, a blind man from Manchester, in which he argued for an allowance to pay for a guide dog when he visited unfamiliar places.

However civil servants have since stepped in not only to obstruct subsequent similar claims, but even to deny Mr Mallinson the extra money he is due.

Instead an official circular to disability appeal tribunals in September says that "It is the intention of the government to lay a short bill before Parliament which will presumably have the purpose of counteracting the decision in some way."

Bosses snatch sick pay

MORE and more cheapskate employers are now refusing to pay sickness pay to their staff as a result of the Tories scrapping the scheme under which the government used to reimburse 80 percent of the cost.

The changed policy, introduced in April, is designed to save £700 million for the Exchequer, but advice agencies are reporting a six-fold increase in workers raising problems over sick pay.

Student nurses fight Trusts' savage rent hike

CASH-STRAPPED NHS Trusts have been trying to balance their books by jacking up rents in nurses' homes by an average of £100 per month across the country. In Leicester, the increase was a massive 250 percent, from £48 to £140 a month.

Student nurses in the East Midlands have been spearheading a militant fightback against these massive increases.

Grants (bursaries) for student nurses are pegged at just £4,260 a year. Their long working weeks running right through the year, and the requirement to work 1,000 hours on the wards as part of their training, mean that nursing students miss out on long vacations in which other



Poor now, jobless later? students earn extra cash.

The fightback has centred strongly on the East Midlands,

with 'sleep out' protests in Leicester and Derby, but there have also been actions in London and York.

Spirits have been raised by the news that after protests by over 100 student nurses, Community Trust bosses in Northampton have suspended the imposition of a 50 percent rent increase to allow for negotiations.

With Trusts across the country cutting back on nurse training and seeking to minimise the numbers of qualified staff they employ, student nurses are not even certain of a job when they qualify.

The fight, organised by health union UNISON, goes on. It could help to radicalise the rest of the NHS workforce.

Student accommodation is a profitable business for developers according to housing specialists in Leeds.

Ron Strong of the central accommodation agency Unipol has pointed out that:

"The return on student development is better than most investments.

"A £1.5m development might supply 130 rooms at around £12,500 each. If each student paid £35 per week for 43 weeks of the year, then the return on the investment is about 12 percent."

Many students are paying far more for inferior accommodation. They are not just getting a bum deal: they are being brutally ripped off.

WELFARE STATE CAMPAIGN

New paper campaigns for Welfare State

Labour Conference saw the launch of *Action*, the campaigning newspaper of the Welfare State Network, seeking to link up the many campaigns on Welfare State issues across the country.

The first, pilot issue of the paper carries an impressive range of coverage, spanning health campaigns, pensioners, housing, disability issues, students, youth benefits, low pay, and nurs-

ery campaigns.

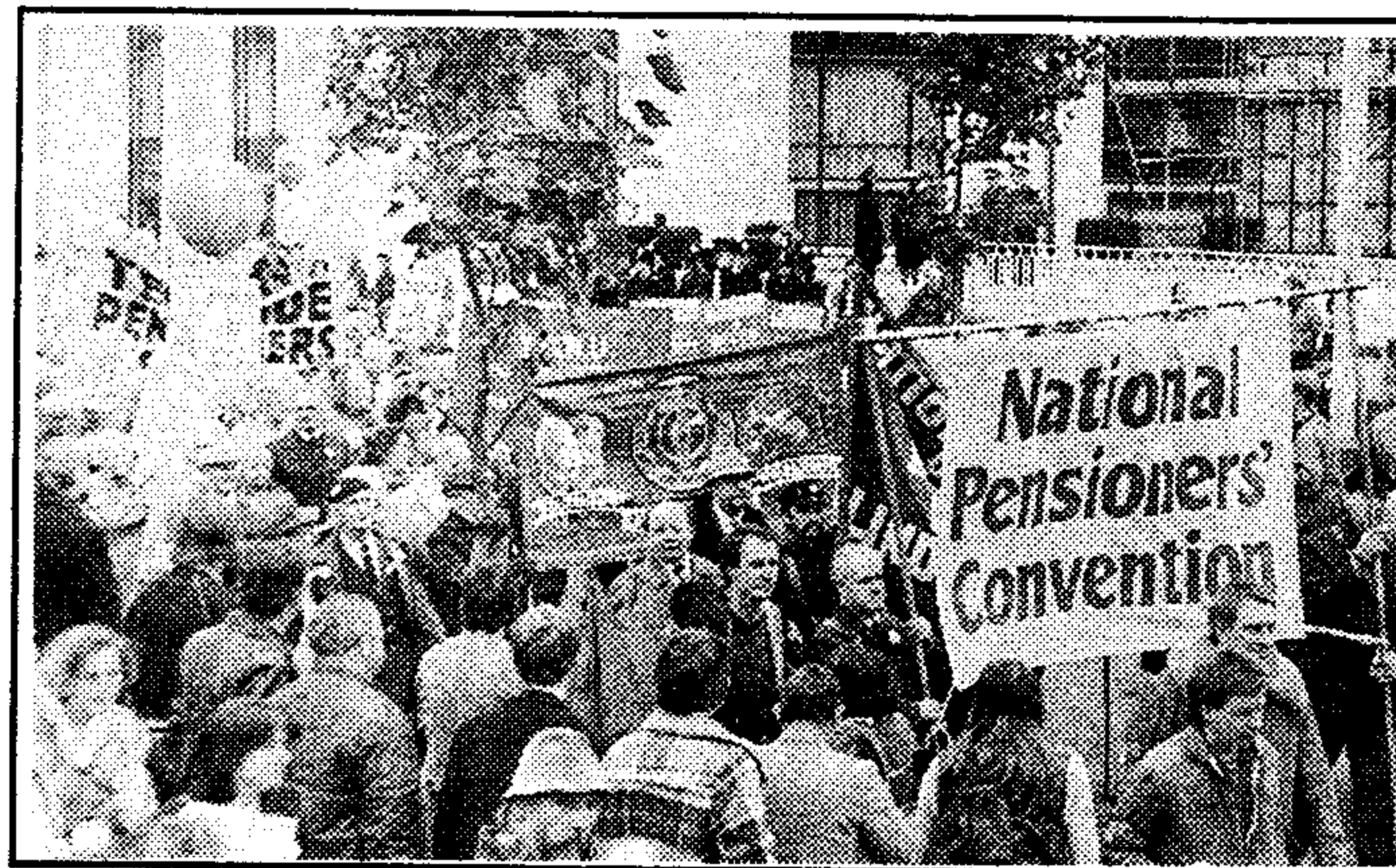
The newspaper is designed to be distributed through affiliated organisations, and urges affiliations from labour movement organisations, community campaigns and individuals. Already over 300 individuals and organisations have signed their support for the Network's basic policy statement.

As well as producing the paper to spread information and build solidarity between campaigns, the Network will

be organising a major national conference in London on April 8.

The Network will be holding an open meeting on November 12 at Islington Town Hall (beginning at 12 noon), and is also urging campaigners to participate in the December 3 conference of the Defend the Welfare State campaign supported by Ken Livingstone and union leaders including the GMB's John Edmonds.

Affiliation to the Network is



Different campaigns can join forces through Network

just £25 (£10 to groups of pensioners and unwaged). Make sure your union, Labour Party and local campaigns get in-

involved.

Write to Welfare State Network, c/o Southwark TUSU, 42 Braganza St, London SE17.

Defend socialism!

Defend Clause Four!

TONY BLAIR seems set to do what Hugh Gaitskell could not do and Neil Kinnock did not dare to try - abolish Clause Four of the Labour Party constitution which pledges the social ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange.

However mismanagement of the Labour conference by Walworth Road bureaucrats enabled a debate to take place on this question immediately, and for the platform to lose by a whisker.

In the next year, and especially at the union conferences next spring and summer, every affiliated organisation will have to debate this question. The Left must mount a huge campaign to defend Clause Four.

That Tony Blair dares take on this question is a measure of the lurch to the right which is taking place in the Labour Party. This is a qualitative new stage of development, way beyond the capitulations carried out during the Kinnock "policy review" of the late 1980s and subsequently.

