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Socialist OUTLOOK

NHS demo
Nov 20:

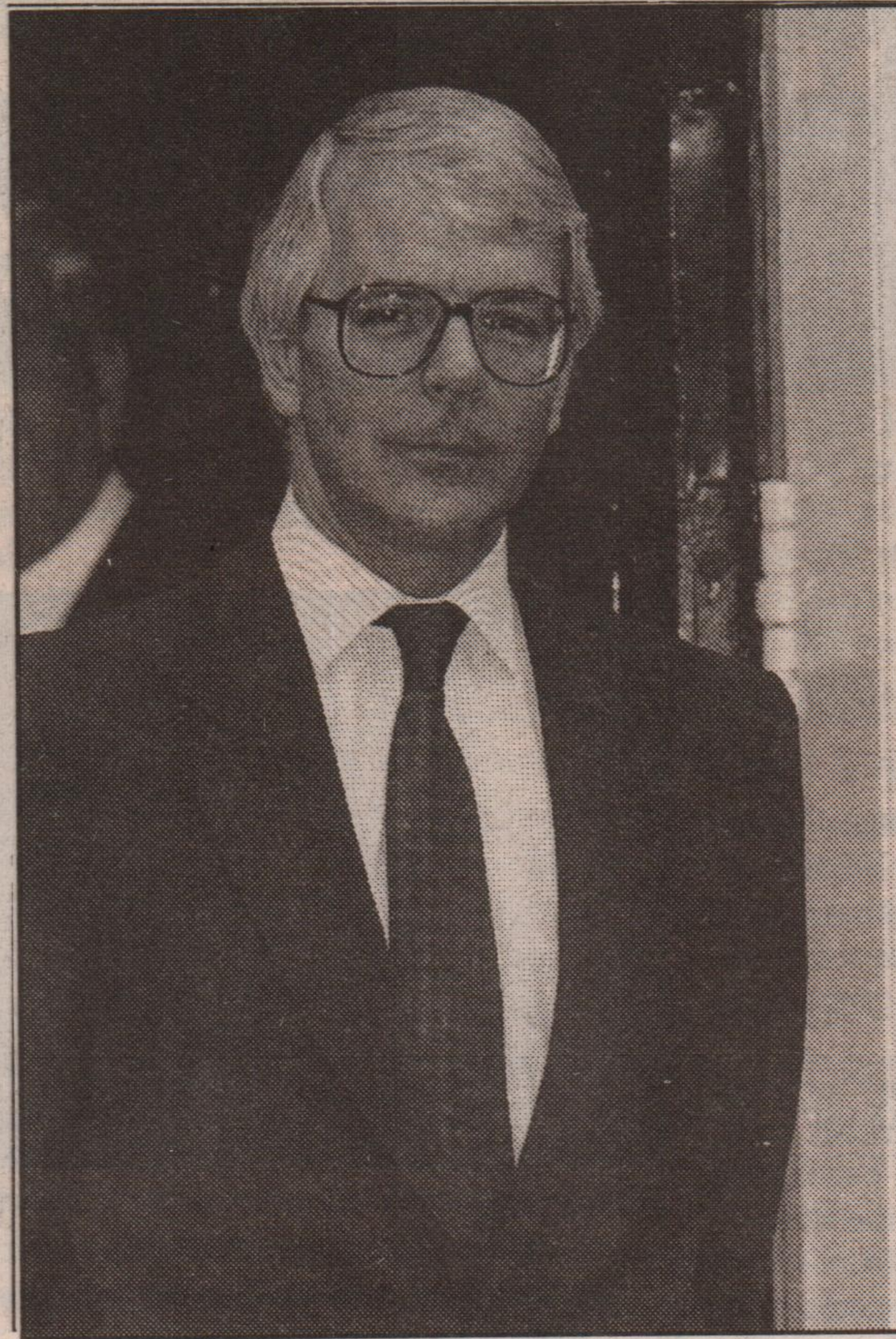
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No. 52, Nov 13, 1993

IRELAND



The REAL enemies of peace

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Bosnia: International Workers Aid lays new plans

By Alan Thornett

International Workers Aid was formally constituted to build international solidarity with the people of Bosnia, and the workers of the Balkans, in Manchester last week.

The formation of a properly organised international campaign was a big step forward.

Adopting a resolution from the Scandinavian delega-

tions, the meeting decided to establish an international co-ordination on a minimal political basis, although campaigns in particular countries would be free to adopt their own slogans. This included:

- Solidarity with the workers of the Balkans
- No to ethnic cleansing and ethnic partition
- Solidarity with multi-ethnic Bosnia
- Asylum rights for those

fleeing the war in ex-Yugoslavia

The meeting called for political, material and humanitarian aid to those forces in ex-Yugoslavia; and for an international co-ordination based on a loose structure and decisions based on consensus.

Immediate plans of the international campaign include the following:

- To take responsibility for the three trucks currently in

Split, trying to get to Tuzla.

● Develop on-the-spot contacts, knowledge, channels for aid to unions, as well as women's groups and peace groups, who resist the war and national chauvinism.

● Launch a campaign demanding the opening of Tuzla airport to humanitarian aid

● Prepare for a new, larger, convoy at the beginning of next year.

● Prepare for an international day of action on 11 De-

cember.

The meeting was attended by delegations from France, Belgium, Denmark, Sweden, Ireland, Italy, Spain, Hungary, Austria and Slovenia.

A delegation from the Swedish SAC union was present.

Unfortunately, after the decision to establish the international co-ordination was taken, supporters of the British WRP, and small groups associated with them, walked out.

THE MANCHESTER conference of Workers Aid for Bosnia, and International Workers Aid, produced a very mixed result. While the international meeting on Sunday 31 October was a success (see above), the Saturday 30 October conference of British Workers Aid resulted in a hijacking of the campaign by the Workers Revolutionary Party.

By seizing absolute control, by refusing to allow the establishment of any democratic structures, by reducing the campaign to a front, the WRP has effectively divided the campaign.

As a result of this undemocratic hijack, Socialist Outlook refuses to recognise the legitimacy of the conference decisions.

Its supporters will continue to build Workers Aid through supporting the initiatives of International Workers Aid. But we refuse to work in a campaign which has been reduced to a front for the WRP. ALAN THORNETT reports.

ALTHOUGH it has yet to reach Tuzla, the Workers Aid convoy has been a big success. It raised the banner of an international working class response to the Bosnian disaster throughout Europe.

It made crucial bonds with the trade unions in both

WRP sectarians divide Workers Aid

Slovenia and Croatia and in other parts of Europe.

Three vehicles, with 40 tonnes of aid from Denmark and Belgium, continue to try to reach Tuzla; they are currently on the southern route through Split.

Other lorries have unloaded in refugee camps and returned to Britain.

These political successes are threatened by the WRP hijack of the campaign.

The Saturday conference of the British campaign was a sectarian jamboree from the start.

Dot Gibson from the WRP, who gave the opening report, abused her position by immediately stressing that she was speaking as a member of the WRP's 'Workers International'.

She used her report, 57-minutes long, to attack sections of the campaign not controlled by the WRP - especially those from parts of Europe in which the Fourth International has been involved.

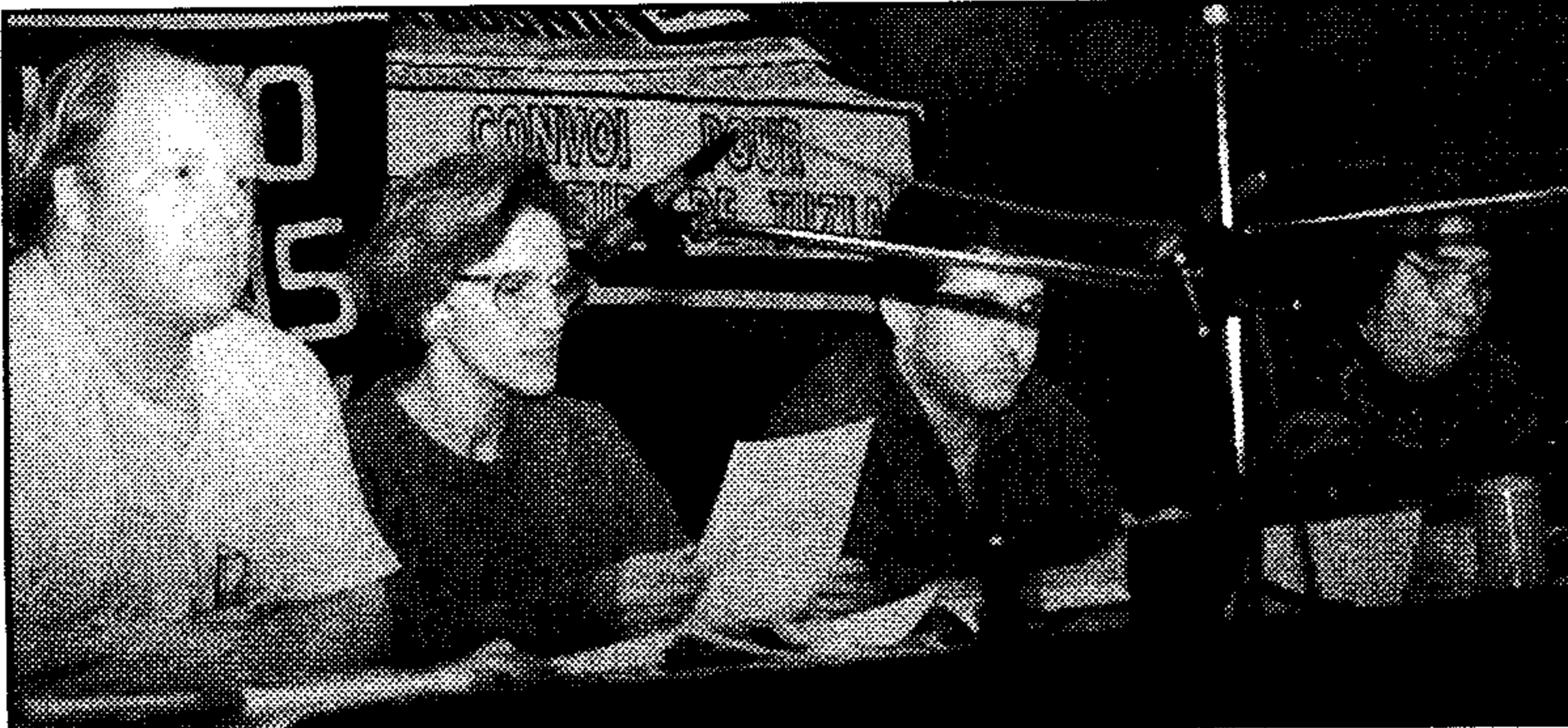
Her practical proposal for the future of the campaign was a 'massive campaign to open the northern route into Bosnia'.

There would be a 'massive convoy' - some WRP speakers said 1,000 lorries - which would arrive in ex-Yugoslavia in March.

Gibson slandered the convoy still on the road (which has no

WRP members on it) as 'only interested in humanitarian aid and not in the political campaign'.

through hostile Bosnian Serb territory with irregular armed militia and two active front lines) and it was not clear how



Steve Myers (left) addresses Workers' Aid conference

Steve Myers, the elected international coordinator of the campaign, presented a very different report, effectively counterposed to Dot Gibson's report. He supported the call for a big convoy in March but argued that everything should not be left until then.

He proposed a number of smaller convoys between now and then given the overwhelming need which now exists.

It does not make sense, he argued, to hold back lorries, like those in Scandinavia, which are ready to go. There are lorries in London not being used and aid which can be taken.

Union links

He called for continuing to build the links with the trade unions in Croatia and Slovenia, and projects around education, women's groups, refugees, and a campaign around asylum laws which prevent Bosnian refugees entering other European countries.

The one-dimensional concentration of the WRP on the northern route was supported by the speaker from the Tuzla centre in Zagreb, who addressed the conference.

It is, however, extremely controversial. It is militarily the most dangerous route (it is only 70 kilometres but it runs

one from each local group and sponsoring organisation to be elected later.

This was opposed by the WRP who argued for a non-elected committee open to anyone - just as it had been before the conference.

The majority of the international delegations - there were delegations or representatives from France, Belgium, Denmark, Sweden, Ireland, Germany, Austria, Italy, Hungary and Slovenia - announced that they would not be voting on resolutions, since it was clearly a conference of the British campaign.

The WRP proposals were then carried on both counts - for the northern route campaign and for no elected steering committee.

The large delegation present from the Manchester Bosnian community were persuaded by the call for a 1,000 lorries. In the end they were the decisive vote in the conference.

Elections rejected

The decision to reject elected structures for the campaign was in reality a formula for total control by the WRP over the campaign. The demagogic claim that this will empower large numbers of people is nonsense.

The lack of elected structures is always in fact a formula for control by an unelected minority who control the apparatus - the office, the bank account, the telephone number, the addresses and the knowledge of what is going on. It is a typical unaccountable bureaucracy.

Instead of seeing the campaigns in other European countries as a big extension to the campaign the WRP saw them as a threat to their own control.

Worse, they then claimed that the Saturday conference, one third of which was made up of people from Manchester, was in fact the 'international' body, making the Sunday international meeting irrelevant.

The international delegations refused to accept this British chauvinist attitude and refused to steamrollered by an unrepresentative British conference.

BOSNIA CONVOY

INTERNATIONAL WORKERS AID

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Loyalist death squads target peace process



'Tribal warfare' is the term used by the press to describe the spate of killings in northern Ireland. The image conjured up is one of crazed sectarian killers on both sides. This is a hypocritical lie, part of the 25-year old disinformation campaign about Ireland.

The starting point of the present wave of killings was not the IRA bombing of the UDA headquarters in the Shankill Road. That bombing, however foolish in its disregard for the possibility of civilian casualties, was an attempt to assassinate the leadership of the UFF loyalist death squads.

These death squads, and those of the UVF, have been responsible for over 60 per cent of all deaths in the Six Counties this year – and that in a country where there is a military struggle going on against British imperialism.