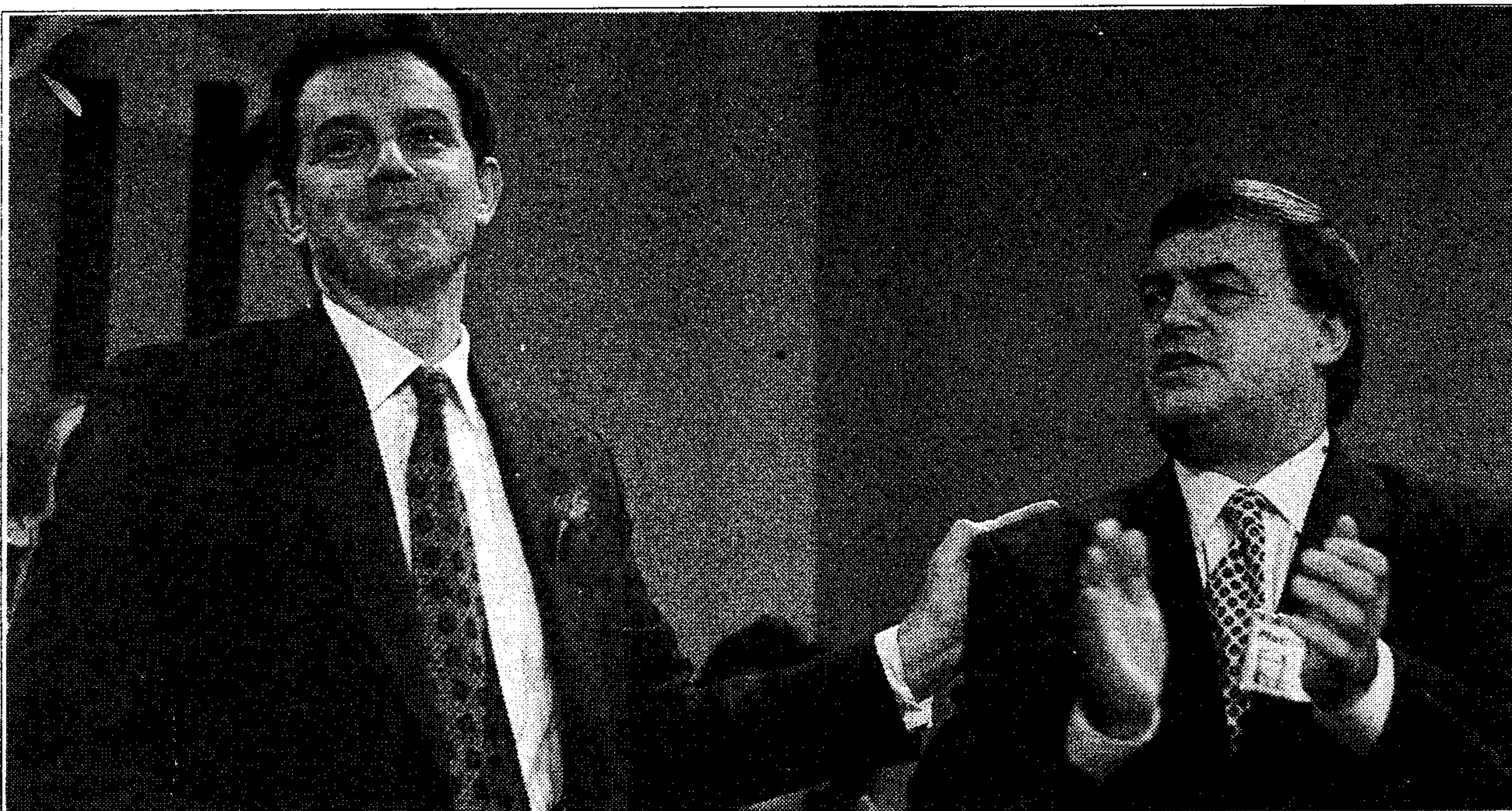
The Labour bureaucracy is using the advent of the new leader to eradicate every remnant of traditional social democratic policy - destroy all support for the mixed economy and the welfare state, and with it every major policy difference between Labour and the Tories.

Apart from defeating the platform on Clause Four, the left at Labour's conference scored successes in having Dennis Skinner and Diane Abbot elected to the NEC; Ken Livingstone also came close.

Dominant right

However none of this can hide the real relationship of forces: in the "New" Labour Party the right wing is utterly dominant. While the constituencies have undergone a certain growth in the past period, especially since Blair's election, this is a political selection of people supporting the Right. It is quite unlike the Bennite influx of the early 1980s.

Thus it is quite on the cards that Blair will actually carry a majority against Clause Four in the constituencies. Among the trade union leaders, Blair will certainly get his way.



Making Labour fit for capitalism: Prescott and Blair will join forces to push for the revision of Clause 4

The attitude of most of them was to support the approach in John Prescott's final speech: don't worry, we will have a new constitution expressing traditional values, after all we still support a nationally owned railway system and post office! By that criterion, 95 per cent of the

But while the willingness of Blair to take on Clause Four represents the confidence of the new leadership, it also provides a major opportunity for the Left to mount a sustained fightback. The battle to defend Clause Four must be raised in every constituency and, especially,

Party is not the instrument of socialist transition; it is a pro-capitalist party, albeit based on the working class. Blair could just as easily have ignored Clause Four, without committing himself to anything.

However, Clause Four has immense symbolic significance. It should not be defended because we want to defend the past traditions of Labourism, but as an opportunity to take the ideological offensive to defend socialism.

One of the great ironies of Tony Blair is that just as the Tories' free market approach has been shown to be incapable of resolving any major problem, the Labour leadership wants to abolish all policy distinction between the two big parties.

The campaign to defend Clause Four can be a tremendous opportunity to explain exactly what social ownership means, and how a society based on social need and not profit is not just morally superior, but, contrary to the claims of the "death of socialism", a perfectly workable alternative.

Just as the Tories' free market approach has been shown to be incapable of resolving any major problem, the Labour leadership wants to abolish all policy distinction between the two big parties.

world is socialist. Nationalised utilities, especially inherently unprofitable ones, are accepted world wide: even the United States has a state owned postal service.

The minimal pledge to support nationalised utilities is itself rendered meaningless by the refusal to renationalise utilities like gas, water and electricity privatised by the Tories. It is highly unlikely that a Blair Labour government would renationalise a privatised railway or postal service.

taken into every union conference.

A major campaign, uniting the whole of the Left inside the Labour Party and outside must be mounted to defend Clause Four. This must be the major campaigning theme for the Left at every union conference in 1995.

In one sense it could be argued that the issue of Clause Four is not of great practical import: every Labour government has ignored it. The social ownership of production means socialism. The Labour

Join us for memorial dinner

SOCIALISTS from all over the country will gather in London on October 22 for a dinner to honour the memory of our comrade Bob Smith, who died earlier this year at the age of 46.

Bob, who lived in Birmingham, was well-known in the anti-racist and Irish solidarity movements, and devoted much of his final year to the

struggle of Asian women at the Burnsalls factory.

The dinner will see the launch of a book, dedicated to Bob's memory, on the anti-racist and anti-fascist struggle - *Here to Stay, Here to Fight*.

It will also feature speakers prominent in the anti-racist struggle.

The dinner will raise

money for the memorial fund.

This fund will be used to finance the book, as well as to refurbish *Socialist Outlook's* offices and buy new, and urgently needed, computer equipment for the paper.

The dinner is not just for *Socialist Outlook* supporters, but open to all those who knew Bob and those dedicated to

the anti-racist and anti-fascist struggle.

Be there!

Tickets cost £12 waged, £7 unwaged from:

Socialist Outlook, PO Box 1109, London N4 2UU. Cheques should be made out to 'Bob Smith Memorial Fund'.

Please send me ... tickets for the Bob Smith memorial dinner (... waged, ... unwaged). I enclose a cheque for £.....

Name

Address

Send to PO Box 1109, London N4 2UU

EDITORIAL

Tory sleaze

Mother's Little Helper

By Dave Osler

"MARK Thatcher. £40 million. Business. The son of Baroness Thatcher. Mark Thatcher made his fortune from his Middle East and American business deals. Joint 219th".

So reads the entry for Mark Thatcher in the 1993 *Sunday Times* ranking of the super-rich. The truth is somewhat more complex: Mark Thatcher made his fortune as a go-between in the global death trade, playing on the family name to amass a fortune.

Tam Dayell, Labour MPs for Linlithgow, claimed in 1992 that Thatcher junior was "up to his neck" in arms deals with Iraq.

It has been established that on December 14 1992 Mark Thatcher's 11 Swiss bank accounts at three separate financial institutions added up to 93,142,139 francs (£41,581,312).

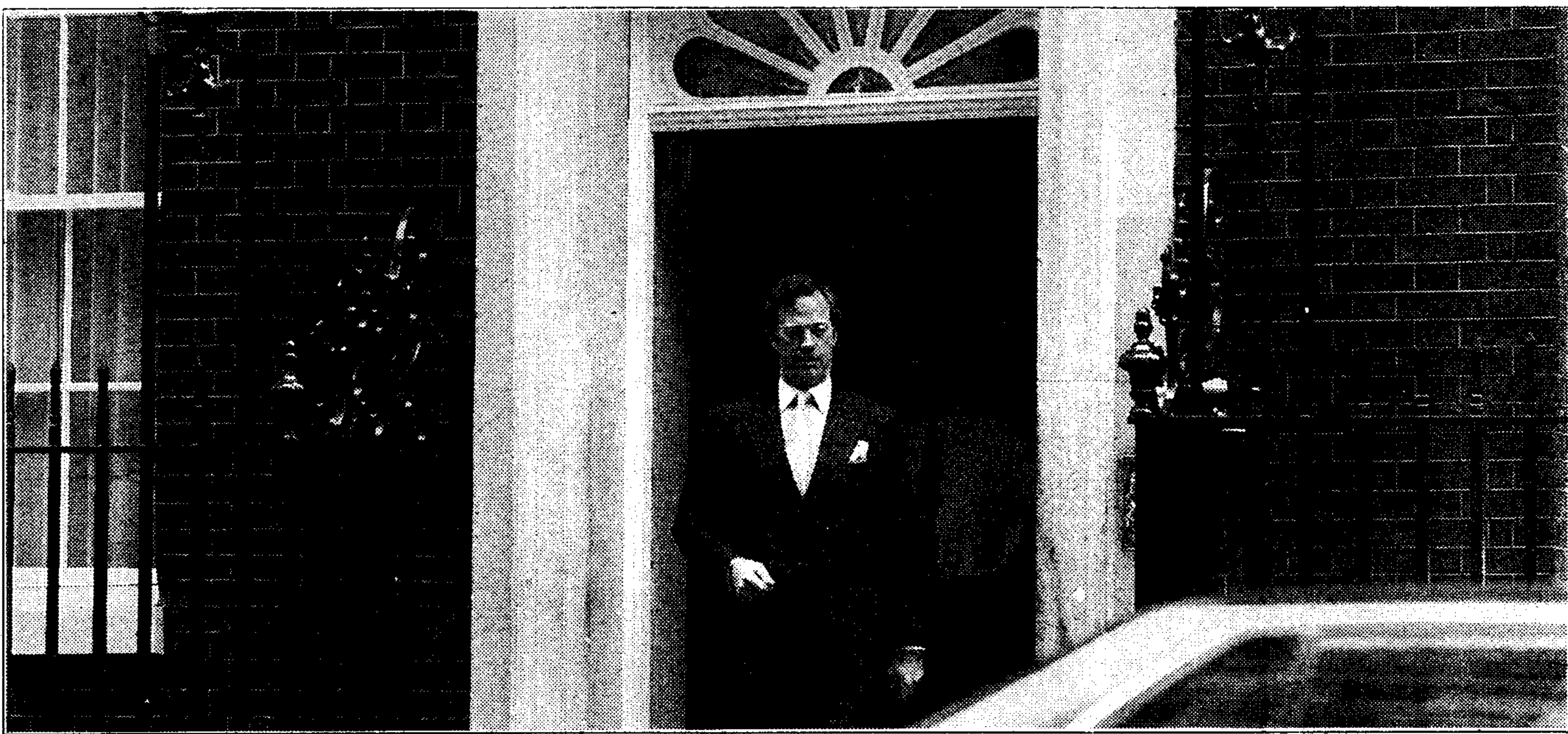
That was just his liquid assets. There are also shareholdings in South Africa, and considerable personal assets around the world, including a one-million dollar home in Dallas, a similarly-priced one in Switzerland and a £2,100,000 home in London. His net worth is probably between £80m and £100m. This pushed him up to about 80th on the rich list.

Mark Thatcher left Britain in 1994 after revelations that he had won a commission in a £300m contract with Oman during his mother's visit there three years previously.

Regular job

He took up a job as American agent for Lotus Cars, a company owned by an old Thatcher family friend, Alan Curtis, on a comparatively modest salary of £45,000 a year until 1986. It is the only regular employment he is ever known to have had.

Basing himself in Dallas, he established a personal and business relationship with Ross Perot, the right-wing populist presidential contender in the



Bringing a few quid back home? Mark Thatcher emerging from Number Ten – and not the tradesmen's entrance

Throughout his nine years in exile, Mark Thatcher made most of his real money from introducing private arms and munitions manufacturers to key contracts in various governments.

1992 elections and a key player in the Irangate scandal.

In 1991 Mark Thatcher took out Swiss resident status on the grounds he was consultant to the Lausanne branch of a Portuguese banking and investment company, Espirito Santo. He thus enjoyed an income tax rate of only 12 per cent.

Throughout his nine years in exile, Mark Thatcher made most of his real money from introducing private arms and munitions manufacturers to key contracts in various governments.

There is nothing to say he ever acted illegally. Merely furnishing introductions where no specific deal can be shown to have occurred as a direct result, and receiving money for the introduction rather than the sale, is legitimate business practice.



Pointing towards the cash?

As Gerald James, the former chairman of the defunct munitions manufacturer Astra Holdings commented: "No one is ever going to find a piece of paper with Mark Thatcher's name on it".

In 1992 James gave evidence to the House of Commons Select Committee on the Iraqi super-gun affair, claiming that Mark Thatcher was among the British nationals who received commission from Britain's £20 billion Al Yamanah II (AY2) weapons contract with Saudi Arabia in 1985, the biggest arms deal in history. The deal took place only after the personal intervention of Margaret Thatcher.

£1m house

British Aerospace was a prime beneficiary of AY2. The

company's Saudi agent, Wafic Said, was a personal friend of the Thatchers, and provided Mark Thatcher with a £1 million house in London in 1988.

In weapons sales, especially when sanctions-busting is involved, commissions often outstrip the actual cost of the equipment.

Mark Thatcher, it has been claimed, was involved in deals including the supply of 48 Chieftain tanks to Pinochet's regime in Chile in 1983; light artillery to Jordan, again in 1983, as part of a deal in which Thatcher junior netted £1 million; and helicopters to Saudi Arabia in 1985 in a package worth £1.5 billion.

Malaysia

In 1987 he was involved in a £2 billion contract with Malaysia, taking a share of the £65 million fees with other British business people.

The most explicit allegations about Mark Thatcher's career are contained in the book *The Profits of War*, written by Ari Ben-Menashe, who formerly worked in the Israeli prime minister's office.

Ben-Menashe points out that the Israeli secret service, Mossad, often "takes out" people involved in the supply of arms to

nations of which it disapproves. This category included Mark Thatcher, and only the fact that his mother was serving prime minister stayed Mossad's hand.

Yitzak Shamir, the Israeli prime minister, wrote to Margaret Thatcher officially, expressing his disapproval at the involvement of unnamed "British nationals" in supplying Iraq, an obvious potential enemy. He was clearly referring to her son.

Without comment

"Little Major will be quite unable to hold the party together – of that we can be sure. My guess is they will ditch him before the next general election, and the Conservatives will give us the delightful choice of Mr Kenneth Clarke or Mr Michael Portillo as our next Prime Minister..."

"The 'soul of the party' will be fought over by the yobs, represented by the neo-Fascist Portillo, and the slobbs represented by the smug Hush Puppy Chancellor.

"True Tories...must vote Labour and do so enthusiastically."

A.N. Wilson, *Evening Standard*, October 14.

HOME NEWS

Clear blue water engulfing Major



Leaning to the right?

JOHN MAJOR decided to write his own speech for Tory conference this and, according to *Newsnight's* Jeremy Paxman, "it showed".

Homespun reassurance that the NHS would never be privatised drew muted applause compared with the loud reception given Michael Portillo's xenophobic rantings and Peter Lilley's new plans to force claimants to work for a pit-

tance.

The enthusiasm for introducing identity cards and the anti-Europe mania showed the politics of the ageing party activists, a massive 90% of whom are over 56. Once again the Tory right is setting the political agenda.

On one thing Major was right: the Tories have won the political battle, and in contesting the "middle ground" Blair is capitulating to Tory ideology. As Major so rightly

pointed out, if people want Tory policies they will tend to go for the real thing; as he put it, "if you want to buy a Rolex you don't buy it from a man on a street corner".

The Portillo-led right wants to bounce Major even further rightward before the next general election in 1997. If Major loses, Portillo is the next party leader and the mad dogs of vicious anti-working class nationalism will be let loose with a vengeance.

Blair's 'democracy': one delegate, one threat

By Jason Pocock

For Tony Blair, the Labour party lives or dies by its media coverage; all the stops are pulled out to make sure it goes smoothly.

At last year's Labour conference, which debated the party-union link, attempts to intimidate delegates were made for the first time in years. Party officials and MPs tried to get delegates to break their mandates.

This year, blatant manipulation of the conference, the media and delegates was apparent throughout.

Due to the increase in the number of constituency delegates and the introduction of the quota system for women delegates, there was a high proportion of first-time delegates.

This is no bad thing in itself; but many were unfamiliar with procedures, and this made them less confident in standing up to pressure.

Nor were such attempts restricted to constituency delegates.

Last year's conference, as part of weakening the union link, decided union delegates would be issued with an individual voting card - rather than one card for the whole of each union's vote.

Union leaders immediately made it clear this would make no difference - delegates would be expected to vote in line with un-



The old block-vote wheeler-dealing has been replaced by Blair's new-model intimidation

ion policy.

Manipulation of the agenda took place before the conference started, when USDAW withdrew their resolution spelling out a definite figure for a national minimum wage.

Ducking conflict

Despite this having emerged as a contentious issue, with Blair refusing to accept a commitment to a specific figure, a union representing some of those most affected didn't want to be seen as being in conflict with him.

In past years, resolutions on cuts in defence spending and scrapping Trident have been taken separately. This time officials browbeat delegates into accepting both being composited

into one resolution.

This was done as a ploy to get both defeated, since some unions like the GMB, committed to defence cuts, would not support scrapping Trident.

But this attempted manipulation failed, with the composited resolution being carried by a small margin.

Regional organisers, used only to organising booze-ups, this year organised "briefing" meetings for delegates, which went through the agenda explaining the NEC's position on resolutions.

Some of them followed this up with pressure - sometimes successful - on delegates to remit resolutions.

Blair's speech itself was the height of media manipulation.

meaning of "a modern statement of our objectives", which meant they were able to represent the standing ovation, given while delegates were still digesting the final few sentences, as endorsement of Blair's plans.

Suddenly realising there was a resolution reaffirming Clause Four on the agenda, the apparatus was mobilised in an attempt to minimise the damage.

MPs, officials at all levels and the standing orders committee were all brought in to try to get the resolution withdrawn, and as a result the Maryhill delegate went into hiding overnight to avoid the pressure.

Then attempts were made to pressurise delegates into breaking their mandates on this issue. With some blips, media coverage of the conference was good for Blair.

But a large minority went away determined to fight his plans and aware of the means he will use to try to achieve them.

Copies of the text released beforehand left out the coded reference to scrapping Clause Four.