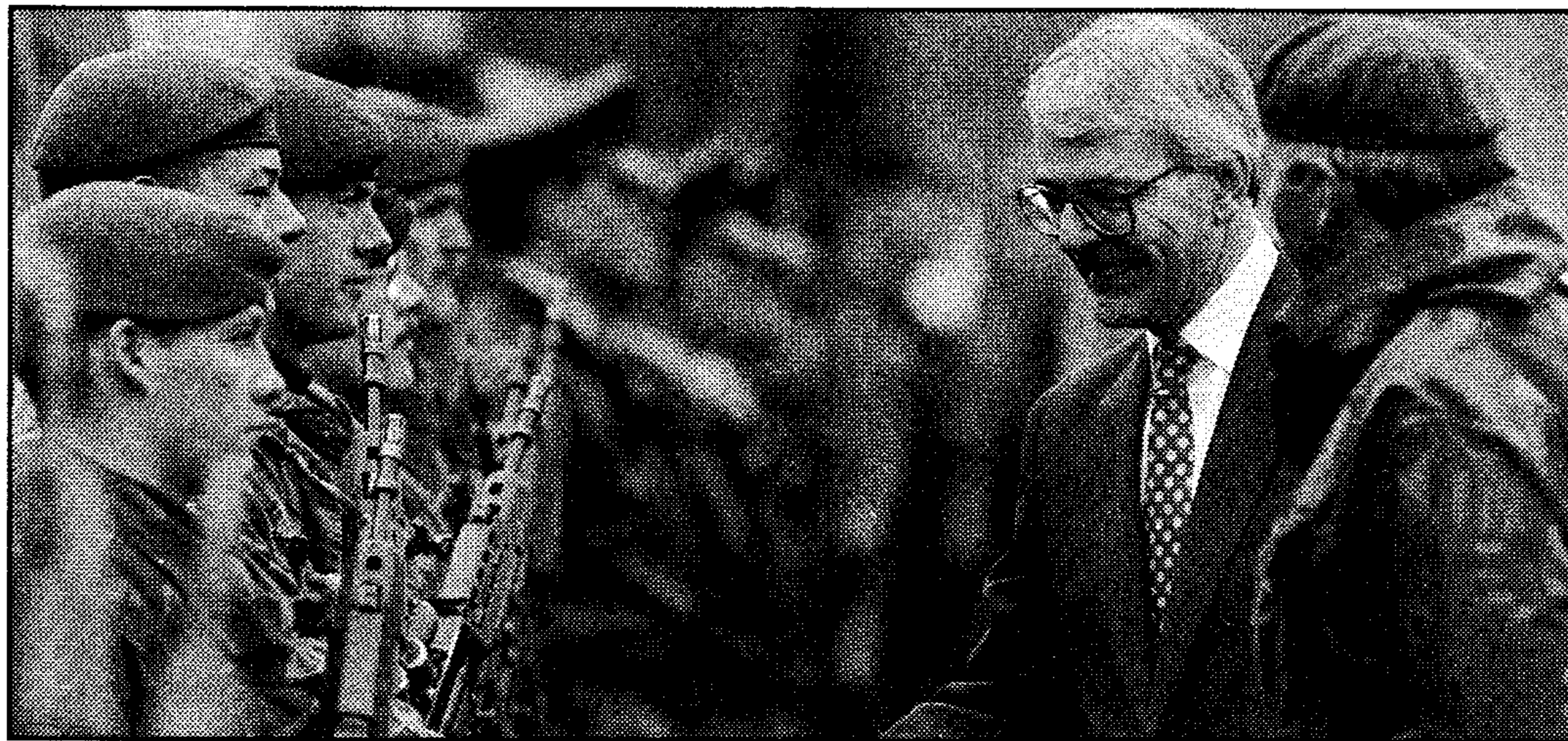
One hundred and forty six people have been assassinated by loyalist killers since 1988.

Military

IRA attacks, by contrast, are in most cases against the military, those who work for the military or against the loyalist death squads.

The UFF and UVF regard all members of the Catholic nationalist community as 'guilty' and thus fair game for murder.

The Shankill bombing was a response to dozens of murders of Catholic civilians by the UFF. The retaliatory UFF killings at the Rising



Sun bar at Greysteel were typical of the callousness of the loyalist death merchants.

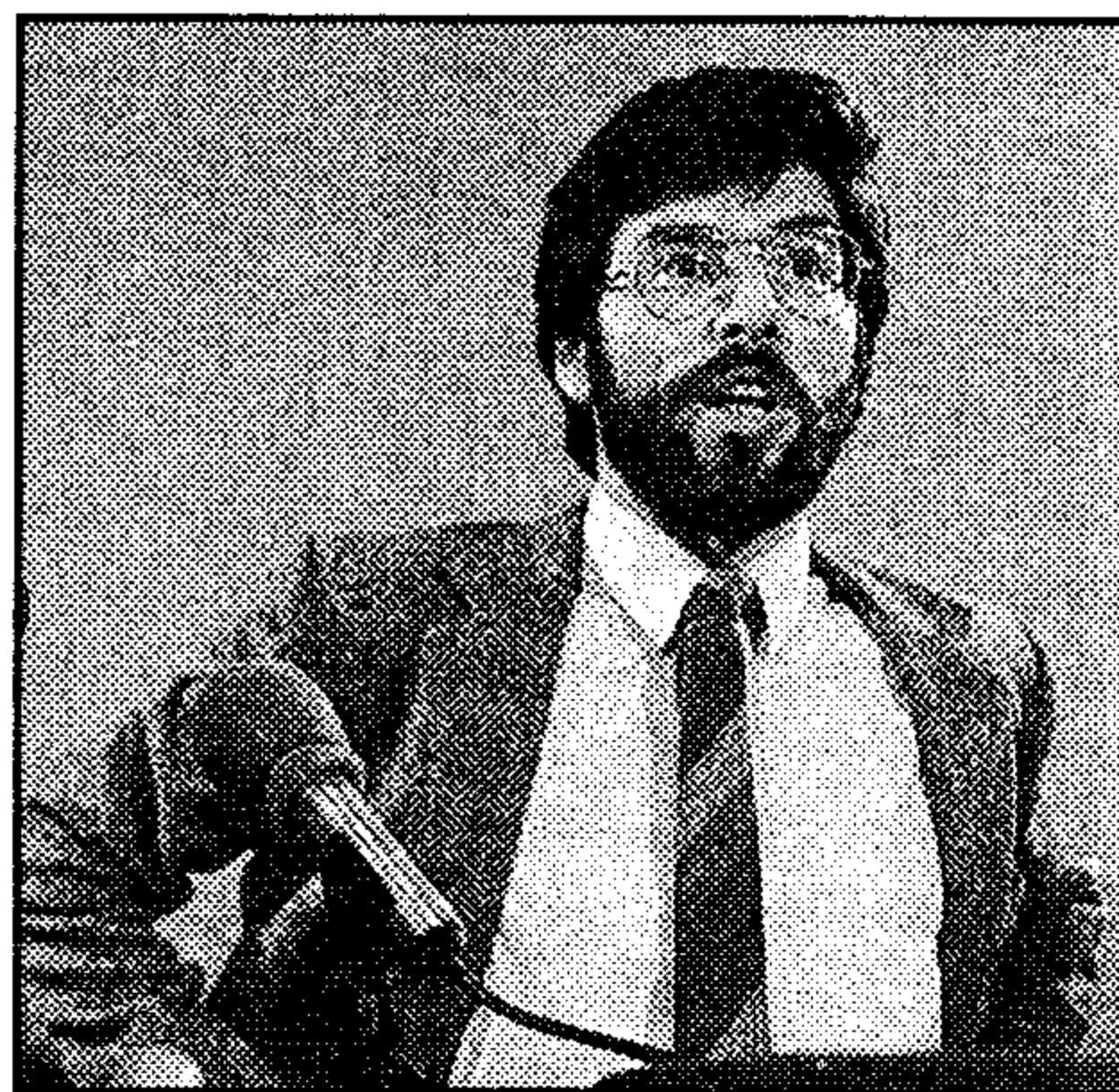
The two thousand-strong turnout for the funeral of the IRA volunteer killed in the bombing was a sign of the sympathy in the nationalist community for an attempt to take defensive action to halt the sectarian murders.

Doubtless the Shankill bombing was born out of frustration in the IRA at its inability to effectively defend the nationalist community against the sectarian killings. This failure is no surprise.

The military situation makes it absolutely impossible for the IRA to patrol the streets and mount an armed defence of them, even if the IRA had that ambition. The Catholic areas are wide open to murderous night-time attacks.

Bombing the Shankill Road on a Saturday afternoon almost inevitably resulted in civilian deaths.

This was a political disaster for the



Adams in talks with Hume

republican movement, enabling the government and the press to present the IRA and UFF as two sides of the same coin.

Loyalist sectarian killings have a political purpose. That purpose is to ensure the loyalist veto on any attempt at a political solution which has an all-Ireland dimension.

Every time the loyalists feel politically threatened, attacks on the nationalist community escalate.

Collusion between British state

forces and the loyalist paramilitaries has been proved over many years; the names and addresses of republican sympathisers are handed over to the killers as part of the 'low-intensity warfare' strategy, to terrorise, intimidate and demoralise the nationalist community.

The response of Major's government to the crisis has been to give further political ground the two main loyalist parties, the Ulster Unionists and the Demo-

cratic Unionists.

The proposals agreed in the dialogue between Sinn Fein's Gerry Adams and SDLP leader John Hume, widely reported to imply an end of the IRA military struggle in return for a place at the negotiating table (although Adams has denied this), have been rejected out of hand.

Censorship

Further censorship of republican views in Britain is being considered. These are the typical responses of an imperialist power.

Nothing will come of John Major's promises to bring forward his own plans for peace talks, because nothing the government is prepared to consider deals with the root causes of the strife – the denial of Irish national rights, and the oppression of the nationalist community.

British socialists must continue to insist that there is no British solution, and that British imperialism offers no answers for the Irish people.

Market collapse threatens cuts

THE SHARP fall in the world's stock markets is a sure indicator that world capitalism has failed to overcome recession. One year ago, when Clinton came to power in the US, expectations were high that the US economy would lead the way out of the mini-slump.

These expectations were wrong. 'Clinton economics' is already a total failure.

Slowdown

Continued economic recession in Britain, worsened by the slowdown in Britain's key export markets in Europe,

means that the financial crisis of the British state has deepened.

Tax revenues have fallen and social security spending has spiralled upwards. The result will be huge anti-working class attacks in the 30 November budget.

The attacks will take two forms: massive cutbacks in the transport, local government and housing budgets, and the imposition of VAT on a range of previously-exempted consumer products.

Threats by chancellor Clarke to cut back the defence budget has been predictably dropped in the face of back-bench Tory opposition.

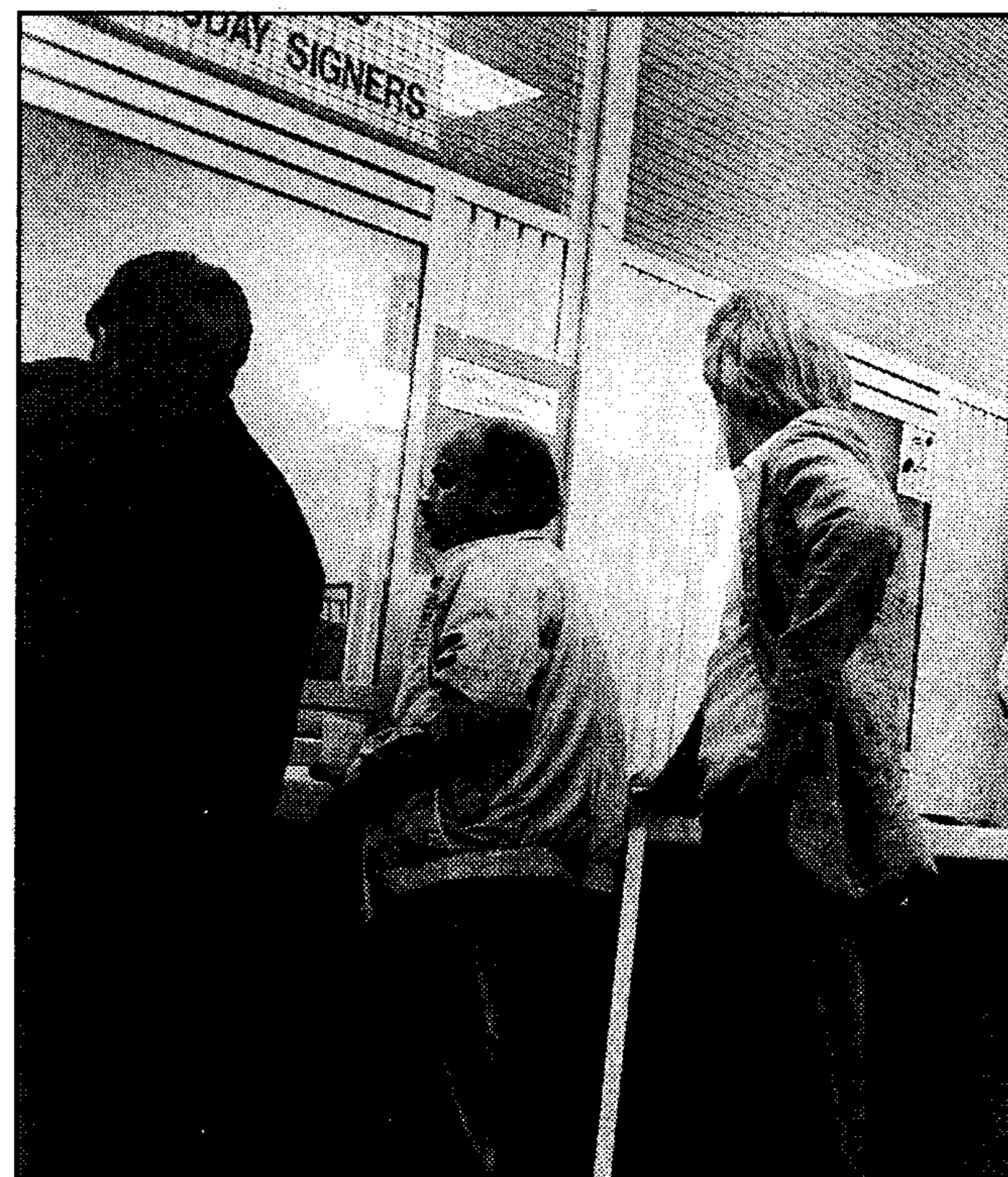
Following the decision to put VAT on domestic heating bills, the government has moved to impose the tax on fresh orange juice, a step towards VAT on all food products.

Books

Other targets could include books and newspapers and children's clothes.

VAT is a tax which hits the poor. But local government and housing cuts will also hit workers' living standards. And a new assault on local government jobs is a certainty.

The strikes in Europe (see page 5) and the civil service



strike last week are a sure sign that economic recession is leading to a massive assault on jobs and conditions

continent-wide and that this will result in huge new struggles.

EDITORIAL

Hidden strength of civil service unions

Remember, remember the strike in November!

By Sean Geoghegan, CPSA Branch Exec, Department of Health London HQ, (personal capacity)

MORE THAN a quarter of a million civil servants stopped work on Friday 5 November against privatisation and 'market testing' in the first national strike for 12 years.

Over half the benefit offices in the country were closed along with hundreds of other government offices. Ports, courts, Whitehall offices, museums, art galleries, employment and benefit offices were picketed.

The 24 hours stoppage also saw Yeoman warders at the Tower of London join the stoppage which united the five civil service unions.

Public support was high as was support from other trade unionists particularly those working in local government.

In Leeds, union members reported people were asking to join the union in the previous few weeks so they could join the strike. There was a real mood change with workers feeling the

time had come for something to be done.

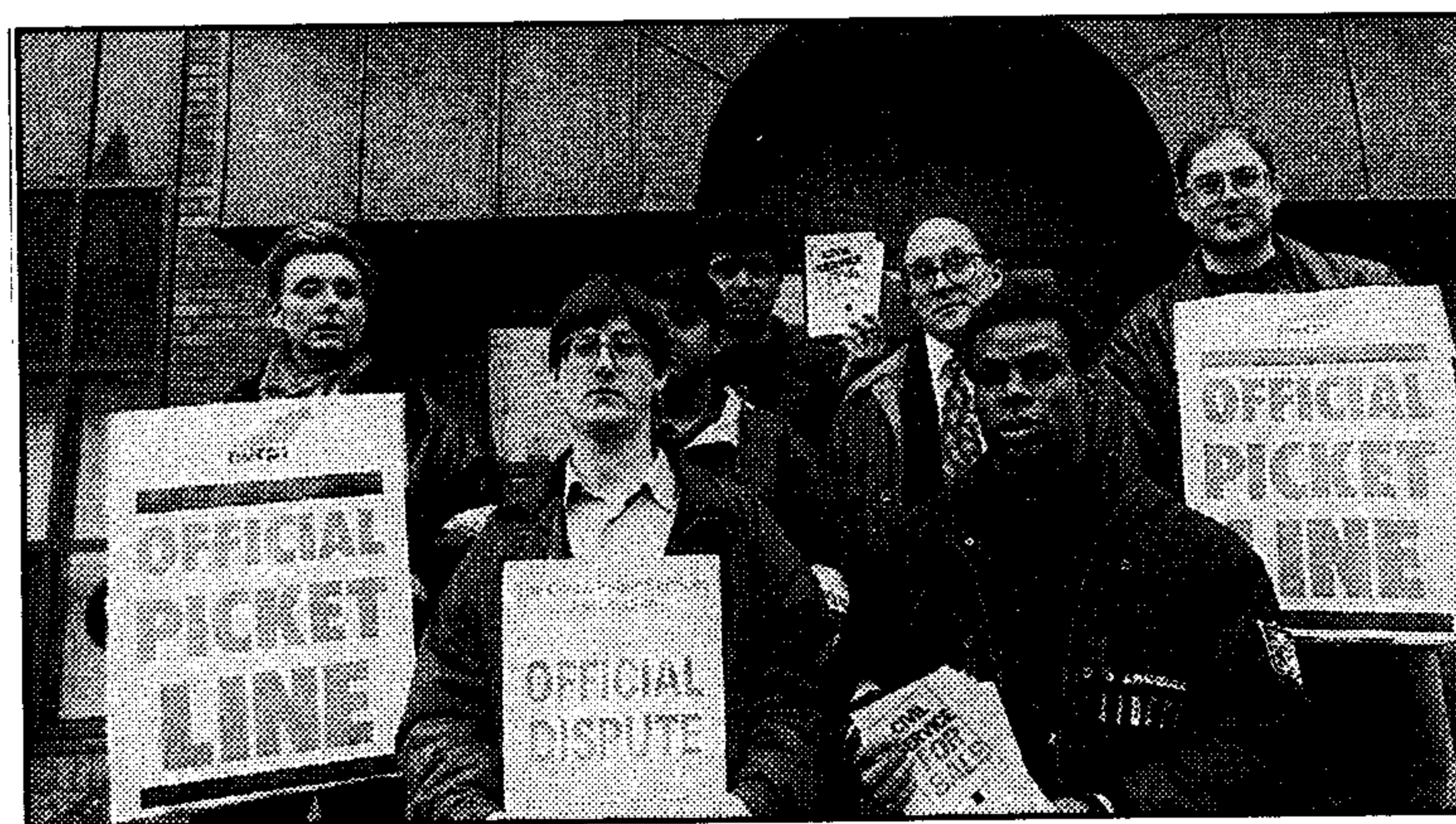
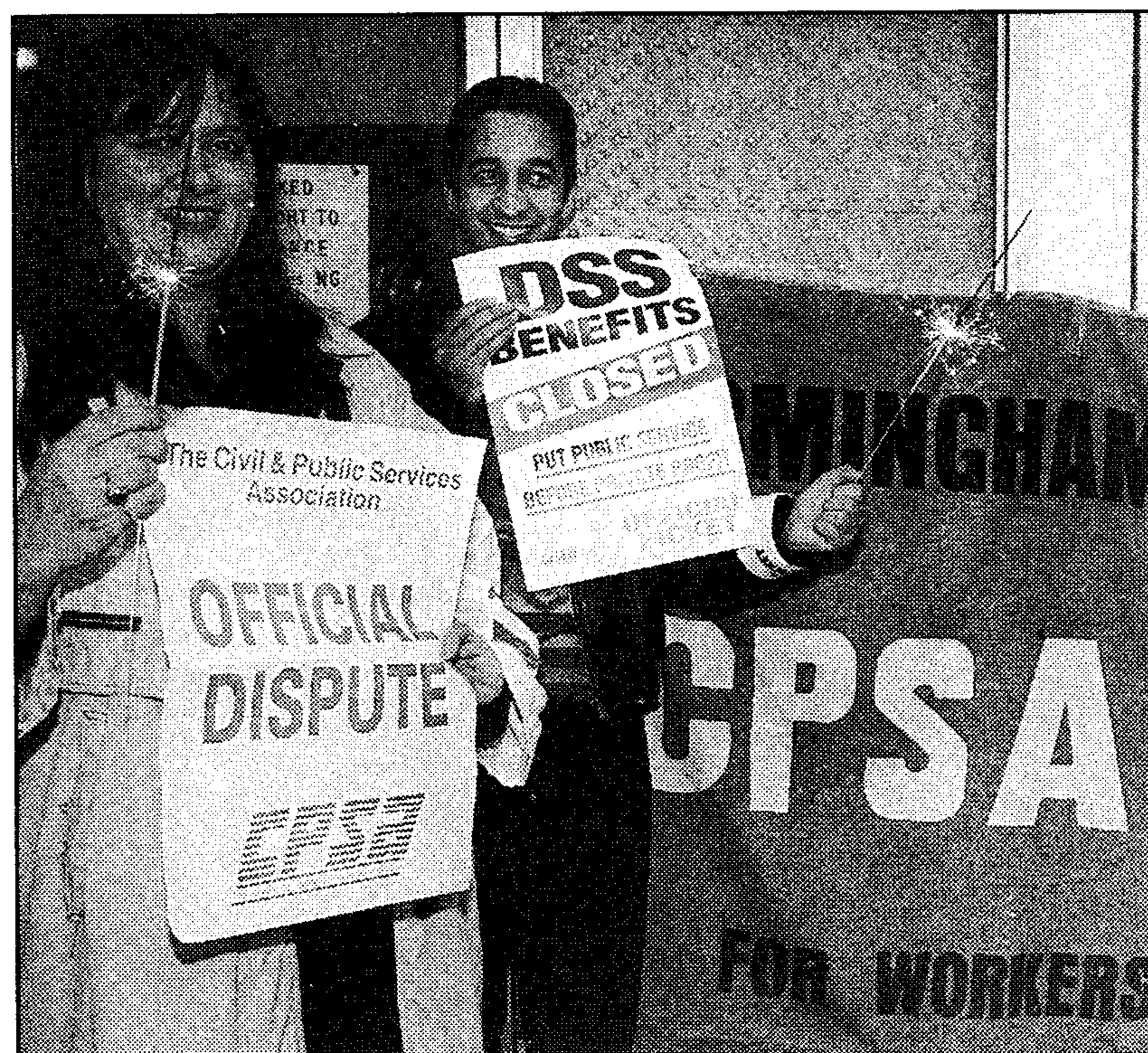
7,000 jobs have already been lost in a process designed to attack union organisation and to undermine current pay and conditions already weakened by the creation of 'agencies' such as the Child Support Agency and the Benefits Agency.

'Market testing' is part of the relentless Tory drive to privatise in the name of better quality services and 'choice' for the consumer. It is the same process as Compulsory Competitive Tendering in local authorities.

Job losses

In fact contracting out of services results in more workers thrown onto the dole, under resourced services, union derecognition and those still lucky enough to have their jobs working harder, for less money and no job security.

The response of the union leadership so far has been poor.



Until they were pushed into this strike they had put their weight behind winning 'in-house' bids as the strategy to fight 'market testing'.

This is doomed to failure - local council workers and NHS manual workers have found to their cost that winning an 'in-house' bid often means the same assault on pay and conditions. Reliance on 'in-house' bids plays into the hands of the government.

Though fighting 'market testing' on the Tories' ground will not work, without strong leadership from the unions many workers see it as their only chance to save their jobs.

Some of the greatest losers in the process will be women and black people who form the majority of the basic and low-paid grades throughout the civil service.

With union derecognition, negotiated 'equal opportunities' policies will cease to exist. Agreements on pensions, holidays, maternity and paternity leave, sickness benefits, rates of pay and hours of work, part-time working, job sharing, special training programmes will be smashed.

There is also an ideological battle to be fought. The Tories have created the agenda which means privatised services are

perceived to be more efficient than state run services; that privatised services 'empower' and provide choice to their users.

The opposite is true. It is the dagger of cuts hidden under the cloak of efficiency, empowerment and choice.

Less money, fewer material resources and fewer workers mean worse services and less choice. The experience in local government

has seen a deterioration of services after contracting out, with some services being brought back 'in-house' after malpractice and suspicions of corruption.

The success of the strike on the 5th shows the potential for increased industrial action. The left needs to fight for an open, democratic, alliance across the public sector.

This should link up with council workers in UNISON who face the same attacks on their jobs. It must draw in service users who also suffer as a result of cuts in the public sector workforce.

TRADE UNION NEWS

BT staff 'on-line' for redundancy

By George Blessing

175,000 British Telecom workers face the loss of job security at a stroke.

Employment in BT has been reduced by 60,000 in three years but management want to lose at least another 80,000 jobs. To do this they plan the introduction of a vicious example of the 'new management techniques' called the 'alignment/reassignment' programme.

This, in reality, is an assessment system which aims to designate nearly half of Britain's telecom workers as 'supernumary' - and thus targeted for the sack by 1997.

All BT employees will be 'rated' on a 90 point scale - a



scale originally designed to assess employees for performance related pay.

Depending on their points rating staff will then be informed whether they have been 'appointed' to a job with the company, or whether they are 'supernumary' - in other words

in line for redundancy.

This process will take place every year. It amounts to a draconian annual system of intimidation. Not only will it have the effect of putting staff permanently in fear of being put on a redundancy list, but for the employers has the added advantage of forcing workers to work harder and compete with one another.

If this system is introduced it will not only devastate telecoms employment but effectively destroy trade unionism in BT.

A further aspect of the 'new management techniques' introduced by this programme is that of disposing with permanent employees and putting work out

to contractors with cheap labour forces.

In fact BT in most departments is now understaffed; the desire for further redundancies can only be explained by BT's intention to further casualise its workforce.

This is partially to compete with the casualised, low-paid, and non-union situation of their Mercury and Cable company competitors.

The recently elected National Communications Union NEC, dominated by the Broad Left, has failed to respond adequately to this attack.

Major branches of the union have been told to co-operate with this system in return for talks and minor concessions.

The first annual AGM of the Broad Left since the election of the BL controlled NEC was at-

tended by about 70 people. It had as its main discussion the Alignment/Reassignment process.

Speaker after speaker criticised the NEC for failing to instruct the membership to boycott their Appraisalment interviews.

The main response from NEC members was to blame the Head Office bureaucracy which is frustrating them at every turn.

However proposals to use the BL itself as a campaigning vehicle with regular publications explaining the issues were firmly resisted.

The AGM was united in supporting the NEC position in calling for an industrial action ballot if BT does not back down from selecting people for their own jobs on a performance related basis.

Workers fight austerity drive

New tide of struggle sweeps Europe

By Paul Clarke

LABOUR UNREST is sweeping Europe. While the struggle at Charles de Gaulle airport in France has been widely reported in Britain, events in Germany, Belgium and Italy have been equally dramatic.

Much of the present strike wave is against defending job security against cutbacks and restructuring, as governments move to cut the number of workers and demand 'flexibility' in state-run industries.

In both France and Italy this is connected to the privatisation drive.

At the Paris Charles de Gaulle airport, Air France workers scored a partial victory at the end of October in forcing the withdrawal of the restructuring plan which would have cost 4000 jobs.

Resignation

Several days of strike action and clashes with riot police on the tarmac also forced the resignation of Air France boss Bernard Attali.

On 29 October all Italian public services and much of industry was shut in a four-hour

general strike against government economic policies.

The mass demonstrations in all large cities protested against 11 per cent unemployment, a government wage freeze and the tax system which allows employers to evade contributions, whereas all workers pay very high taxes.

Plant occupied

The new surge of labour militancy in Italy peaked in September by the mass occupation of the Enichem chemicals plant in Crotona, in southern Italy against a restructuring plan which would have cut 20 per cent of the workforce.

On 27 October 120,000 German building workers demonstrated in Bonn against government plans to scrap winter lay-off payments. This followed the occupation by miners of the Haus Aden-Monopol pit at Bergkamen of the nearby power station, which is threatening to switch to cheap imported coal. The miners also organised a 60,000-strong demonstration against threatened job cuts.

This was followed on 29 October by simultaneous demonstrations by unemployed workers in 200(!) German cities.



FGTB demonstration in Brussels was open to socialist ideas

The biggest mass demonstration in Belgium for many years, 150,000 strong, took place in Brussels on 31 October against the attempt of the government to impose a 'social pact'.

This pact is similar to one being proposed in Spain, which

proposes limiting wage rises 'to create' jobs, and to cut costly redundancy payments which hinder the bosses' restructuring plans.

The debate on alternatives to redundancy, focusing on work-sharing and cutting the working

week, is very strong in Germany and France, although almost absent in Britain.

Volkswagen employers in Germany are proposing a four-day week as an alternative to job cuts - but with a 20 per cent cut in pay.

General strike shakes Belgian bosses

Last week's one-day general strike suggests the post-war 'social pact' between Belgian employers and trades unions is over. CHRIS BROOKS reports from Brussels after a 60,000-strong trade union demonstration was called in four days.

FACED with a massive public debt, the coalition Christian Democrat/Socialist Party government in Belgium has threatened to scrap a system of guaranteed pay-rises as part of a series of attacks on young people and workers.

Belgium has a strong post-war tradition of 'united' government-employer-trades union agreements. The 'social pacts' produced by these negotiations have always produced small gains for the working class.

Hard class struggle could have gained more, but with the highest productivity in Europe Belgium has massive social security and welfare rights.

Central to all this is the In-

dex, a system where most workers get guaranteed pay rises in line with the rise of the cost of living.

The Index is the product of an agreement between the employers federation, the FEB, and the two trade union federations. It's one of reasons why trade union membership in Belgium is high.

This longstanding arrangement is threatened by the massive state debt. Last year the government paid £14 billion in interest payments - nearly four times more than it pays towards social security!

Under the pressure of the recession, the government wants to cut both wages and employers' National Insurance contributions. They aim to end the Index and introduce a layer of new, low paid, jobs for youth.

The response of the working class has been massive.

The FGTB union federation, unprepared to compromise on the Index, has walked out of discussions with the employers and government.

With just four days notice more than 60,000 members of the Socialist Party-aligned union joined a noisy and confident Brussels demonstration to mark a 24 hour strike.

Linked to the attacks on organised labour, the government plans to introduce new 'little jobs' for the jobless, especially the youth - like 'compan-

ions', nannies, gardeners and supermarket bag-packers - on tiny wages and with poor social welfare rights. It's an arrangement that will deepen social inequality and insecurity.

Working people on the Brussels demonstration were eager to read and buy the literature of the Workers' Socialist Party, the Belgian section of the Fourth International.

The bosses government, argues the Party, must be replaced with a social government based on the workers', and other, mass organisations. The solution to the crisis is to cut the working week, with no loss of pay, and to ruthlessly attack both the financial fraud of big business and the current level of military spending.

These practical solutions have been eagerly heard. The Party sold out of a double-issue of its French-language journal *La Gauche*, dedicated to fighting the social pact.

At the same time, a radicalisation of youth is being marked by a 24 November strike of school and college students against racism and fascism. Especially strong in Flanders, where the far right Flemish Bloc got 11% of the vote in 1991, the strike is being enthusiastically built by the Socialist Young Guard, which also supports the Fourth International.

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WORLD NEWS

Why is Irish nationalism in crisis?

By David Coen

The crisis in the Six Counties and the various peace proposals have cast a spotlight on the evolution of the whole Irish nationalist tradition.

Irish nationalism took its main reference point from 1916 Proclamation, which called for an Ireland 'not merely free but Gaelic as well'.

But its practical application and most visible shape came from the Fianna Fail Party and its founder Eamon De Valera, which ruled almost without interruption from 1932 to 1973.

De Valera's austere vision was much mocked by the historical 'revisionists' like Roy Murphy and John A. Foster who came to the fore in the late 1970s.

As the economic crisis of the 26 counties began, they raised doubts about the wisdom of the original break with Britain.

Though the Six County State was dismissed as a failed political entity, the same seemed to be becoming true of the 'Free' State.

Aided and abetted by some of a more left wing persuasion, they explained the causes of the great Famine, not so much by the actions (or rather the inaction) of the British, but by the internal relations of class and politics in Ireland.