Only during the speech did officials alert the media to the

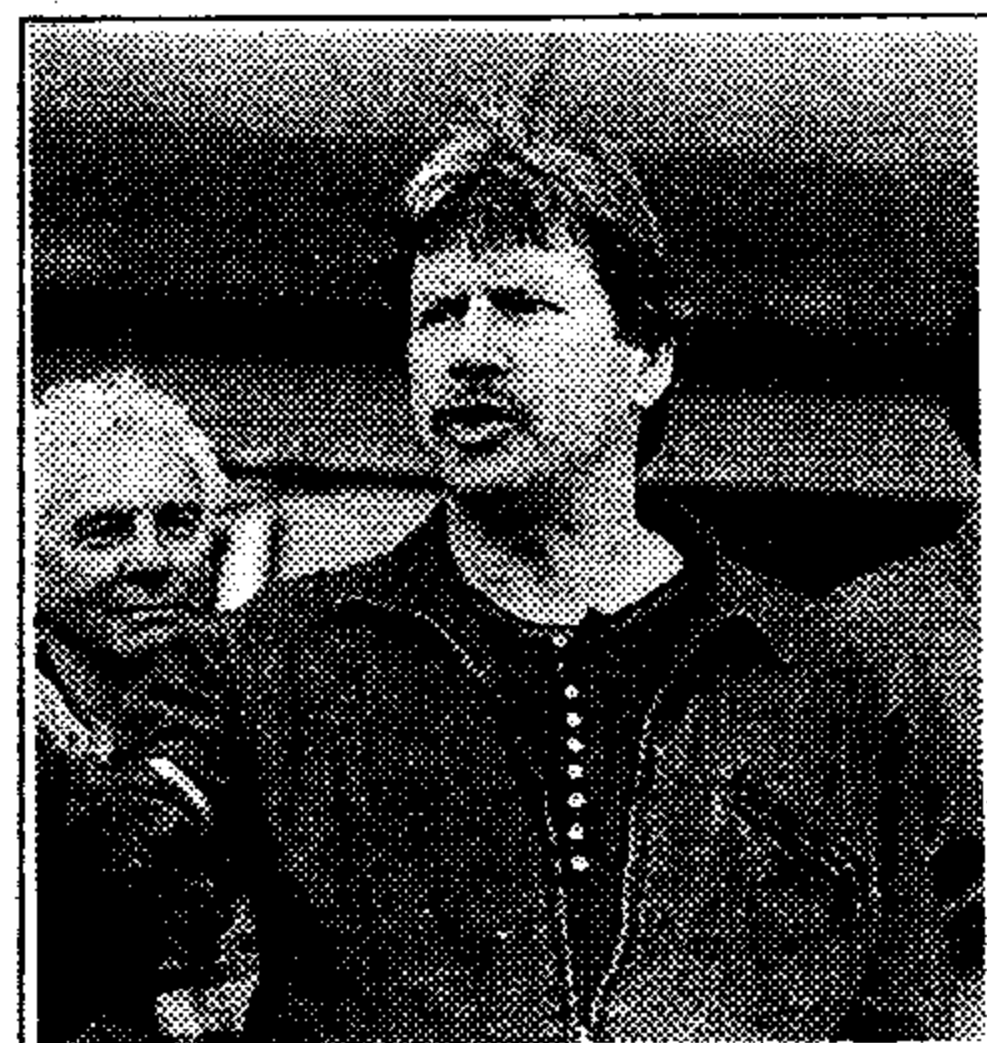
**Defend Clause Four,
Defend Socialism
Campaign launch meeting
Saturday November 12, 1pm
St Aloysius Hall, Phoenix Rd., NW1
near Euston Station (Eversholt St. exit)
Affiliations: minimum £10; send to NUM, 2
Huddersfield Rd., Barnsley, Yorks.**

North West gets organised to fight Tories

By Steve Hall and Glenn Voris

A MAJOR regional conference to help organise a fighting left against Tory attacks will be held in Manchester on October 29/30.

The conference has wide sponsorship from leading local union activists, trades council leaders and campaign activists.



Sponsor: Alec McFadden (Wirral TUC Secretary)

It aims to build on struggles such as that to defend Park-

side pit and the signal workers' struggle which was well supported in the North West, as well as existing fighting networks like Women Against Pit Closures, whose activists are prominent sponsors of the conference.

The conference aims to promote joint work and greater unity among the left on a regional level, particularly among trade unions and local communities.

A wide range of workshops will take up issue such as fighting racism and fascism; defending the welfare state; fighting for jobs; fighting the Criminal Justice Bill; defending the ecology; homelessness; privatisation; and the Tory offensive on "family values".

The conference aims to be much more than a talking shop: a plenary session with debate the establishment of a North West Liaison Committee as a permanent forum for building unity in struggle.

Equality - a point well taken

By Peter Purton (LCLGR)

THE SUPPORT for lesbian and gay equality at Labour Party conference stirred the syrup of Blair's New Labour. Even the AEU, which has traditionally opposed resolutions from the Campaign for Lesbian and Gay Rights, did not vote against.

Despite opposing an equal age of consent in February, David Blunkett had to announce a 97.6% vote in favour. His words to the delegates - 'point well taken' - put the seal on a massive victory.

Never in five LCLGR conference campaigns has backing come so easily. Lesbian and gay equality is no longer a problem for Labour Party and trade union activists. Support and understanding is well in advance of the Parliamentary Labour Party. Converting the win into prac-

tical politics will not be so easy.

Labour students put forward a far less controversial compromise to that favoured by lesbian and gay activists. It concentrated attention on the age of consent above all other questions.

Yet an equal age of consent has been voted for no less than FIVE times before.

LCLGR wanted to widen the debate to address issues of family and social policy to highlight the inferior rights of lesbians and gay men compared to heterosexuals.

This is especially vital in the current climate of "back to basics" and the attacks on single parents.

The work of LCLGR must continue if we are to dent the enthusiasm for the mythical model family shown by both old-fashioned labourism and new-fashioned Blairism.

But the near unanimous vote at conference shows how far we have come.

LABOUR CONFERENCE

FIGHTBACK CONFERENCE

UMIST Students Union, Barnes Wallis Building, Sackville St, MANCHESTER

Saturday 29 - Sunday 30 October

Further details: Fightback Conference, c/o 1 Church St, Atherton, Manchester

Clause Four - Holy Writ?

By Jon White

"To secure for workers by hand or by brain the full fruits of their industry and the most equitable distribution thereof that may be possible, upon the basis of the common ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange, and the best obtainable system of popular administration and control of each industry and service."

THE LABOUR leaders have never liked Clause Four - it sounds to them too much like socialism. Yet despite its radical tone, it was adopted in 1918 as a way of blocking a more left-wing alternative.

To understand how the Labour Party came to espouse such a far reaching commitment it is necessary to look at the state of the labour movement after the first world war.

It was not until 1918 that the Labour Party become a truly national organisation. Before this it was a loose federation of groups.

Only under the impact of the Russian revolution could so radical a statement be accepted. However, it was deliberately conceived by its authors as non-revolutionary. This strange state of affairs is explained by the unique origins of the Labour Party.

Origins

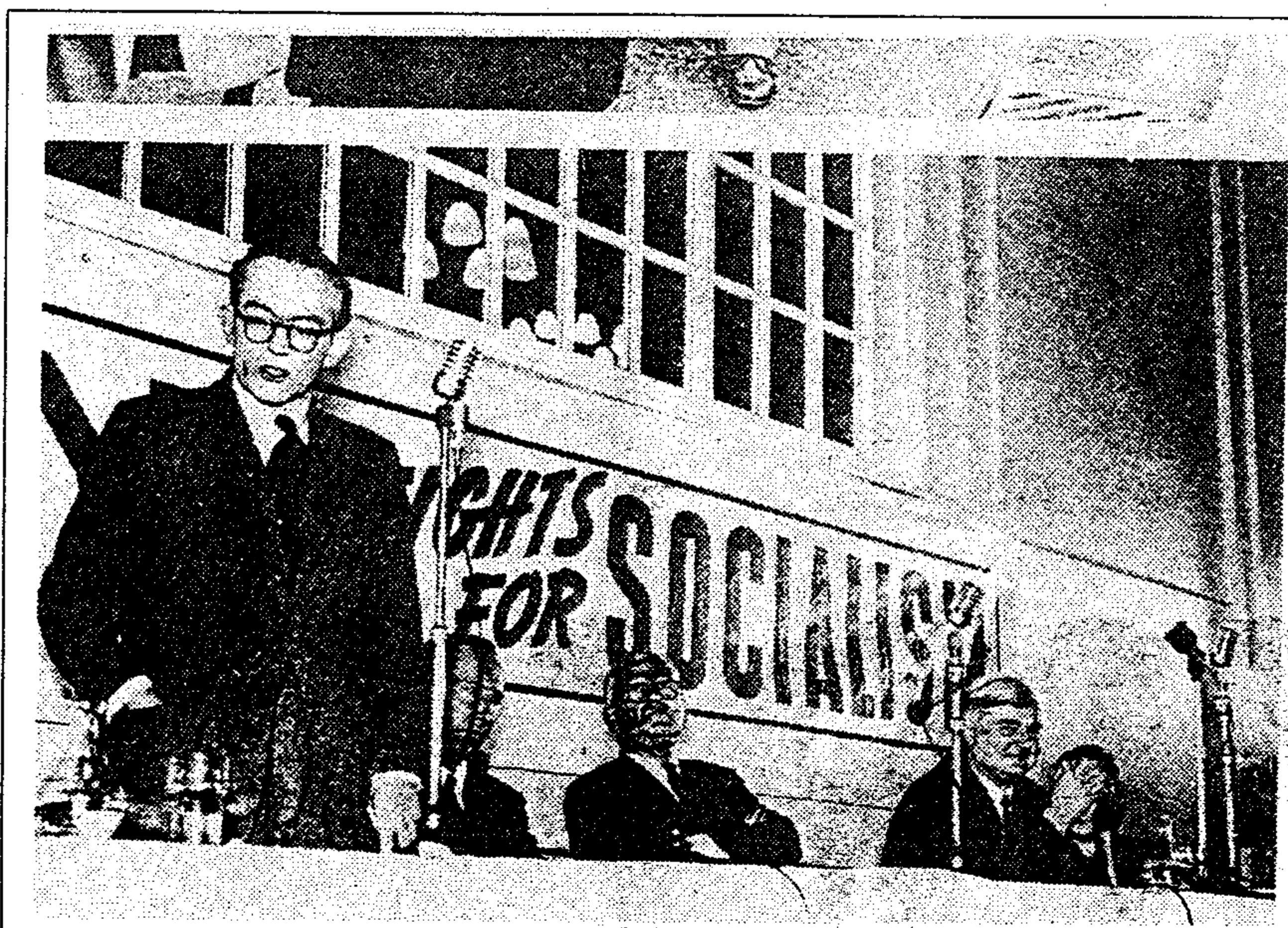
The party grew out of the Labour Representation Committee, set up in February 1900 to win representation for the working class. This was not seen by its advocates as an instrument of socialist change, but to express the opinion of "men sympathetic with the aims and demands of the labour movement". Class struggle was not part of its programme.

Only the Marxist Social Democratic Federation suggested a more radical position. The vast majority of the delegates at the 1900 conference were quite happy with the formulation. They were mainly radical liberals not socialists. They desired only for wage earners "to be organized to support trade union principles and ideas by political methods".