The correction (perhaps necessary) of the 'imbalance' in the teaching of history in De Valera's Republic, soon led to an attack on Republicanism and even a nostalgic yearning on the part of some of the Dublin intelligentsia for a return to the 'United Kingdom'.

Recanting

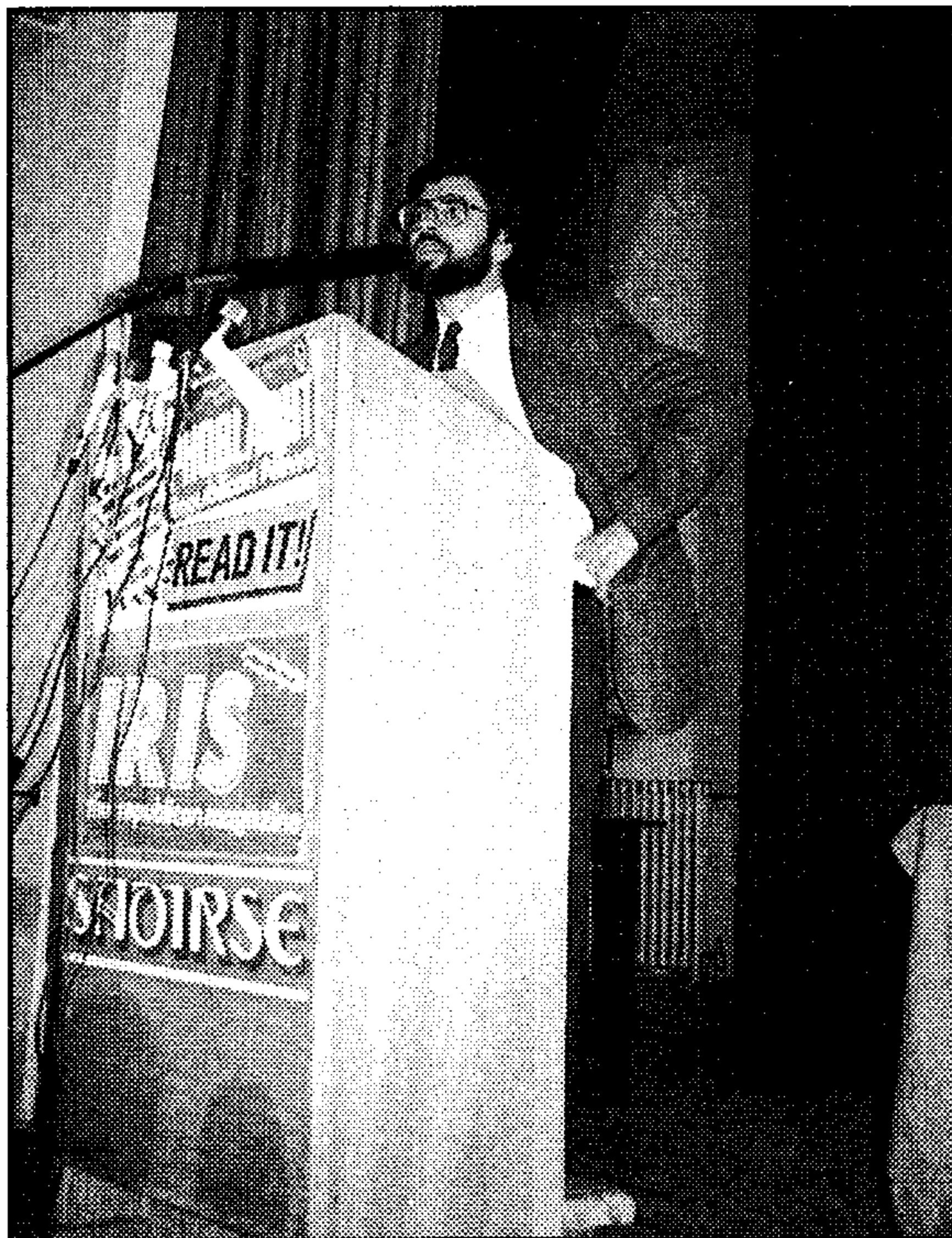
The latest to beg forgiveness for the fervour of his nationalist views is Tim Pat Coogan, author of a famous book on the IRA and long-time former editor of the De Valera's Irish Press newspaper, who sets out to debunk the De Valera role in 20th century Irish history.

Such was the influence of the revisionists and the self-doubt among the mainstream Fianna Fail nationalists that there were no official celebrations in 1981 of the 75th Anniversary of the 1916 Rising which led to the foundation of the state.

It is against this background that the prospects for a so-called 'pan-nationalist alliance', stretching apparently from the IRA, through John Hume's SDLP to Dick Spring and Albert Reynolds in the Dublin Government, can be assessed.

Hume's talks with Adams arose out of his desperation at the fact that in the Brooke/Mayhew talks, he was being offered a deal worse than the 'power sharing' but short-lived Sunningdale Agreement of 1974 - some kind of devolved Government with a token input from Dublin.

Hume knows that a return to Unionist



Gerry Adams

rule as existed before 1972 is not acceptable to the nationalist community in northern Ireland. He needs to bring in Sinn Fein and to try to get a green coating on a deal by involving Dublin as a guarantor of the position of the nationalists.

His talks with Adams put Major under a certain amount of pressure to talk peace, but given Major's deal with the Unionists at Westminster and pressure from the right of the Tory Party, Major seems unlikely to make any concessions.

Adams saw the talks as a way of breaking out of Sinn Fein's isolation and the limitations of the 'long war' strategy - while the IRA could fight the British to a standstill they couldn't drive them out by military means alone.

The strategy in the South was alliances, where possible, with Fianna Fail. Even after Haughey's betrayal of the Hunger Strikes showed the dangers of that policy, Sinn Fein failed to link with

do something about the murderous attacks on nationalists by the UVF and the UVP, was a serious tactical mistake.

It removed whatever limited gains Sinn Fein might have made as a result of the Hume/Adams talks and allowed Major off the hook, allowing him not to respond to the call for peace talks. He promptly called for complete surrender by the IRA.

While the Shankill bombing and its aftermath has not affected the fundamental balance of forces in the north of Ireland it does reveal the true relationship of forces on the nationalist side.

The biggest gains in the aftermath of the bombing and the sectarian bloodletting of the loyalists were made by the Dublin government.

They are carefully preparing the way for constitutional changes in the South, dropping the historic claim of the republic to the Six Counties, in return for

"There is no certainty that the British are capable of doing such a deal even on favourable terms. This is after all the Conservative and UNIONIST Party. It is weak and divided, relying on the Unionists to survive in parliament. Even the mildest concessions to nationalism would cause screams of betrayal from a section of the Party"

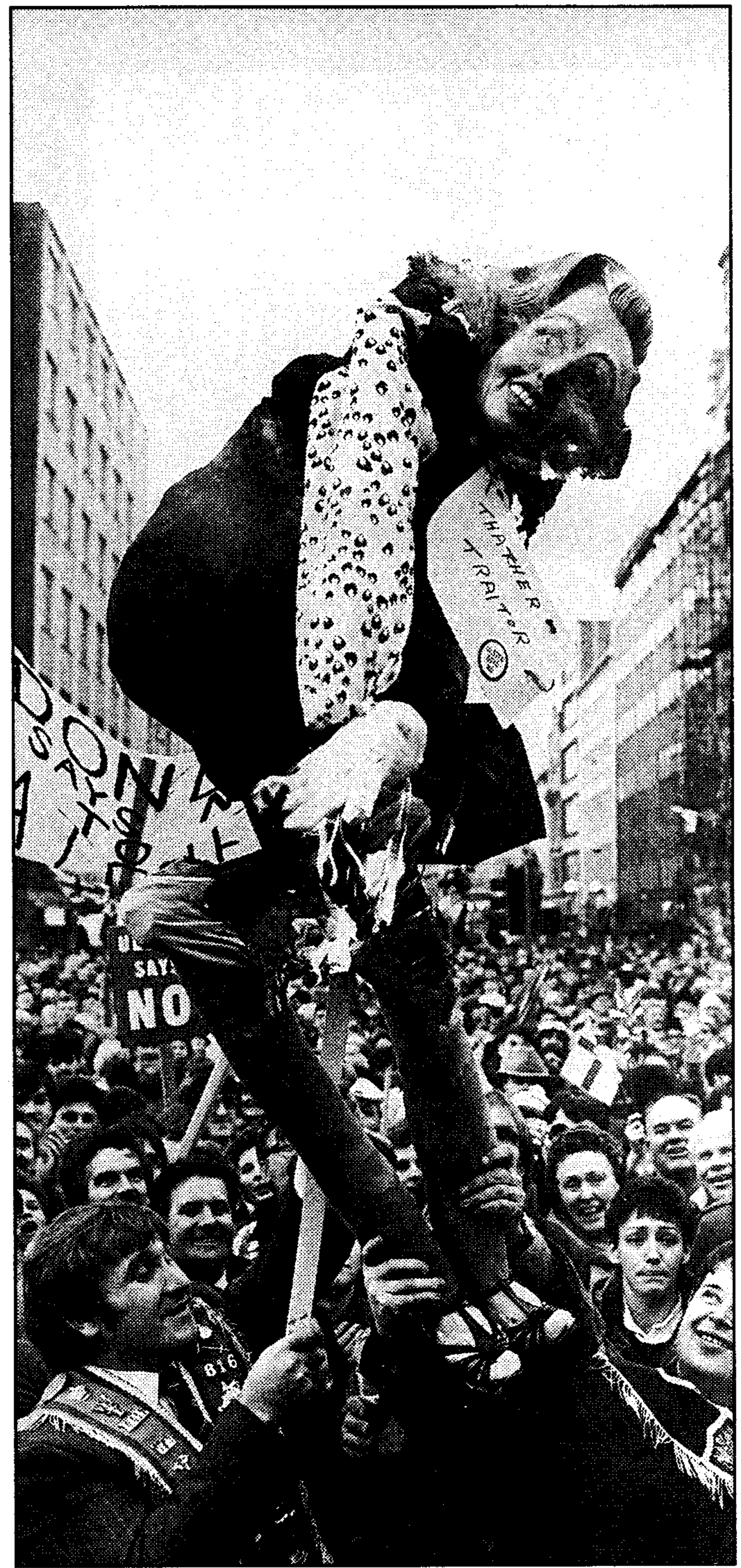
the southern working class and allowed themselves to become isolated from feminist, anti-clerical and other progressive forces.

Now they are having to throw themselves at the tender mercy of Fianna Fail.

The Shankill bomb, while undoubtedly the result of pressure on the IRA to

whatever limited role they might get as 'protectors' of the nationalists.

The Hume/Adams principles were hijacked and diluted by Deputy Taoiseach Dick Spring; and were unrecognisable in the six principles agreed between Taoiseach Albert Reynolds and John Major.



Loyalist workers: pressure on Tories

The general perception that the nationalists are willing to make concessions has led to calls on Major to take the Hume/Adams talks more seriously - some believe Major's original stance was a negotiating ploy to re-assure the Unionists in advance of more talks - and not to miss a 'historic opportunity for peace'.

It is here that Ireland plugs into the crisis of the British state. It may be the right time for a deal, given the perception of weakness and demoralisation among nationalists.

The terms of such a deal may be obvious and the price to be paid by the British may be small in comparison to what the war has cost them, and not just in monetary terms.

But there is no certainty that the British are capable of doing such a deal even on such favourable terms. This is after all the Conservative and Unionist Party. It is weak and divided, relying on the Unionists to survive in parliament.

Even the mildest concessions to nationalism would cause screams of betrayal from a section of the Party.

In the last century, the Tories wrecked Home Rule for Ireland, despite the Liberal Government's belief that Home Rule would save the Union.

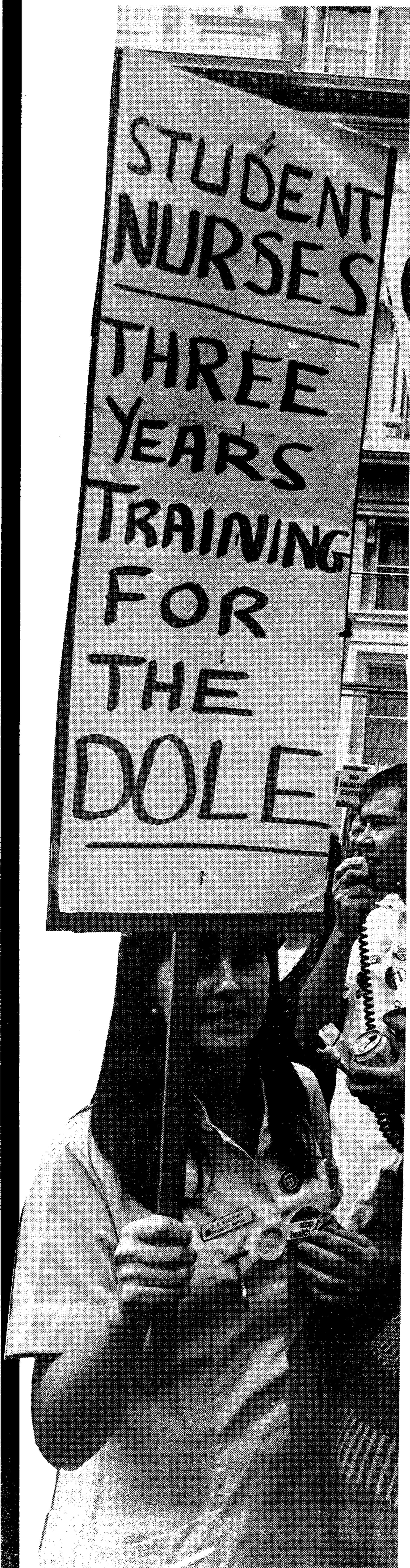
It may be that the divisions in the Tory Party will, once again, block a settlement which is in the interests of the British ruling class and thereby save the nationalists from the historic submission for which they seem to be preparing themselves.

The second historical precedent is even bleaker: the 1921 Agreement, which led to the partition of Ireland and the creation of the Orange State, led also to civil war.

Peace is a long way off.

Liberation!

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London SE1
(Waterloo tube)

THOUSANDS of jobs are being axed in piecemeal cuts and closures by NHS Trusts throughout the country: and even more are at risk.

In London, the big totals are well-known. University College Hospital plans a new wave of 500 redundancies, bringing a 12-month total of 700. Guy's-St Thomas's plans to slash 2,000 jobs (30% of the workforce) to cut £75m from spending: already the redundancies are being pushed through – in batches of 29, to deny staff the 90 days notice due to groups of 30 or more.

In Glasgow, 3,500 jobs are at risk, and in other big cities thousands of NHS jobs are threatened. But smaller Trusts throughout England, Wales, Scotland and the north of Ireland are also cutting jobs in smaller numbers, after decisions taken by secretive Boards behind closed doors, and without attracting big headlines. In Warwickshire alone, 700 jobs have been slashed this year.

Desperate to cut spending to balance their books, all Trusts are looking at ways of cutting numbers of qualified and highly-skilled staff.

Amid a massive increase in numbers of managers on telephone number salaries, thousands of nurses, health visitors, and qualified support staff are being thrown out of work through 'skill mix reviews', sometimes to be replaced by less qualified, lower paid staff.

More and more students are completing nursing or other professional training to find there is no job for them. *But these staff are not 'redundant'*. There is work literally waiting for them to do. As waiting lists soar above the million mark and hospitals struggle to cope with a new winter 'flu epidemic, it is clear the NHS is being stretched to breaking point.

ENOUGH IS ENOUGH! The unions have already let too many jobs disappear without a fight. The TUC demonstration on November 20 must mark the start of a concerted fightback in every hospital and Trust.

Symptoms of Tory market fever

An epidemic of hospital closures

RUMOUR has it that the new Department of Health head office in Leeds employs a senior manager with the exclusive task of promoting massive bed and hospital closure programmes along the lines of London's Tomlinson report.