The LRC took upon itself the endorsement of candidates for parliament. These were never opposed by the Liberals. Indeed there was a formal agreement for Liberals not to stand in opposition to the



Clement Attlee (left) at 1938 Miners' Gala: even Labour's right wing has coexisted with Clause 4 for almost 100 years



"Fighting for Socialism" has been the stock slogan of British left reformism

LRC. In return Kier Hardie and Ramsey MacDonald promised to "demonstrate friendliness".

This went as far as to let in without a fight the Liberal Party's candidate in Dundee in 1908, one Winston Churchill. There was, said MacDonald, "no profound gulf" between the two organisations. The LRC in this period was a Liberal pressure group rather than a party in its own right.

MacDonald's organisation rejected militant action in favour of parliamentary tactics. In 1911 Arthur Henderson even proposed a Bill to make strikes which had not given 30 days notice illegal.

War

The first World War was supported unhesitatingly by the Labour Party. Days after it began Keir Hardie wrote

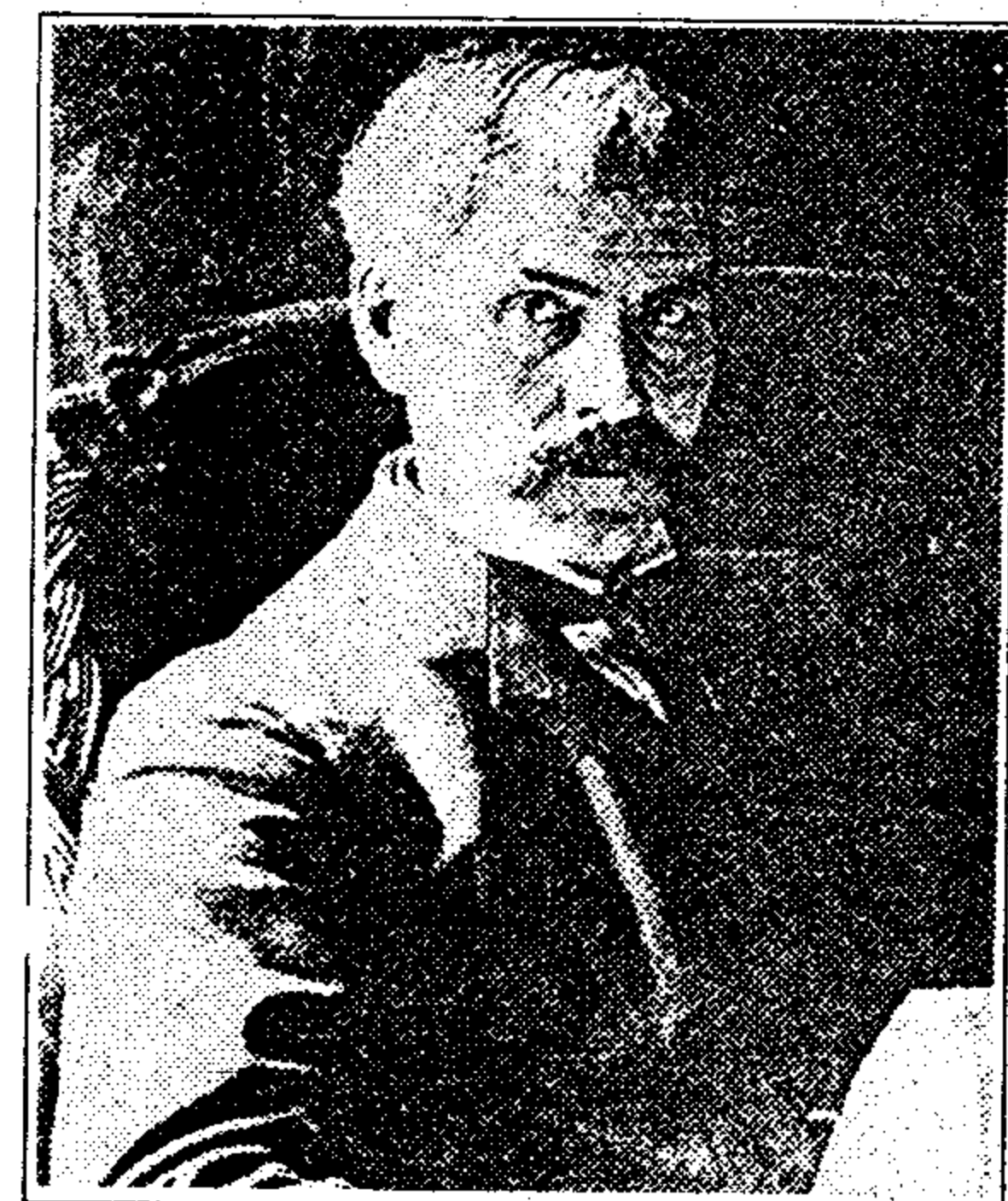
"a nation at war must be united". He argued that "With the boom of the enemy's guns within earshot, the lads who have gone forth to fight their country's battles must not be disheartened by any discordant notes at home".

The bosses soon realised how useful it was to have the Labour leaders on their side. They were the perfect agents for suppressing working class action.

Keeping production going was vital to prosecute the war. Through appeals for workers' self sacrifice hours could be extended and wages cut.

In return for pacifying their members the Labour leaders were given access to the highest level of decision making. In Asquith's coalition government they were taught to reject all militancy as unpatriotic. Henderson's Treasury Agreement of 1915 took away the right to strike from several unions and suspended all

The construction of a mass working class party wholly tied to parliamentary politics was a deliberate strategy aimed to "rehabilitate Parliament in the eyes of the people" and channel discontent away from Bolshevism.



Ramsay MacDonald joined a Tory coalition - but didn't drop Clause 4!

rules that would hinder increasing production.

Labour MPs enthusiastically recruited young men for the cannons of the battle fields. They opposed all negotiation. The only peace they favoured was through complete victory for the British Empire.

Russian Revolution

The Russian Revolution changed everything. The cosy deal the leaders had with the bosses could not continue while the revolutionary wave swept through Europe.

A three week strike of 200,000 people in May 1917 was part of a mass radicalisation in Britain that saw the growth of a huge unofficial rank and file movement.

The Prime Minister Lloyd George exclaimed "the whole state of society is molten". He told Labour leaders "If I could have presumed to have been the adviser of the working classes...I should say to them: 'audacity is the thing for you. Think out new ways; think out new methods... Don't always be thinking of getting back to where you were before the war: get a really new world'".

The workers' leaders were not so bold. They spent their time devising ways of avoiding the struggle for the new world. Seeing revolution first hand on a visit to Russia filled Henderson with dread. He was determined to stop it happening in Britain.

Parliament

The new Labour constitution of 1918 was designed with this purpose in mind. "Revolution is a word of evil omen" said one of its authors. The construction of a mass working class party wholly tied to parliamentary politics was a deliberate strategy aimed to "rehabilitate Parliament in the eyes of the people" and channel discontent away from Bolshevism.

The Fabian gradualist Sidney Webb



Beatrice Webb



Sidney Webb: no leftie



Harder-line for capitalism than Gaitskell: Tony Blair

wrote the constitution. Just like Blair he wanted to rename the party so as to appeal more to the middle class. Although he eventually had to abandon this idea he succeeded in reorganising the party so as to stifle the left.

In transforming the Labour Party into a centralised membership organisation, he established a system of local constituency parties and the election of an executive at annual conference.

The trade unions were given most of the votes. This aimed to isolate the left in the constituencies.

Clause Four

The commitment to common ownership of the means of production was put into the constitution by Webb to avoid an even more radical position. That this was a moderate option is an indication of just how militant the working class was in the period.

The leaders had to have a form of words that was without day-to-day relevance. They had no intention of letting it affect their practice. They have always ensured that socialist demands are left as abstract positions so that they can continue their class collaboration.

Nevertheless Clause Four expresses the peak of British working class militancy. This is what makes it so important. The inclusion in the Labour Party constitution of a statement in favour of social ownership expresses the strength of anti-capitalist feeling after the first world war. That is why the Labour leaders have always disliked it.

Although it is not a revolutionary programme the clause is unambiguously anti-capitalist. Its reference to "the best possible system of popular administration and control of each industry and service" comes close to a demand for workers' control.

The reformist views of its Fabian authors are also present. It talks of securing for the workers the full fruits of their industry. This is a top-down socialism not a recipe for class struggle.

Class Independence

The 1918 conference meant a rejection of Liberalism. This break with the party of capitalism was a big step forward. But the new ideology was not socialist. It was a peculiarly British product called "Labourism".

This was enshrined in the statement of policy "Labour and the New Social Order" that accompanied Clause Four. This document spoke for the "genuinely scientific reorganisation of industry, on the basis of the Common Ownership of the Means of Production". It was easy to win support for nationalisation following the huge growth in state control during the war.

While it condemned poverty, unem-

ployment and poor quality housing and called for a big improvement in living standards, it never went so far as to demand an end to capitalism. It was a programme for extending the war economy in the favour of workers.

Ralph Milliband in his famous book *Parliamentary Socialism* concludes that, "the new programme was much less the manifesto of a new social order, altogether different, economically and socially, from the old one, than an explicit affirmation by the Labour Party of its belief that piecemeal collectivism, within a predominantly capitalist society, was the key to more welfare, higher efficiency, and greater social justice".

It was Fabian plan for a new type of capitalism not a declaration of socialism. This notwithstanding, the 1918 settlement between the right wing leadership and the radical mood of the day stood for significant reform of capitalism. It is more than Blair offers today.

Gaitskell

It was not until 1959 that the clause was challenged. The Labour Party had lost three elections in a row. Party leader Hugh Gaitskell blamed the commitment to nationalisation.

He favoured a massive retreat from public ownership and even proposed working class share-owning of industry long before Thatcher thought of it.

The parallels with Blair are striking. Gaitskell wanted a debate over basics. He wanted to undo the Labour Party's link with organised labour in order to present it as a 'people's party' rather than a workers' party.

He argued that only by dumping nationalisation could the party win the middle classes. This electoral argument hid a more fundamental divide. Gaitskell did not just want to win elections, he wanted to put an end to the party's formal opposition to capitalism.

In arguing for the removal of the commitment to nationalisation he said that Britain was now a "mixed economy", "in my opinion, capitalism has significantly changed, largely as a result of our own effort". Like Blair, his catchword was "modernisation".

This reopened a basic divide in the labour movement between those who want to run capitalism and those who want to build socialism. It was a division the leadership would have better left alone.

Gaitskell's proposals were defeated. He was forced to back down in the face

of massive trade union opposition. The post-war boom had created a powerful and self confident trade union movement that was not prepared to be cajoled or bullied by the party leadership.

Nevertheless the compromise the party adopted still recognised "that both public and private enterprise have a place in the economy". Despite rejecting Gaitskell's 'grand reconciliation' the right retained the leadership of the Labour Party.

Blair

Like Blair, Gaitskell did not call outright for the removal of Clause Four. This would have been too forthright an attack. Both coded the change in the language of modernisation.

But even if widespread nationalisation had been called for by the party it is certain that the leadership would not have implemented it. In this sense all the debate and discussion over nationalisation is unreal.

The leadership will never be won to socialism, or to measures that lead in its direction. Declarations in favour of social ownership are useful to them only for May Day speechifying. They have no intention of acting upon them.

Defending the Clause against the Gaitskell-Blair attacks is necessary not because its retention will make Labour one day implement socialism, but because behind the attacks lies an attempt to get the rank and file of the labour movement to accept capitalism as permanent.

Both Gaitskell and Blair have seen Clause Four as an impediment to people understanding that the Labour Party is a pro-capitalist party. They are united in a desire make the labour movement aban-

don a socialist alternative. This is why defending it is so important.

The defence of Clause Four is a practical matter not an "article of faith". If Labour Party activists can be persuaded to accept capitalism as the only way of organising society then they will have no basis for opposing its demands and requirements - if capitalism needs to make cuts they must be implemented. Getting rid of the Clause is an attempt to demobilise opposition to capitalism.

This is what lies behind the latest developments in the Labour Party. Kinnock brought in the ad-men not to do more than communicate more effectively. It was the beginnings of a right wing strategy to make the party more wholeheartedly embrace the market.

Symbol

Kinnock may not have been fully aware of the consequences of the policy review. The present leadership is far more confident. It understands that Clause Four is an important symbol. One that speaks of a completely different type of society. It has to be removed in order to help carry out unashamedly pro-capitalist policies in office.

The right has traditionally claimed that its differences with the left are just over the speed of change, that everyone is moving in the same direction toward socialism, only that more caution is necessary. The attacks on Clause Four show this is not true.

Blair intends to remove all what is left of the social democratic intention to reform capitalism. His new constitution is motivated by just the same intention as Gaitskell's reforms - to put an end to the working class nature of the party. The leadership is laying the groundwork for carrying out capitalism's cuts if Labour should win the election.

The removal of the Clause would be a profound victory for the right. It would not only weaken the Labour Party, but weaken the struggle against capitalism. This is why every socialist must fight for its retention.

Defending the Clause is necessary not because its retention will make Labour one day implement socialism, but because behind the attacks lies an attempt to get the rank and file of the labour movement to accept capitalism as permanent. Clause Four is an impediment to people understanding that Labour is a pro-capitalist party.

CENTRE STAGE

Italian workers fight Berlusconi's welfare cutbacks

by Jon White

Italy has been brought to a standstill by a general strike against attacks on pensions and the welfare state.

On October 14th millions took to the streets in all the major cities. The demonstrations are the culmination of weeks of rolling stoppages.

The mobilisation breaks two years of union leaders' quiescence at government attacks. The mass anger has united all three union federations in action against the budget proposals. This is a big step forward.

Berlusconi is demanding L50,000bn (£20bn) in cuts. His government is targeting those least able to fight back to pay for Italian capitalism's crisis while offering tax amnesties to business.

Cutting pensions is the centrepiece of the offensive. Also threatened is the closure of small hospitals, extending people's working lives, penalising early retirement and ending free prescriptions.

The strikes are bigger than previous protests against austerity. Although only a four hour

stoppage was called many struck for the whole day. It seems the government will be forced to reopen negotiations after breaking them off three weeks ago.

Unstable

The right wing regime is looking increasingly unstable. As well as corruption charges getting closer and closer to Berlusconi his governmental alliance of neo-fascists, Northern

League separatists and Thatcher style populists is showing signs of breakdown.

It is unlikely to survive a winter of concerted action in defence of the welfare state.

Only media workers went to work. They had their action earlier in the week so that they could provide full coverage on the day of the general strike.

As well as demanding pay increases transport workers have called for attention to be paid to the environment and for



On the warpath: Italian pensioners will not give up without a fight more involvement of workers in planning transport.

In the countryside protests have been held against increases in land rent. The price rises are designed to drive out the inhabitants so the money

makers of the tourist industry can move in.

All banks shut and rail and air services barely operative.

The strikes and demonstrations are set to continue.

Redundancy pay-off smooths Haiti dictator's departure

MILLIONS of dollars belonging to the people of Haiti have been paid out to Raoul Cedras and his military sidekicks to smooth their exile in Panama. The US has "rented" his former villa in Port-au-Prince, paying the money to Cedras in advance.

This grotesque gesture is just part of a multi-million pay-off to Cedras and his thugs to, at least

temporarily, leave the country.

Despite the US attempt to collect in arms belonging to the military junta's gangs, probably thousands remain hidden. Most of the top *tons tons macoutes* assassins remain at large.

America has succeeded in taming the returning president Jean-Bertrand Aristide. Coming home thanks the US "peaceful invasion", he is stuck with 20,000 US troops and his new

government will be under United States supervision.

The radical priest who promised his people major reforms to help the poor will now be hamstrung by his "deal with the devil".

It appears that Aristide will now bring some former supporters of the junta into his new government.

This "broad based government" ploy has been cooked up

by the United States as a further guarantee against any hint of radicalism in the new regime.

Aristide's sanctioning of the US intervention, in addition to making radical reforms impossible, has done a disservice to all the people of Latin America.

Now the United States can even more present itself as the champion of "democracy" with the right to intervene where and when it wants to.

Sri Lanka polls: the mis-rule continues

By K. Govindan

After 17 years of mis-rule, the defeat of the United National Party (UNP) in Sri Lanka's August elections has been greeted with relief and hope that the bloody war in the North-East can be ended.

The centre-left Peoples Alliance (PA) — dominated by the capitalist Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) — formed the government with support from the Muslim Congress and one independent giving it a razor-thin majority of one in Parliament.

Under the Gaulist constitution there is an Executive President with substantial authority, the incumbent being D.B. Wijetunge from the UNP. Presidential elections are due on November 9 and Prime Minister Chandrika Kumaratunga will contest for the PA.

A strong challenge will be

mounted by UNP nominee Gamini Disanayake. Ironically both candidates are critics of the powers and functions of the President, which is blamed for dictatorial rule.

The UNP managed to retain 44 per cent of the vote despite human rights abuses including the murder of 60,000 Sinhala youth between 1987 and 1990, an expensive and unwinnable war against the Tamil nationalists in the North-East, and open-economic policies which increased the gulf between rich and poor.

Left wing parties and movements were divided in the elections. The Lanka Sama Samaja Party (LSSP) and the Communist Party (CP) are staunch supporters of Chandrika and of a strategic alliance with the SLFP.

Others extended "critical



Unsuccessful: Freedom Party leader Bandaranaike

support" to the PA believing the removal of the UNP to be more important than the market-friendly manifesto of the PA. The Nava Sama Samaja Party (NSSP) campaign was weakened when its Member of Parliament Vasudeva Nanayakkara split from the Party along with a few other leading members.

He opposed standing against the PA because he felt it would divide the opposition vote and allow the UNP to

squeeze a victory. Instead Vasu was a LSSP candidate and topped the poll in his district.

While supporting the new government Vasu has announced his intention to form a united socialist party combining the LSSP and CP.

The NSSP fielded an independent list in two districts and extended critical support to the PA in most parts of the island except in the East where it backed the Tamil left-

wing EPRLF.

Tamil parties contested against each other in the mainly Tamil North-East province.

The biggest surprise was in the East where the previously marginalised moderate TULF sent former Tamil militant groups to a crushing defeat.

The PA has always been eager to assure creditors, the IMF and World Bank that they have rejected their

old statist economics in order to be attractive to foreign capital.

They have promised to create "capitalism with a human face" oblivious to the fact that the Swedish model is extinct in the country of its birth.

The governments strategy will remain dependent on labour intensive low technology industries like garment factories, and on courting foreign aid and loans.

Germany: the East is Red!

By Paul Clarke

CHANCELLOR Helmut Kohl may be back, but in a greatly weakened government.

Germany's October 16 elections have given his Christian Democrat-Free Democrat (CDU-FDP) coalition a majority of less than 10. It is possible it will not be able to survive until the next elections in 1998.

Parliamentary resistance will be stiffened by the increase in the representation of the Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS) from 17 to 29.

While the vote for the Greens stayed steady at about seven per cent, giving them 48 seats, the extreme-right Republicans saw their vote fall to around two per cent, far short of that necessary to get them representation in the German parliament, the Bundestag.

The rebuff of the Republi-

cans is a welcome blow to the European far right after its recent successes in elections in Italy, Austria and Belgium.

Decline

The background to the election was economic decline throughout Germany over the past five years, only partially compensated for by a new surge of economic growth this year which has seen unemployment fall by half a million. Economic crisis and government policy has devastated industry in eastern Germany.

Until this year it seemed likely that Kohl would lose these elections and a new government of the Social Democrats (SPD) would take power.

However, Kohl scraped back on the basis of the limited economic recovery, and the lacklustre performance of the SPD, one of the most right-wing social democratic parties in Europe.