The effort hardly seems necessary. Even in London, Tomlinson's proposal to axe ten

hospitals and 4,000 beds has already been overtaken by the galloping cash crisis created by the Tory internal market system.

So far 24 hospitals are under threat of closure in London, with more looking to make cut-backs, as tens of millions of pounds are removed from health budgets in the capital. No less than 13 of London's 17 purchasing health authorities stand to lose out, some losing as much

as 10% of their budgets, as a result of the new funding formula introduced by the Tories.

But cash pressures are increasingly being felt by Trusts throughout the country, forcing managers to contemplate similarly massive cuts in hospital services.

Especially hard hit are the big cities. Hospitals in Birmingham, Newcastle, Glasgow, Liverpool, Sheffield, Bristol, Cardiff, Belfast and other cities are being forced to close vital wards, beds and services for lack of cash.

Naturally, as they look for ways to dress up these cuts for public consumption, Trust bosses and health authorities are reaching for the rhetoric of the Tomlinson Report, which asserted (without a shred of evidence) that improved GP and primary care services could make hospital beds unnecessary.

Tomlinson went on to argue that irrespective of its exceptional health problems, inner London's hospitals should be expected not only to match but to exceed by almost 50% the "throughput" of the most efficient hospitals anywhere in Britain.

His 'target figures' for the use of hospital beds, again invented without any supporting evidence, are being widely touted by desperate health chiefs seeking to save money by closing hospitals.

In reality, treating patients is still expensive, and in the wacky logic of the new NHS market, it is cash limits and not patient care which is the top priority. So we find Trusts are being penal-

● The axe is swinging towards thousands of NHS beds in SCOTLAND. Under current plans Glasgow stands to lose upwards of 1,200 beds, Tayside 900, Ayrshire and Arran 400 and Fife 250. Six hospitals face closure in Glasgow, including the Western Infirmary which according to UNISON faces a £9m overspend.

● In the West Midlands, funds to buy treatment ran out only months into the financial year, bringing a halt to non-urgent surgery at the Alexandra Hospital, Redditch. Meanwhile Solihull's non fund-holding GPs have been told not to refer patients to the local Solihull hospital, since there is no money to pay for treatment. Consultants at the Good Hope Hospital in Sutton Coldfield, who had been treating too many waiting list patients, have been told to cancel all non-urgent operations for two months - unless they come from fund-holding GPs.

● Belfast's Royal Victoria Hospital, facing a deficit of £6 million, is axing 300 jobs.

● Liverpool's Broadgreen Hospital, whose casualty unit faces closure, is closing three wards and a theatre suite to save money.

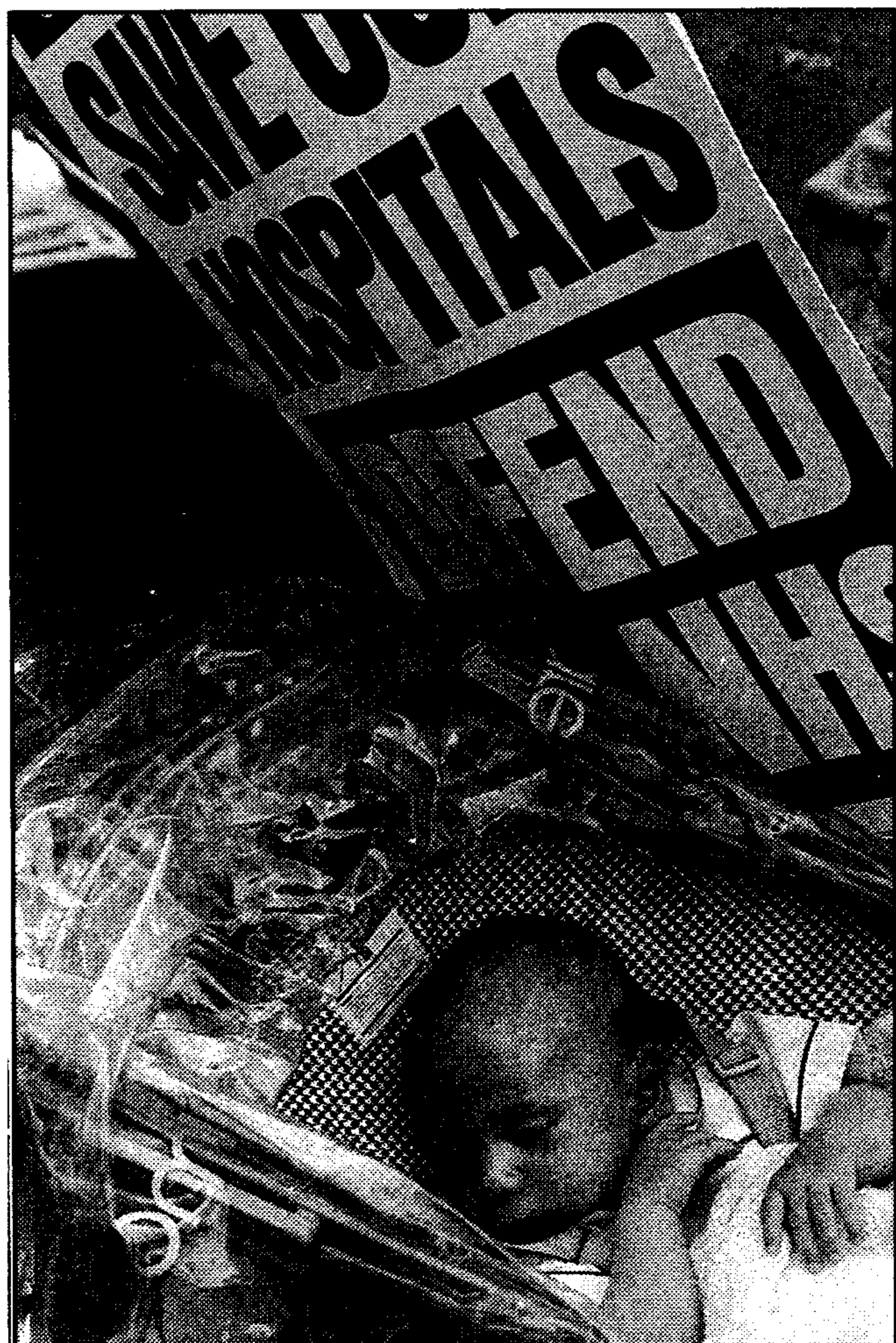
ised for treating too many patients!

Already the market system is creating a crop of avoidable tragedies. Three patients from Greater Manchester, aged 50, 62 and 40, have died within a week because of a lack of intensive care beds. They were transferred 50 miles by ambulance to Blackpool, not to vacant beds in nearby Liverpool because their health authority had no contract with Liverpool!

The crisis-ridden Ealing Hospital Trust, which hit the

headlines recently when its Chief Executive suddenly publicised the plight of patients forced to spend the night on trolleys in the corridor, has since announced it can only accept 'blue light' emergencies.

Meanwhile, Rosie Faunch, after her day of glory in the press as Ealing's Chief Executive with a conscience', (or 'the fart with a heart', as one health worker described her) has opted out of the NHS - and taken a job running a plush private hospital in Windsor.



CENTRE STAGE

Where have health unions been since '88?

Wake up the sleeping giants!

IT IS FIVE years since the TUC last called on health workers and campaigners to join a national demonstration for the NHS - and then had the nerve to offer a platform of speakers devoid of health workers, and headed by 'Agony Aunt' Clare Rayner.

Even that demonstration was only grudgingly called, under pressure from a mass movement of nurses which began in January 1988 with strikes in Manchester and spread across the country.

In 1989, a much more limited demonstration was called in support of the ambulance pay dispute, but then ... nothing.

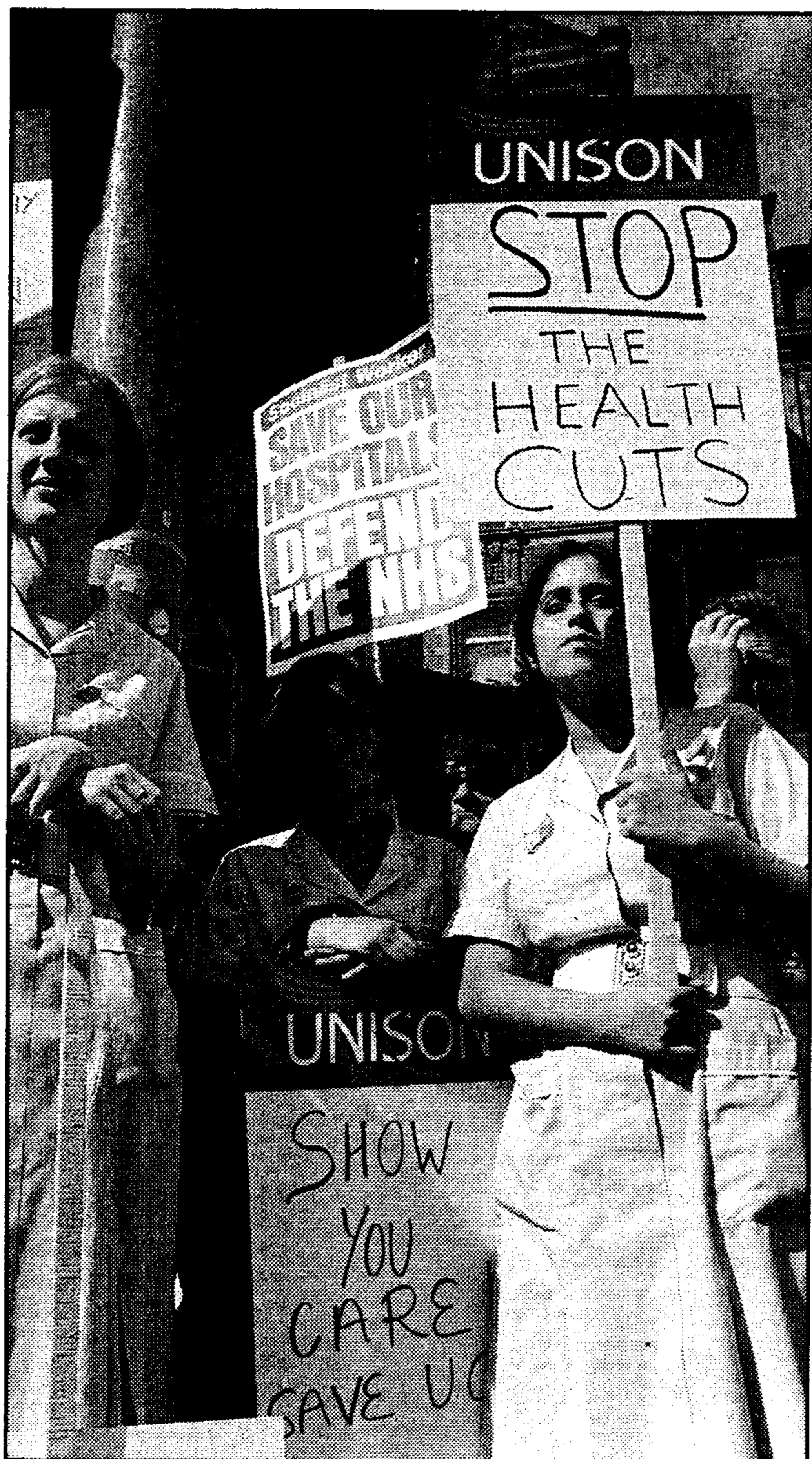
There was no demonstration or TUC campaign against the NHS & Community Care Act which introduced the controversial 'market' system and opted

out Trusts to the NHS from April 1991.

There was no challenge to the introduction of the Community Care reforms, which in April of this year removed the long-term care of the elderly from the NHS, making patients liable to means-tested charges.

It has appeared that in many areas the health unions have completely given up the ghost, allowing dozens of Trust bosses carte blanche to carry through brutal cuts in beds and services, a massacre of jobs, a two-year virtual pay freeze, and fresh rounds of privatisation. Fightbacks have been few and far between.

Health unions have merged to become bigger, but so far show little sign of increased strength or militant activity. The biggest of the sleeping giants, UNISON with 500,000 members, can point only to the courageous fight this summer at London's



What's so good about the NHS?

DESPITE 14 years of Thatcherite attacks, the British National Health Service remains one of the most egalitarian healthcare systems in the world. In providing to each patient treatment according to their needs, while being funded from direct taxation which varies according to ability to pay, it embodies a basic tenet of socialism.

Indeed the NHS is virtually unique among capitalist countries in delivering comprehensive care, funded from taxation, and free to all citizens at point of use.

By contrast many other health services are based on more expensive insurance systems, and many levy charges on patients for treatment and hospital stays as well as prescription drugs. In France, for example, charges on patients amount to a massive 19% of health spending.

Pushed through in 1948 by left wing Health Minister Aneurin Bevan, the NHS legislation effectively nationalised the existing hotch-potch of charitable and municipal hospitals. The state took over the funding of treatment from a ramshackle collection of insurance and other funds, which had left millions, notably women, without health cover.

Family doctors were brought in – at first grudgingly – as self-employed sub-contractors.

Like all post-war nationalisations in Britain (such as coal, rail and other utilities) the NHS was set up with serious problems. It established social ownership, but not social control. Instead, many of the old managers who had shamefully neglected and almost bankrupted the hospitals were left in charge: new health authorities were set up to replace the discredited Hospital Boards – but the authorities were always unelected and undemocratic.

Profits

Private drug companies and other suppliers were allowed to milk profits from the state-funded system, which from the outset was starved of the capital it needed to build new hospitals in expanding centres of population, and under-funded on its annual budget. In its first year the NHS cost £402 million, compared to a budget of £180m

The new NHS could never achieve the dreams of the socialists who had campaigned hardest for it. It could not create an island of socialism in the midst of crisis-ridden capitalist society. Nor, for this reason, could it eradicate disease and ill-health, especially from working class communities wracked

by poverty, poor housing and brutish working conditions. Some of the biggest advances in public health since 1948 have come from rising living standards rather than medical treatment.

However the NHS did make extremely important advances, and though Labour soon retreated and prescription charges and means-tested fees for dental treatment and spectacles were soon introduced, the vast bulk of NHS treatment – including all consultations and in-patient treatment – is still free of charge.

The attachment to this principle runs very deep: the unregenerate Thatcherite Michael Portillo is one of very few top Tories who now openly argue for 'hotel charges' to be levied on patients in hospital.

So while it is correct to highlight Tory under-funding of the NHS and to expose the problems created by growing waiting lists for treatment, it is important that socialists defend our health service.

Just remember: Bill Clinton's new plan for extending health insurance in the USA would leave working people liable to pay up to \$3,000 a year in charges, including \$10 for every visit to a doctor.

Even after 14 years of Thatcherism, we are far better off than that!

With a new flu epidemic spreading rapidly southwards through the country, it is clear hospitals have been cut back so far that they cannot cope.

Increasing numbers of beds left open will be 'blocked' by elderly patients who cannot be discharged into the collapsing, under-funded new community care arrangements.

Soon 'yellow' and then 'red' alerts will be imposed, leading to the cancellation of thousands more waiting list operations.

The cancellation of waiting list admissions last winter resulted in the present million-plus waiting list totals nationally – almost a third of them (300,000) in the four Thames regions.

Yet even as the queues lengthen, more beds are closing and more health workers are being thrown onto the dole.

The NHS crisis is deepening.

It was predictable. It was and is avoidable.

It is a *manufactured* crisis, the outcome of the government's crazy health reforms, which have led to ever more managers for ever fewer beds and front-line staff, and which nobody but ministers and the most servile managers support.

Desperate though things may appear, there is a simple and popular answer:

- Scrap the bureaucratic nightmare of the market system.

- Disband the wasteful, divisive Trusts.

- Pump in the £2 billion needed immediately to restore the NHS and cut the waiting lists.

- Halt the closure of any hospital beds until alternative proven and improved alternative forms of care are up and running.

University College Hospital.

In many cases health workers appear daunted by the sheer scale of the financial problems faced by Trusts in the new internal market. The UCH management, for example, faces a massive £13m shortfall, South Birmingham £24m, and Guy's-St Thomas's £75m over five years.

Workers embarking on industrial action against such odds need to feel part of a movement, feel sure they will not just be isolated and defeated.

That is why the TUC demonstration, opening the way to link up the rival health unions with other sections of workers and build a common national campaign, is important. It shows what could be achieved through joint action targeted at a common enemy.

The inter-union links that have been formed in building for the November 20 demo must be continued and extended,



with further initiatives at local and national level aimed at defeating NHS cuts and closures, and scrapping the crazy, anarchic market system.

Union officials who obstruct this fighting unity must be challenged and

pushed aside.

Health workers must organise to defend themselves, and link up with other campaigns and community groups. After all, we can't afford to wait another five years for the next TUC demo!

Get the facts for the fight

● FUTURE issues of *Liberation's* fortnightly sister paper **SOCIALIST OUTLOOK** will carry feature articles examining the Clinton health plan in the USA and health services in Europe, and coverage of the fight for the NHS in Britain.

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Scandal as black health workers face discrimination

NHS: Britain's biggest (racist) employer

BIG DEMONSTRATIONS have recently challenged the Nazi-style racists of the BNP in East London and the 'state racism' of the government's Asylum Act and other legislation. The biggest health union, UNISON, encourages its black members to organise themselves in groups to ensure their demands are heard.

But as Britain's biggest employer of black workers, the record of the NHS on fighting racism remains poor.

Each round of cuts and privatisation has struck first and hardest at black health workers.

In the early 1980s, tens of thousands of black workers were employed in NHS ancillary services - catering, domestic and laundry. One survey suggested 80% of ancillary workers in London were black or from ethnic minorities.

But ancillary staffs have been decimated by privatisation. NHS numbers employed fell by 90,000 (40%) in the 1980s, with many forced into part-time working: hours worked were cut by almost 50%.

Thousands of ousted ancillary staff were forced to work for the cheapskate cowboy firms which took over after offering hospital bosses the lowest tender price. As a result they lost job security, holiday pay, pension rights, sickness benefits and often union rights.

Thousands more still work for the NHS but on shorter hours and worsened conditions.

The picture is also bleak for any black nurses, thousands of whom were encouraged to work as unqualified nursing auxiliaries (NAs) or to seek the less academic Enrolled Nurse (SEN) qualification.

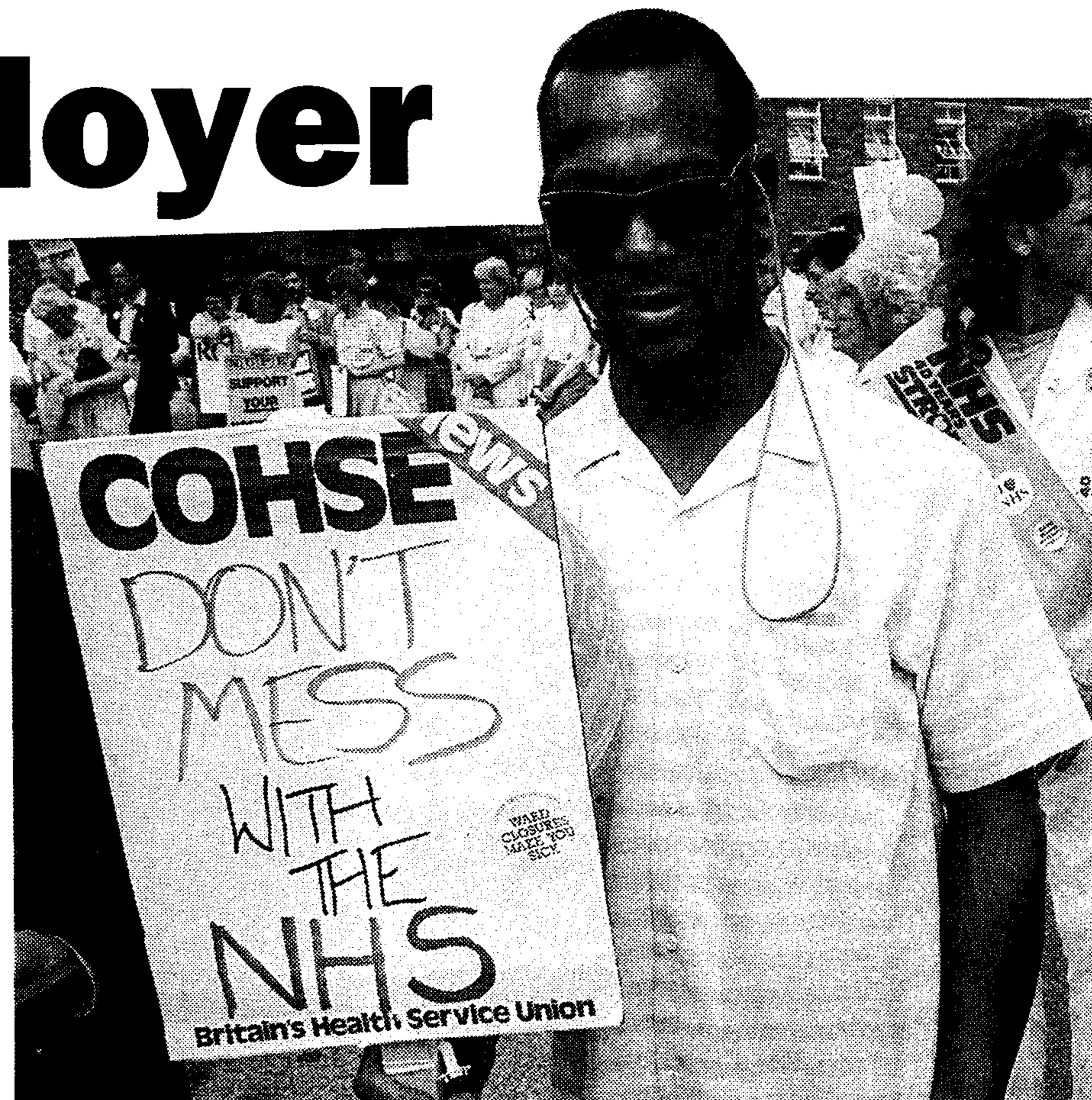
Now a new system of nurse training offers promotion only to Registered nurses. Yet for 100,000 SENs only 3,000 places are available on conversion courses: selection procedures are tough, and some SENs are even being asked to pay for their own training. But if they stay put, they could find their jobs wiped out as Trusts replace them with cheaper, less qualified staff.

Promotion

Black nurses, whether SRNs, SENs or NAs have tended to wind up working in the less attractive areas of the NHS, caring for the elderly, the mentally ill, or working nights and unsocial hours. Black nurses once qualified find it harder to gain promotion.

And black nurses also lost out under the 1988 'clinical grading' exercise which set pay levels for each job. In one area, 70% of the appeals lodged by the unions came from black members: appeals are still being heard.

Black staff in post often find little support from an overwhelmingly white NHS management structure. All of the Chief Executives and 98% of the directors of the 57



first-wave Trusts were white, most of them men.

The new Trusts are not bound by previously negotiated equal opportunities agreements, not obliged to publish any monitoring of the ethnic breakdown of their staff.

An example of the kind of problem that can arise was the case of Anita Ceesay, a black NUPE member employed by the Royal London Trust, who was sacked for 'professional misconduct' after responding to racial abuse from a man later arrested and prosecuted. Months later a vigorous local campaign secured her reinstatement - just as the Trust opted to save money by sacking its Community Recruitment Officer.

A similar episode cost Hounslow health authority £27,000 in compensation after they suspended a black health visitor who complained of racial discrimination, then sacked him for complaining to his MP.

Even now some areas of the NHS remain largely white enclaves. According to an inquiry into the London Ambulance Service, only 50 (1.8%) of its 2,700 staff are black or from ethnic minorities.

But information on NHS racism is depressingly sparse. Health unions persistently fail to monitor and campaign on problems as they arise. Here is an urgent task for black members' groups.

If wars, starvation, environmental devastation, exploitation and injustice make you angry...
If you reject the idea that they are somehow "inevitable" or permanent features of human society...
Then, like us, you've probably thought alot about how to change the world. Simply wishing things would get better is not enough.
Working alone you can change some things a little, for a while; working together with others, you can change the world.

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Nurses train for dole

THOUSANDS of young workers and students are falling victim to the runaway NHS cash crisis.

Many working in support services like catering, portering, cleaning and laundry have been caught up in the privatisation process, seeking their jobs axed or their pay and conditions hacked back.

As a result those that remain face tin-pot dictatorial managers desperately seeking to meet specified standards by brutally exploiting insufficient numbers of low-paid staff.

But perhaps the worst headache affects the thousands of student nurses who work three years on rock-bottom pay for a qualification, only to find that the NHS can't

offer them a job.

In Romford last autumn, 100 final year nurse students at Oldchurch Hospital were told there would be no vacancies until July 1993.

In central London, unions at the crisis-ridden University College Hospital won a management concession - that qualifying student nurses who were not offered jobs would not be immediately evicted from their NHS accommodation.

The situation for student nurses is worsening all the time as NHS Trusts implement rigorous 'skill mix reviews' designed to cut the numbers of qualified staff they employ, replacing them with cheaper, unqualified health care assistants.

Many of these are young women attracted

to the NHS as a caring service, who find themselves stuck in a low-paid, dead-end grade as the elitist new 'Project 2000' scheme widens the gulf between qualified and unqualified nurses.

In some areas the cuts in nurse jobs have led to a reduction in the intake of new students. In Barnet, the near-bankrupt Wellhouse Trust has gone further and closed its College of Nursing to save money.

By failing to recruit, train and retain young workers, the NHS market system is jeopardising the future and quality of health care.

It is more vital than ever that young NHS workers get active in the fightback against the Tory attack.

The impasse of municipal socialism

Dispatches, Channel 4, 27 October: *Going to the Dogs*

Reviewed by Phil Hearse and Helen Shaw

WHAT REALLY lies behind the election of BNP councillor Derek Beackon in Millwall? Channel Four's 27 October 'Dispatches' programme, *Going to the Dogs*? attempted to answer this question.

While the programme left out crucial facts, the underlying material basis for racism on the Isle of Dogs and in many other working class communities was highlighted.

This points to problems whose solutions lie way beyond the scope of anything which could be done by Tower Hamlets council, whichever party had control.

The key question is housing. Acting on statutory duties, the council prioritises housing homeless people above rehousing long-time residents living in crowded and run-down accommodation.

In practice this often means - quite rightly - priority to homeless Bangladeshi families.

Not that the Liberal Democrats do this willingly; a Liberal councillor explained how they had tried to give priority to 'long-time residents' or

'those whose parents come from the island' - ie white people.

BNP voters knew very well why they voted for the fascists. Not because of their ideology, but because of the 'rights for whites' slogan; because their perception is that Bangladeshi families are getting new housing, while they have waited for many years to be rehoused.

In addition, a conscious policy of rehousing Bangladeshis from all over the borough on the Isle of Dogs seems to be in operation.

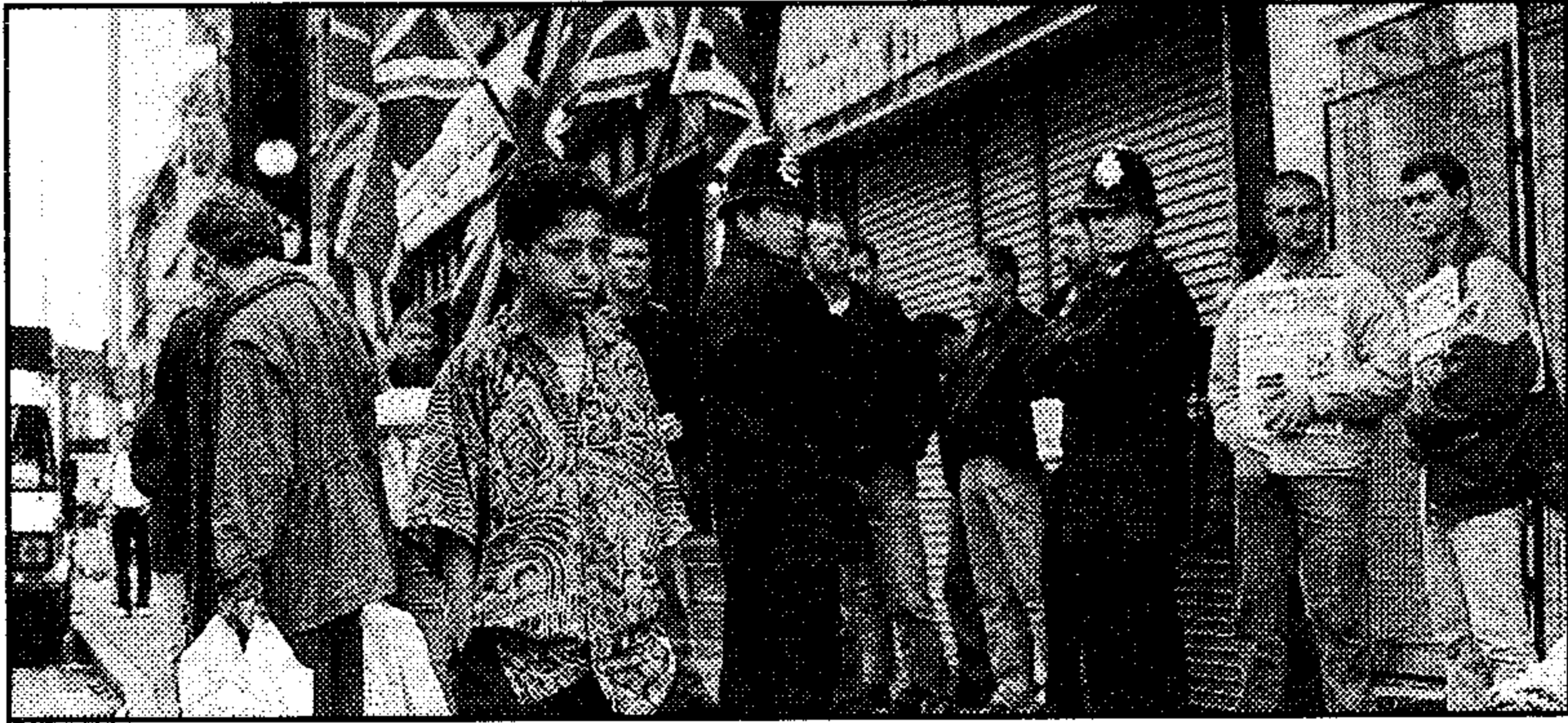
As the yuppie boom of the 1980s crashed many flats in Docklands remained unoccu-

afraid are they of racial attacks.

Hostility to the Labour Party is widespread. While Tower Hamlets is Liberal-controlled, its unique devolved structure means that many decisions are taken at neighbourhood level, with control being in the hands of local Labour councillors.

In other words, Labour councillors administer Liberal council policies which are themselves constrained by Tory spending cuts.

Labour councillors on the programme were strong in their opposition to racism, but very short on answers to the real problems of working class people in the borough.



pied. A small number of these have been sold to Tower Hamlets. Large extended Bangladeshi families have been housed in some of these.