From the outset of the election campaign, the SPD heaped vitriolic abuse on the PDS, and made it clear it would not accept PDS support to form a government, even if the parliamentary arithmetic allowed for it.

Although the issue never arose, in effect the SPD was saying that it would rather have a Kohl-led CDU government than an SPD government relying on support or "tolerance" from the PDS!

The increasingly right-wing Green party also joined in the anti-communist witch hunting of the PDS.

Fearful Greens

The Greens' stand-offish attitude to the PDS is an attempt to guard their base in western Germany from incursions both from the left and the right. The Greens fear any association whatever with the former east German regime, and think they too would be victims of the

witch hunt if they made an alliance with the PDS.

Moreover the Greens fear that if the PDS establishes itself as a real all-German party, it will eat into its support from west German radicals.

The success of the PDS was mainly in eastern Germany. Although not successful in reaching the five per cent national threshold necessary for automatic representation in the Bundestag, the PDS circumvented this rule by winning four seats directly: any party winning three seats outright automatically gets proportional representation.

The PDS did particularly well in East Berlin, in the north-west state of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern and in Thuringia.

The two key themes of their campaign were defence of the rights of workers in eastern Germany, and a new deal for women - the PDS was the only party which made women's



Scraping home: old king Kohl rights one of its key campaigning issues.

Observers also said the PDS was helped by the vitriolic campaign against it by the CDU, which characterised it as "red fascists". According to Lothar Bisky of the PDS "this was free advertising for us, it played right into our hands".

Roaring chauvinism?

Jodley Green reviews the new Disney cartoon smash *The Lion King*

A REACTIONARY moral message, stereotyped characters, a thin plot, corny jokes: yep, Disney is still doing what it does best.

But there's huge variation in the treatment of these eternal Disney themes. Between *The Aristocats* and *Jungle Book* there's a world of difference. So the question isn't whether *The Lion King* is reactionary nonsense, but whether

it's enjoyable reactionary nonsense.

The animation is fantastic. The wildebeest stampede alone is worth the price of admission. But it's the baddies

which are the best drawn. The star of the show, Simba, is pretty characterless once he grows up.

The best voices also go to the evil animals - uncle Scar (Jeremy Irons) and the hyenas (who include Whoopi Goldberg and Cheech Marin). Rowan Atkinson is wasted on the completely dull part of Zazu, the courtier bird. And the music is rubbish.

But, *The Lion King* isn't a bad movie. It could be a bad influence on kids though.

The moral is clear - take your place in society, don't try to change destiny, the world is one of harmony. There's no place for struggle. The eco-

logical 'message' is cute rather than hard hitting.

The film has been called racist. The evil hyenas speak like homeboys, and the laid back lazy philosophy of the Warthog and Meerkat characters is summed up by a Swahili phrase Hakuna Matata - 'No Worries'.

Images

In the United States, where representations of young blacks as violent, lazy and irresponsible are used to justify police brutality and cuts in welfare payments, it is not surprising that every image is interrogated by anti-racists.

But black and white voices

are fairly evenly distributed between good and evil roles, and the Hakuna Matata philosophy is presented by characters which can't possibly be construed as metaphors for 'welfare others' or other targets of the right wing ideologues.

Kids are more likely to come out of the cinema enraptured by royalty, than filled with racist ideas. *The Lion King* is a great punch up between good and evil (with a fight scene lifted from *Raging Bull*).

And if you expected anything different, let me ask you a question - have you ever been to a Disney movie?

REVIEW



Kurds under threat Saddam's real targets are his 'enemies within'

by Paul Clarke

WHAT LIES behind Saddam Hussein's sabre rattling? Only a lunatic could imagine that Iraq could invade Kuwait without a massive response by the United States and the other imperialist nations. Surely even Saddam Hussein knew he would have to back down?

Saddam's provocation of a new "confrontation" is mainly for internal consumption – an attempt to mobilise the population in support of his regime.

There are three major factors motivating his actions. The most important of these is that despite the incredible level of repression, the Ba'athist government is threatened internally.

There have almost certainly been attempts to plot a coup inside the army and overthrow

Saddam. Food riots, caused by the severe shortages imposed by international sanctions, have hit the major cities.

Both the Iraqi elite and the working masses understand that Saddam has brought them nothing but misery.

Even the most cunning, most ruthless and most determined dictator can eventually be brought down by mass disaffection and divisions in the ruling elite.

Rumours abound of the execution of up to 150 leading army officers, and the murder of top government officials. No one is safe from Saddam's paranoid repression.

A new military mobilisation and confrontation with imperialism serves to say: "this is all the fault of world imperialism, Saddam represents the interests of the nation".

The second part of Saddam's calculation is that a new crisis highlight interna-

tional sanctions.

They have had a terrible effect on the people of Iraq, depriving them of food and medicines, and the ability to reconstruct their country after the destruction of the Gulf war.

Saddam probably knows that sanctions will not be lifted until he goes; at least through this crisis he forces a new debate on this issue.

Saddam's most sinister intentions concern the Kurds in the north. Reports indicate that the main military build up is not in the south against Kuwait, but against the liberated Kurdish areas.

Saddam probably knows that while an offensive against Kuwait could not be ignored by the United States, the situation is very different with Kurdistan.

The US can claim a big "victory" in having forced the retreat of the Iraqi forces in the south, and then turn a



Keeping an eye on everyone: Big Brother Saddam

blind eye to an invasion of Kurdistan – which has as its main objective the recapture of the oil pipeline and oil producing areas.

Kuwait is an artificial statelet, controlled by a corrupt and repressive elite, which serves only as an oil-pumping station for western monopolies. This is why the US defends it.

But the real victims of US policy and Saddam are the

Iraqi people and the people of Kurdistan. Bill Clinton's oil embargo and sanctions do nothing to aid them, indeed they are desperately harmed by these policies.

Disease and poverty are the lot of Saddam's subjects. The way forward in the Gulf is to lift the sanctions and support the democratic and working class opposition to Saddam.

Austrian elections

Far right bids for power

JÖRG HAIDER, leader of Austria's extreme-right Freedom Party (FPÖ), led his party to scoring nearly 23 per cent in the country's general election on October 9.

Haider, a 44-year old millionaire who once openly expressed his admiration for some of Hitler's policies, is redrawing the political map of the country. Key to the FPÖ plans is an attempt to break up the coalition between the Social Democrats and the Christian Democratic Peoples Party which has ruled the country for the last eight years.

While the FPÖ vote rose by seven points from the 16.5 per cent scored in the last election, the Social Democrats fell eight points to 35 per cent, and the Peoples Party fell four points to 28 per cent. The Green Party got 13 per cent.

While this still enables the SD-PP coalition to govern, it has lost the two-thirds majority which enables it to pass constitutional laws. Moreover, it seems likely that on some key issues some Peoples Party deputies will now vote with the FPÖ rather than the coalition.

Like other far-right populist parties in Europe, the cutting edge of Haider's appeal is opposition to immigrants and refu-



Start of an inglorious tradition: Hitler, history's most infamous Austrian, promoted *anschluss*

gees. In his 1993 book *What I Want - Freedom*, Haider denounces the "utopia" of a multicultural society and rants about Austrians being reduced to "foreigners in their own land".

Central elements of FPÖ ideology, as propounded by their theorist-in-chief Andreas Mølzer, are pan-Germanism, economic liberalism and opposition to "social democratic corporatism" in the name of "individual freedom".

While the FPÖ does not (yet) argue for Austrian integration into a "greater Germany", it rejects the idea that there is an

Austrian nation; rather Austrians are part of the "great community of German peoples".

Anschluss

This of course has loud echoes of the in-gathering of the German speaking peoples undertaken by Hitler, especially through the *anschluss* with Austria.

Like French far-right leader Jean-Marie Le Pen, Haider rejects the Hitlerite corporate state and embraces Thatcher-style economic liberalism, countering the free market to Aus-

tria's mixed economy and welfare state.

Mølzer argues that the FPÖ conception of freedom is radically different to that of 1789. The French revolution, produced "tyranny" by trying to combine freedom with "equality and fraternity".

The FPÖ campaigns strongly against the nepotism and corruption of the old party system; and indeed the old system, which until eight years ago had been virtually one-party social democratic rule for 40 years, is corrupt.

Although Austria is much

richer than most European countries, it too is beginning to suffer from mass unemployment and economic recession, reinforcing the impression that the old system has failed. Disillusionment with the old system is also represented by the vote for the Green Party.

The FPÖ strategy is now very clear: to break the coalition and force the Christian Democrats into a new, right wing, coalition government.

Pressure

Erhard Busek, leader of the Peoples Party, has renewed the coalition but is under strong pressure from the right-wing of his party. If the FPÖ surge continues the clamour for a coalition with the FPÖ at the next election has a high chance of success.

Haider's new advance has undoubtedly been helped by the victory of Silvio Berlusconi's right-wing coalition in the March 1994 elections in neighboring Italy.

The trend to increasing support for right-wing populist parties was also shown in the October 9 local elections in Antwerp, Belgium, where the Flemish Vlams Blok emerged as the largest party in the new municipal administration.

Wider lessons from signal workers fight

By an RMT member

SIGNAL workers voted overwhelmingly to accept offers made by Railtrack after a week of complicated negotiation. Their return to work after over three months of strikes is clearly not a defeat—but is it a victory?

The executive certainly feel that the deal is a victory—they voted unanimously to recommend its acceptance. According to the negotiation the offer includes new money on the table above and beyond even the original 5.7% “offer that never was”. They argue that Railtrack’s public presentation of the offer underplayed it in order to save Tory embarrassment at their

climbdown.

The offer give all signalworkers an increase in basic pay of between 20-30%. This is paid for however with the loss of significant bonuses.

A whole new range of “flexible” working practices are to be introduced. More positively, the working week is reduced and Sundays are still to be treated separately—though with smaller overtime premium rates.

The end result is a package far less stringent than was expected before the dispute, but one that introduces some of the new practices to which signalworkers have objected.