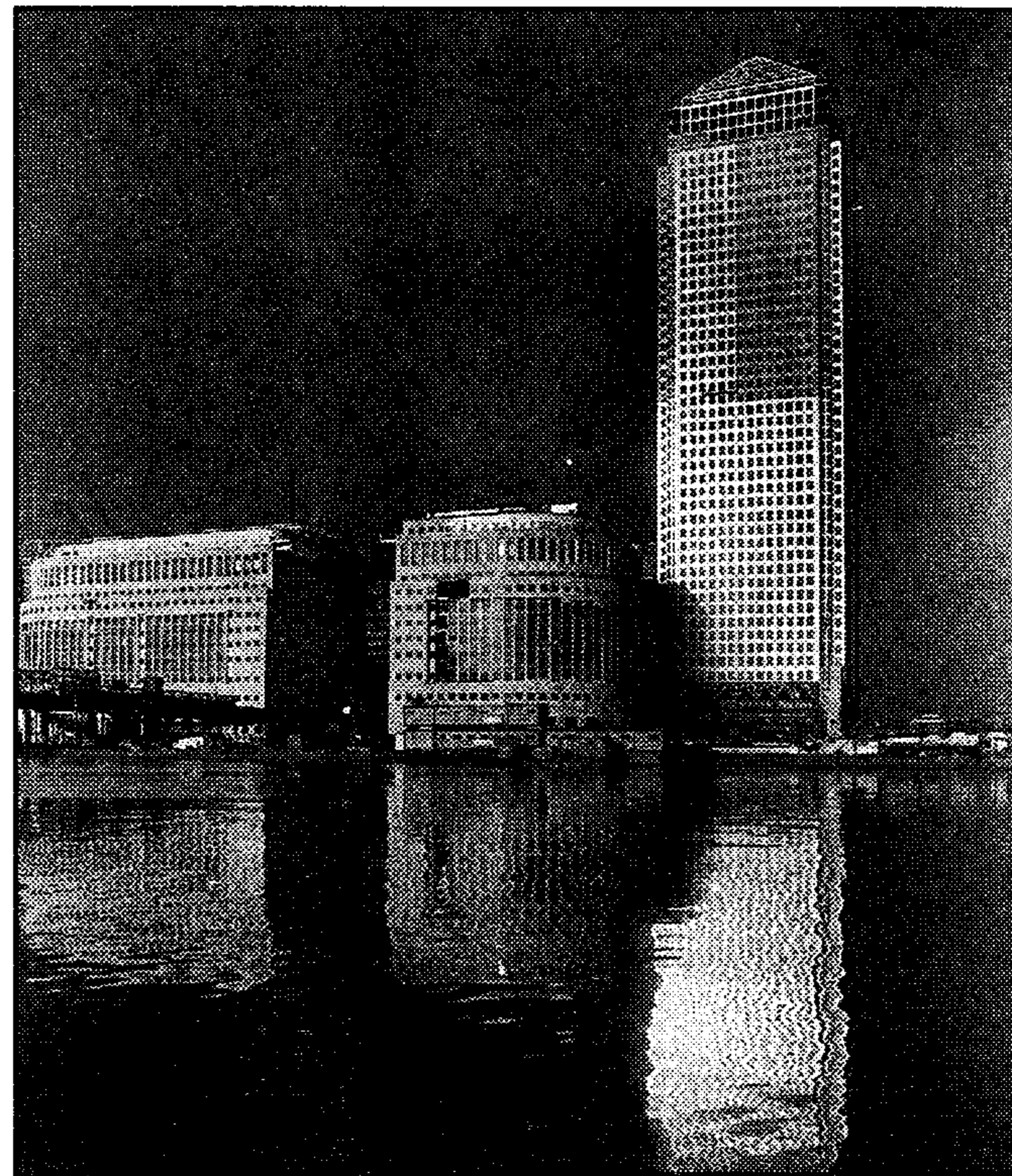
Resentment over housing doesn't explain everything. The culture of racism in a small, run-down, white working class community also has to be explained. It is an area where the fascists have long been active.

Neither do big social problems in the white working class directly explain why social services have to pay for taxis to take some Bangladeshi kids to school, so

What was left out is the fact that there are 1000 empty flats in Docklands, owned by the building societies and big financial institutions. Lacking yuppie buyers, they stand unused. And of course workers can't afford them.

Many of the gleaming office blocks are also empty: they too should be converted to housing, but that too poses the question of ownership and control.

But of course how to get the homeless and poorly-housed working class people into these flats is a problem beyond the control of any local



Canary Wharf: ordinary people gathered none of the benefits the Tories lavished on Docklands

authority. That is a problem not only at the level of government, but at the level of power.

Newly-emerging political forces in the community pose both a promise and a threat. The politicisation of Bangladeshi youth, evident in *Youth Connections*, is an immense promise for the future. But groups of white residents organising against both the BNP and Labour showed the potential, not only in Tower Hamlets, for a reactionary threat emerging, in some ways more dangerous than the BNP.

A BNP voter explained openly that his was a 'protest' vote. Despite that, in the long term the programme showed clearly that the material basis for growing fascism cannot be combated solely by raising anti-fascist and anti-racist consciousness.

The community and local workers organisations have to be united in struggle around demands relating to their material problems.

That is the difficulty in the situation. It is not just a matter

of directly party-political organisation, but of a movement of struggle.

The two occasions in the 1980s when such a movement existed, apart from the miners strike, were in the rate-capping fight and the anti-poll tax movement.

Now that local government and housing are going to bear the brunt of Clarke's budgets cuts, the real resources to address local social problems are being further devastated.

This casts a spotlight on what role can be played by Labour councillors. There are no solutions at the level of Tower Hamlets. It is an illusion to believe that a Labour council, in itself, will solve anything - no matter how left wing its policies.

Labour councillors can help generate and build a movement of resistance - to the government and the fascists. But the material basis for 'municipal socialism', substantial local reforms in the interests of the working class, has disappeared.

Campaign against detention camp gains momentum

Stop Tories jailing refugees!

By Bill MacKeith

A CAMPAIGN against the opening of the UK's largest detention centre for people held under the Immigration Acts has been launched in Oxford.

Campsfield detention centre is being opened near Kidlington by the Immigration Service, 'probably in late November', according to the Home office. It will be a profit-making enterprise run by Group 4.

There will be places for 200 people including children. A large proportion of detainees will be refugees or asylum seekers.

Others will be deemed to have overstayed their 'welcome' ('illegal immi-

grants') and on the way to being deported.

The great majority of detainees will of course be black. Kurds, Zaireans and Bosnians are currently the most numerous asylum seekers.

Campsfield is a development of national importance. It is also an incitement to racism across Europe; the UK is the only EC country to detain refugees in this way.

Applications

Many of those who will be held at Campsfield would previously have lived in the community while their applications for asylum or appeals against deportation were considered by the Home Office.

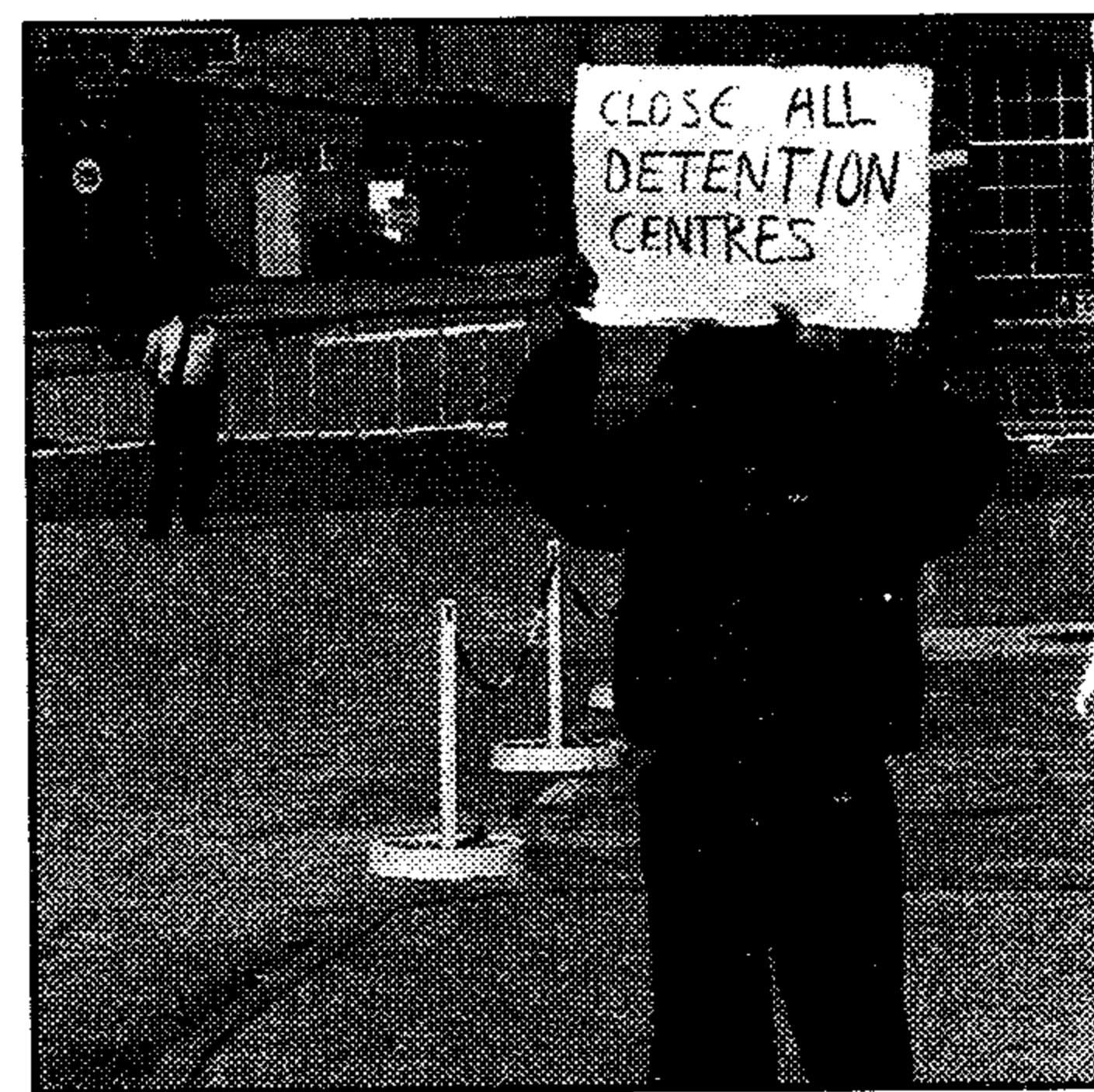
Campsfield is part of the 'Fortress

Europe' being built by European governments to make it more difficult for black people to live in Europe.

The Tory government is playing a leading role in this project which reflects its racist siege mentality in the face of increasing poverty, debt and inequality between rich and poor states world-wide.

The campaign, whose slogans include Stop the Refugee Prison, Stop the Deportations, and Refugees are Not Criminals is being launched under the umbrella group Oxford against Racism and Fascism, the auspices of Oxford Trades Council and with the active involvement of Socialist Outlook supporters.

A demonstration will take place at Carfax, central Oxford at 5pm, Wednesday 24



November. On the day the first detainees are bussed in, Campsfield gates will be picketed and leaflets distributed in town. A meeting addressed by Jeremy Corbyn MP is planned to follow shortly.

A campaign for the closure of Campsfield will need to develop other demands, in particular the repeal of the UK's racist immigration laws.

A large national demonstration should be called in the new year. For further information 'phone 0865 724452.

FIGHTING RACISM

A night full of hate

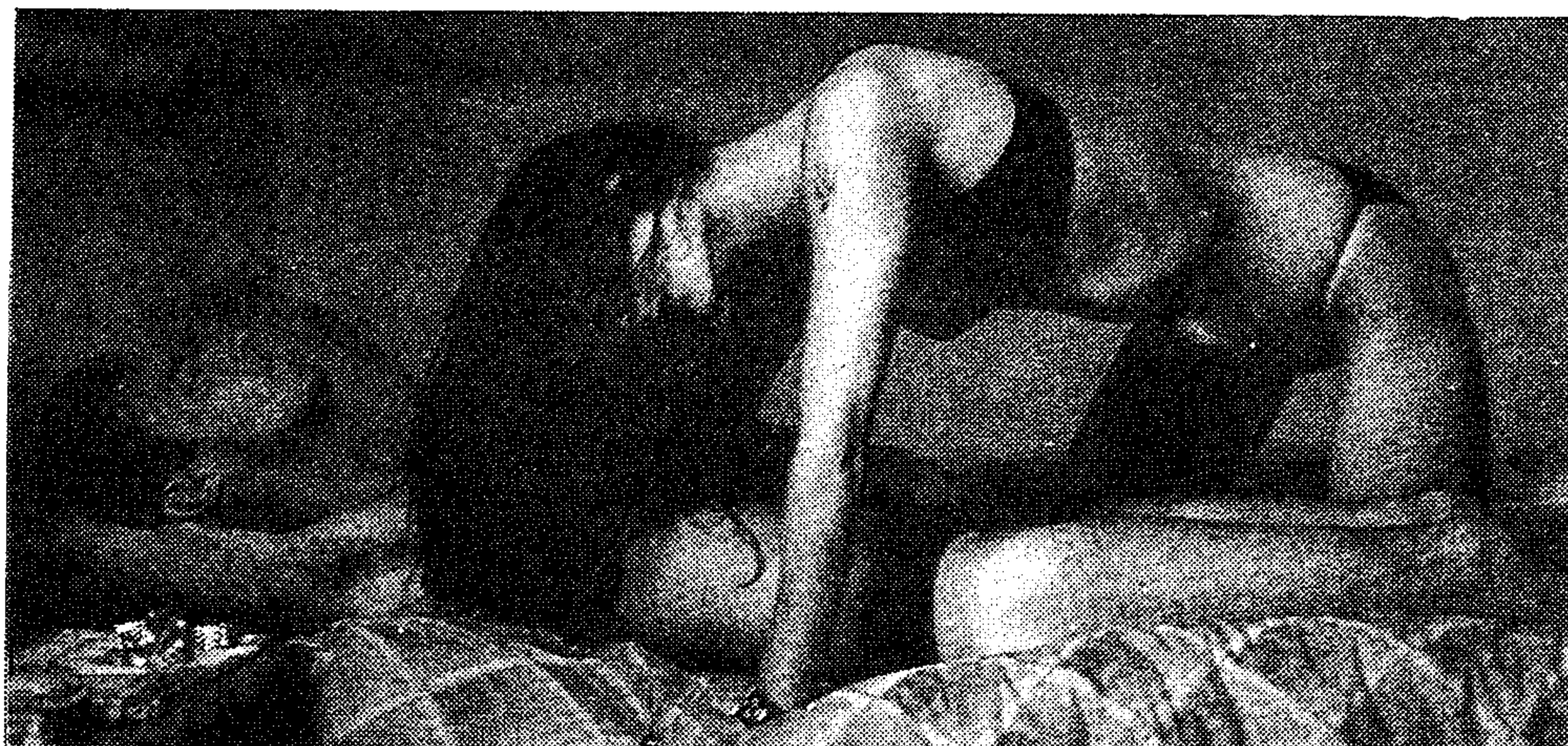
Naked

Film by Mike Leigh

Reviewed by
Helen Shaw

WIDELY critically acclaimed – a ‘milestone in the British film industry’ and a ‘masterly excursion into the heaven and hell of our existence’ – Leigh’s new Cannes award winner is a relentlessly bleak, hateful and misogynist film.

It attempts to comment on the cynicism and self-centred values of 90s Britain and their effect on relationships between men and women by following unemployed Mancunian, Johnny (David Thewlis), on a three day visit to London.



Johnny lurches through the film spewing forth his boring ‘philosophical’ rantings about the impending apocalypse akin to those of an angry sixth-form grammar school boy.

It is beyond belief that the people he encounters just let him into their lives and suffer his abuse for so long without protest.