It is not surprising therefore that many signalworker activists feel let down.

From the start of the dispute the union leadership dragged its

feet.

Decisions of the Executive were never implemented, or only partially and late. The London demonstration was a good example. Weeks after it was agreed the union had not even decided a venue.

When it had eventually been agreed, branches received only a handful of leaflets—six in most cases. And this one week before it was due.

Escalation

The timing of the strike varied over one or two days. Different start times were imaginative and effective. But the issue of escalation was never resolved.

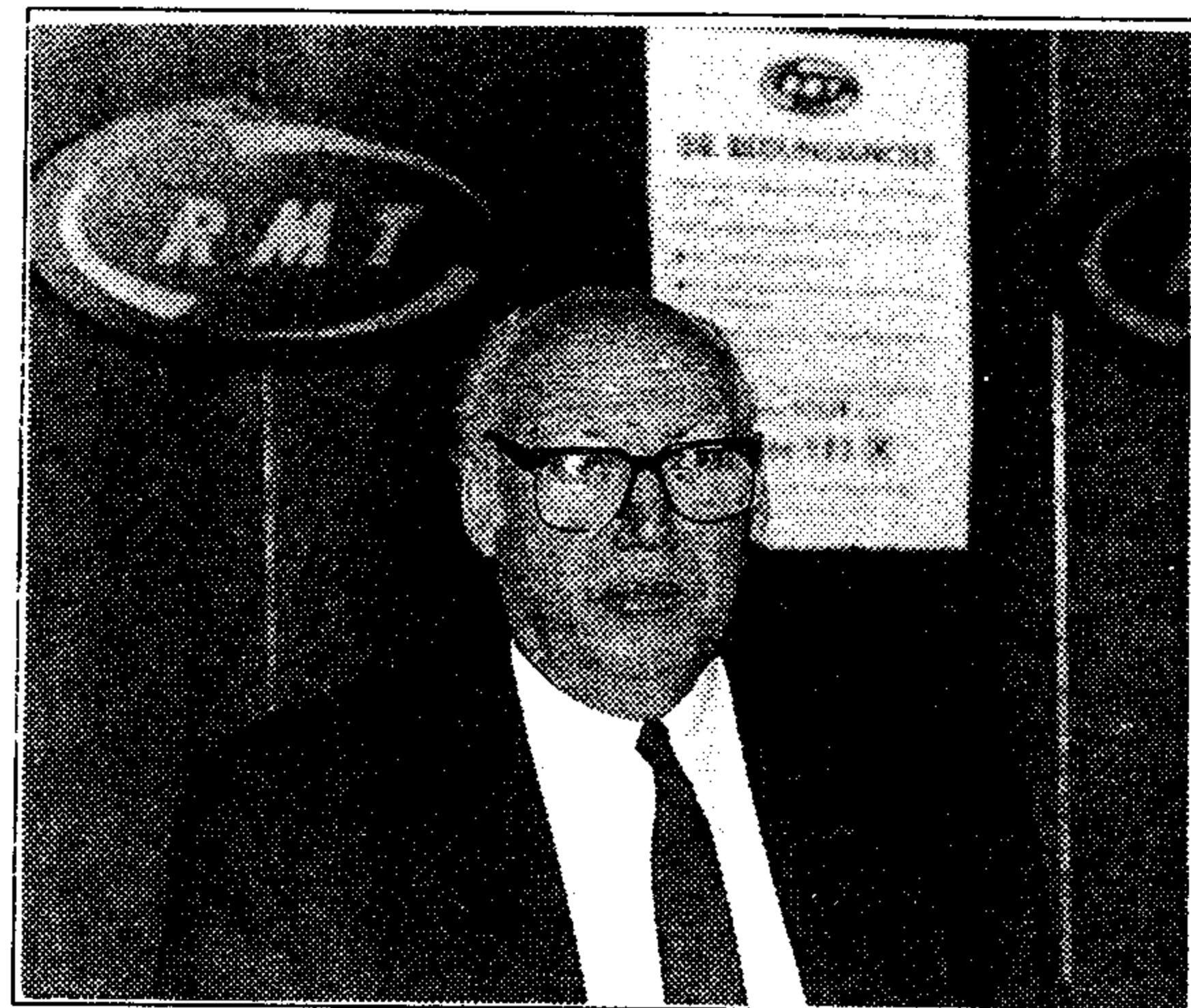
This issue should be approached with caution. Discussing an escalation to an all out stoppage was important but signalworkers were far from convinced. As a demand on the RMT executive it was a non-starter: without first winning the de-

mand among signalworkers it would have broken the strike.

Far more practically important was the call for widening the dispute to other grades. Pressure was mounting from the grass roots – up to and including a unanimous proposal from Traincrew Grades officers – that all guards and drivers be instructed to stop work. The strike committee had not discussed the matter when the ACAS talks recommenced.

Railtrack did make a significant climbdown – but so did the RMT.

Signalworkers can be proud of their fight, and have come out of the dispute in a stronger position than they would have got without a fight: but they have still lost out.



Slow to spread fight: RMT's Jimmy Knapp

However the drive to railway privatisation has been seriously damaged. At last a group of workers has confronted the government and come out undefeated.

It is possible to take on the Tories. That lesson must be taken up by other public sector workers in their battles to come.

Deadly strings to Rover deal

By a car worker

ROVER car workers are balloting on October 24 on a pay deal which has ominous strings attached.

Union officials, who are recommending the deal, claim it is worth 10.7%; management claim it is worth 7.8%, and even the *Morning Star* has represented it as busting the pay freeze. The reality is somewhat different.

The wage offer is for 3.7% the first year and 4% for the second year. But the extra money which adds up to the 10.7% the union claims

comes from acceptance of a new three-tier integrated (staff and manual) grading structure.

Management see this as an essential step to getting “personal assessments” into the wage structure.

Alongside this the company is going to expect workers to be more flexible, doing any work within their grade. For the lowest grade this can include many types of manual and clerical work.

The new formula creates divisions in the workforce, pushing some workers closer to management and weakening trade unionism.

Tube strike a step forward

By an LUL train operator

THE OCTOBER 7 RMT strike on London Underground was only partially successful, since although we disrupted the service, we were not strong enough to force total closure of the system.

The media of course churned out management’s claims of a 75% service, which is total nonsense.

During the afternoon shift,

my picket line was highly amused by the *Evening Standard* headline “Tube Strike Collapses”; outside we could see a depot half full of trains and trains that were stuck at signals for 25 minutes!

In the station booking hall behind us a primitive socialist ticketing system was in operation – passengers who had finished with their tickets left them on a ledge, while passengers arriving without tickets rooted through them for something suitable!

Nonetheless strike action among station staff was disappointing; management managed

to open nearly every station. TSSA staff continued working, and management used people on six month contracts who were too scared to strike.

They also used a skeleton staff to keep signals working, with various degrees of success from line to line.

RMT has about 40% of train drivers and not all of them supported the strike, although some ASLEF members did respect the picket lines.

“At least we had a go” was the general view, combined with disgust at the way that other unions, especially ASLEF, had cancelled their own strike ballots at the last minute.

RMT gained members from the dispute, and as *Socialist Outlook* has previously argued, it is crucial to build workplace organisation to prepare for future conflicts.

The low turnout for the strike ballot and failure of some members to support the strike shows there is a lot of work to be done.

■ *Militant tube workers leader Bob Crowe has beaten a right winger to take one of the three RMT Assistant General Secretary jobs by a vote of 10,000-5,000. His role in supporting the Railtrack signal workers was decisive. The mood for a fight exists side-by-side with demoralisation.*

Hull council workers bite back

By Keith Sinclair
Secretary, Hull
Trades Council

DISCIPLINARY notices against four Hull building workers have been withdrawn following a successful unofficial strike.

The city council workers had been summoned to disciplinary hearings under the council’s Performance Monitoring Scheme. The senior shop steward Kevin Taylor was amongst

those threatened with disciplinary action.

Forty joiners and bricklayers sat in at the Tiverton council depot and refused to work. A mass meeting was held and the attempts made to spread the action.

Management had to back down. The disciplinary action was lifted. Stewart Emms of UCATT summed up the feeling of all those involved “this was a victory for workers solidarity.”

The success follows street lighting workers action against

privatisation.

The two local strikes highlight the need to defend the right to strike and to build effective action in defence of public services.

Hull UCATT members are now planning to attend the November 26th conference at Birmingham Union Club. Building workers are also planning for the Hull Trades Council march and rally on October 22th.

■ *A strike of nearly fifty building workers at the*

North Hull Action Trust has led to the reinstatement of a worker sacked for allegedly verbally abusing a member of the public.

The strike was held without a ballot and united UCATT members and non-union workers, most of whom are self-employed.

This important victory came, according to one local UCATT organiser, because workers were prepared “to use old-fashioned industrial muscle”

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Old Bill gets hammered, now kick out the Bill

Youth resist police riot

ON OCTOBER 9 police gave a brilliant demonstration of what we can expect when the Criminal Justice Bill becomes law. The "mob rule" which press hysteria railed against was entirely caused by the actions of the police.

Nothing could have been more provocative on a demonstration against the Criminal Justice Bill than to try to prevent a sound system coming into Park Lane; then trying to prevent it getting into Hyde

Park; and then trying to clear the Park with riot police and horses.

As could have been predicted, the thousands of youth in the park resisted this provocation.

Twice police horses were driven out of the Park under a hail of missiles, then the riot police were driven out of the Park as well.

Kamikaze police charges to attempt to re-enter the park through a small gateway were also driven back.

True to form, many of the injuries to

demonstrators occurred when they were eventually forced out of the park, split into small groups and forced down Oxford Street. No wonder the windows of some rich people's shops got trashed.

The demo organisers are wrong however to call for a public enquiry; public enquiries are whitewash affairs conducted by the state to exonerate itself.

There should be a *labour movement* enquiry into both the police riot and the draconian restriction of democratic rights represented by the Bill.