During this visit to 72 hours of misery and hate we witness

Johnny having a series of violent emotional and sometimes sexual encounters with cardboard women characters united in their powerlessness and masochism.

Whilst some reviews in the bourgeois press have commented on the misogyny by saying they don’t want to get into the ‘should you portray it or not’ debate, they miss the point.

Leigh seeks to attribute all the male characters’ misogyny to the the last 14 years of Tory rule.

But male hatred of women is not new, nor the sole prerogative of men socialised during the Thatcher years (whether at the margins of society or at the peak of success in the city).

And it has only a tenuous link to the decay and decline

of a society and a lack of hope.

Many of the ‘60s ‘angry young men’ displayed the same degree of loathing for women at a time of increasing affluence, hope and opportunity.

Mike Leigh has in the past provided insight and thoughtful comment on working class life in Britain – not any more.

This is a voyeuristic film. It fails in its attempt to show alienation in British society and its impact on men and women.

As a chance for the curious to ‘experience’ the lives of the marginalised ‘underclass’ and their exploiters, with some brutal sex thrown in for good measure, it succeeds.

One character in the film says to Johnny ‘don’t waste your life’. Unless you fancy a night out full of hate, listening to a boring quasi-religious rant peppered with unerotic sex that leaves you angry and frustrated, don’t waste your money!

Reservoir Romance

True Romance

Film by Quentin Tarantino, with Christian Slater, Patricia Arquette.

Reviewed by
Alan Brief

THE FOLLOW-UP offering by the man who created “Reservoir Dogs” is a tense, engaging, violent film with dialogue to match.

It is brought to you with literally everyone who is anyone in Hollywood trying to pitch in with one of the cameo parts.

The film has wrongly been compared to “Wild at Heart” but in reality is only a road movie in the sense the two main characters flee the bad guys to arrive in Hollywood in a car.

The film is in one sense more of a reworking of “Bonny and Clyde” except the heroes here are not ever proper gangsters (and this film is a lot better.)

The plot centres on a very average man who works at a store and spends every birth-

day watching Kung Fu movies by himself. So pathetic is this spectacle his boss fixes it for him to be picked up at the cinema, enter Arquette.

They fall in love, Slater decides to deal with her pimp, excellent bit part for Gary Oldman who manages to play the cliché of a dreadlocked scarfaced drug dealing pimp convincingly, and mistakenly picks up a case full of someone else’s cocaine when he leaves the building.

Cue mayhem. For those who disliked “Reservoir Dogs” this film is less violent, no-one spends the entire film with the only acting

skill required being to die slowly from bullet wounds to the stomach. However what both of these films has in common is that the violence is very realistic.

Here after all is where the controversy over Tarantino’s work stems from. What you certainly do have in his work is a stripping away of the glamour of violence especially that concerned with the Mafia.

Even in some of the earlier films, even the better ones such as the “Godfather”, dying is quick normally clean and the lifestyle lived is with codes and honour. Tarantino upsets people because his films do not go in for either type of bullshit.

Violence in his films has its own message, everyone in “Reservoir Dogs” lives violently and they nearly all die sordidly and slowly.

So too in his latest film with an added touch of farce in the final shoot out. Furthermore he has an ability to get the viewer to accept acts they would not normally do, most clearly when Patricia Arquette brutalised by the mob finally manages to escape by skewering her tormentor’s foot to the floor with a pair of scissors.

In fact Arquette has stated in interview that she only took the role because she believed it

to be ‘a feminist role.’ It is certainly unusual for this type of film to have the narration, where there is any seen through the eyes of Arquette’s character.

However in this film as before what goes completely unchallenged is the racism of his characters.

Whilst it is obvious American society is rife with racism is it really sufficient to simply therefore include it for the sake of reality in each film and fail to comment upon it?

In fact in “True Romance” we are presented with Dennis Hopper as Slater’s father ‘heroically’ using racism to goad a mafia don, Christopher Walken, into killing him rather than inform the mob the whereabouts of his son.

Bad taste

These two characters are memorable, not least for Hopper appearing to send himself up by playing the only ‘normal’ character in the whole film but the outburst simply left a very bad taste in the mouth.

As a whole this film is worth seeing, being crafted by one of the US’s best independent talents, and someone who by all accounts wishes to stay that way.

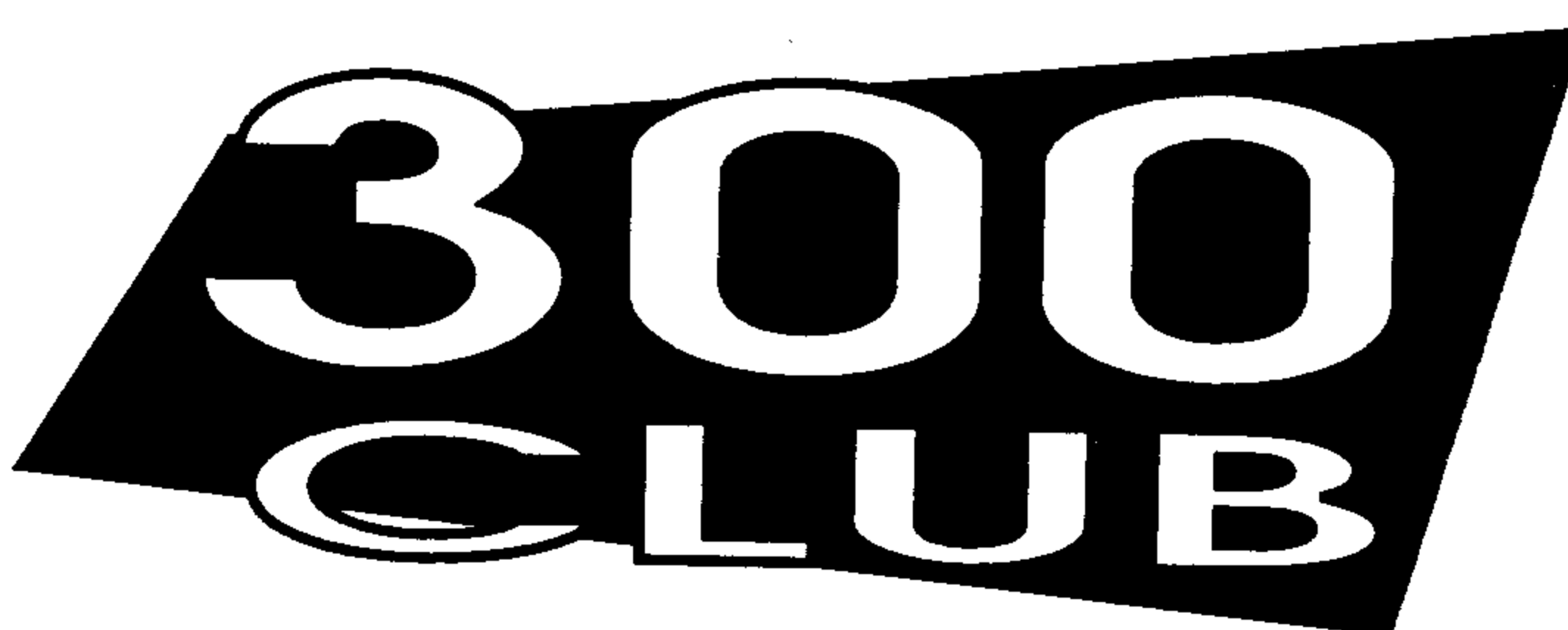
His world of films is not the everyday life of everyone but is probably closer to the mark than earlier attempts to portray the segment of life that interests him.

The only question remaining is why does Christian Slater always pretend to be Jack Nicholson in whatever role he is playing?



“Winning really changed our lives beyond belief!!!”

That’s the verdict of the October winners of Socialist Outlook’s 300 Club, pictured above. November’s lucky names are Finn Jensen, who wins £50, and Debra Jones, whose splendid second prize is on its way. Sign up now to change your life. Send this coupon back to us today, at PO Box 1109, London N4 2UU.



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REVIEWS

1918: Germany's Red November

IT IS A NOTORIOUS myth that there has never been a socialist revolution in the advanced capitalist west. There has. In November 1918, 75 years ago this month, the German workers rose up and created soviet power – the power of elected workers councils – all over Germany. PHIL HEARSE draws some political conclusions.

THE NOVEMBER 1918 uprising came at the end of more than a year of increasing turmoil in Germany, as the

defeat of the German army at the front became obvious and the privations of the workers at home became unbearable.

In April 1917 there were mass strikes against food price increases, and then in January 1918 came a mass political strike against the annexations being demanded by the German government at the Brest Litovsk peace negotiations with the Soviet government.

Fifty thousand workers were sent to the front as a reprisal.

The world war had led to a split in the mass German workers party, the SDP (Social Democrats).

The anti-war left wing had been expelled in January 1917, and in April of that year formed the Independent Social Democrats (USPD). This party had hundreds of thousands of members, in the main revolutionary-minded workers.

The Spartakusbund of Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht was the extreme left wing of the USPD, but only had a few thousand followers.

Collapse

At the end of September 1918, with the German armies on the point of collapse, the General Staff officers visited the Kaiser, and demanded the handing over of power to a 'democratic' government (led by Prince Max von Baden) – as the only way to prevent 'anarchy'.

But before this government could be stabilised, the sailors of the Kiel naval base mutinied on November 4. To prevent the sailors being crushed, the USPD leaders in Kiel decided to seize power in the town.

That evening a Workers and Sailors Council was formed to administer the local area. The signal for revolution had



Spartakusbund leader Karl Liebknecht addresses workers' demonstration

been given.

In the following days the revolution spread all along the northern coast. Hamburg rose on 5 November; Bremen, Altona, Rendsberg and Lockstedt on the 6th; Cologne, Munich, Hanover and Braunschweig on the 7th. In each of these places, workers, and soldiers councils declared themselves the legitimate power.

The focus of events now moved to the capital, Berlin. The key forces here were the USPD left wing, led by Spartacists Liebknecht and Meyer, and the powerful

was to lead the revolution – was posed. The SPD, led by Ebert and Scheidemann, proposed a coalition SPD-USPD government based on

- all power to the workers' councils
- socialisation of industry

Their proposal was for three ministers from each party. After painful indecision, the USPD accepted this proposal.

Counter-revolution had been brought into the heart of the leadership of the revolution. Instead of taking all power themselves, the USPD

Social democracy, when the crunch comes, will always side with the brutal repression of the workers, rather than with socialist revolution.

revolutionary shop stewards movement, the non-party *Obleute*.

The *Obleute* decided to wait for 11 November to act, but Liebknecht preempted them with a call for action on the 8th. The indecision about the date was immaterial: the workers rose on the 9th. Thousands rushed to the Reichstag, the parliament building. It was now that the right wing leaders of the 'old party' – the Social Democrats (SPD) intervened, and a fatal blow was struck against the revolution.

As the workers besieged the Reichstag, at 2pm one of the two main SPD leaders, Schiedemann, rushed out and 'proclaimed' a republic – and his support for the workers. The SPD was taking the leadership of the movement in order to head it off.

At 4pm Karl Liebknecht arrived at the Reichstag to proclaim the *socialist* republic – but some of his thunder had been stolen by the SPD leaders.

Now the question of *government* – who

allowed a government to be formed which, with three SPD and two from the right wing of the USPD, gave effective control to the SPD.

It was a fateful mistake.

A crucial conflict now developed between SPD leaders and the left. A national congress of workers' and soldiers' deputies was due to be held in Berlin on December 30/31.

The SPD leaders decided to propose the election of a 'constituent assembly'. This body was clearly going to be counterposed to the power of the workers' councils – in effect it would be a bourgeois parliament which would be used to crush the councils.

While the Spartacist left demanded all power to the councils, the USPD leaders wavered.

At the congress itself, which the SPD packed with its supporters, and to which Luxemburg and Liebknecht were unable to gain admittance, some USPD delegates voted *both* for the resolutions in

favour of 'all power to the councils' and for national elections to a constituent assembly.

In consequence Ebert and Schiedemann won the day. National elections were called: the 'democratic counter-revolution' was under way.

Frustrated by the government's paralysis and capitulation to the right wing, the USPD withdrew from the government on 29 December, leaving the SPD in power alone.

The Spartacist left of the USPD, exasperated by the compromises of the party leadership, left the party, to declare an independent Communist Party.

Capitalising on their victory at the congress of workers councils, the SPD leaders now moved to provoke the left and inflict a further defeat on it. On 4 January 1919, the Berlin police chief, a USPD member called Eichhorn, was dismissed.

Eichhorn's dismissal was met by demonstrations of hundreds of thousands of workers, many of them armed.

In this situation, sections of the USPD, Spartacists and revolutionary shop stewards decided to try to seize power.

The revolutionaries in Berlin were intoxicated by the sight of tens of thousands of armed workers demanding that the government be got rid of.

But they over-estimated the relationship of forces. The workers outside Berlin were not yet ready for armed insurrection.

The Russian Bolshevik leader Karl Radek – secretly in Germany co-ordinating with the Spartacists – was firmly against the uprising. Rosa Luxemburg also saw the uprising as an ultra-left adventure.

Civil war

The January uprising initiated civil war. Fifty thousand workers lost their lives in the struggle. Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg were killed by counter-revolutionary troops with the connivance of the Social Democrats. It was March before the workers uprising was quenched throughout Germany.

The crushing of the uprising by the army's bullets signalled the end of the revolution, and the establishment of a *bourgeois* republic.

It also, together with further defeats in the 1920s, opened the path for Hitler's victory, the second world war and an historic setback for the workers movement.

The defeat of the 1918-19 revolution showed that social democracy, when the crunch comes, will side with the brutal repression of the workers, rather than with socialist revolution.

Why we don't wear poppies

This weekend the annual Remembrance ceremonies take place. As usual, national politicians and many others have appeared wearing their poppies.

The poppy, and the Cenotaph ceremonies which go with it, symbolise pride in the 'sacrifice' which the soldiers of Britain and the Commonwealth made to ensure Britain's 'freedom'.

But socialists say that the slaughter of millions of, mainly young, men and women was futile and in the interests of the profits of capitalism.

We say that the ceremonies held each year mystify the real character of the two world wars and glorify militarism.

In the first world war millions

of young men died horrible deaths in the trenches in a war for dominance between imperialist powers.

The second world war occurred because of the defeat of the working class struggle in Germany in Italy, France and Spain.

Russian dead

We will remember the British soldiers who died in the two world wars. We will also remember the 20 million Russians, at least 10 million of them civilians, who died before the Red Army crushed the Nazis.

We will remember the millions of civilians who died, including the hundreds of thousands of German workers who died at Dresden and other

cities in allied bombing raids.

And we remember the thousands of partisans, many of them from the Communist movement, who died in the armed struggle against Nazism.

We remember the hundreds of thousands of Japanese killed in the firestorms in Tokyo, and of course in the destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki by atomic bombs.

But most of all we will remember that the many millions killed in other wars this century, were deaths caused by the irrationality and barbarism of the capitalist system.

The militarism of that system is on the upsurge, adding many more victims to the terrible toll. That's nothing to be proud about.

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!

HOME NEWS

INSIDER DEALER reports on the latest crop of businessmen found guilty of forgery, theft, obtaining property by deception and 12 counts of corruption. That's my boys!

Horsing around

HEAR the one about the businessman who blew £7 million of other people's money on the gee-gees after telling clients that he would invest it in offshore trusts offering a high rate of return? Gives a whole new meaning to the term 'mug punter'.

Nick Young, a former executive director of Kenneth Leventhal (CKL), a multinational association of accountancy firms, reckoned he had developed an infallible system to beat the bookies. He was wrong.

After doing time for forgery and deception, Young is now a free man again. But while he has paid his debt to society, he has not paid his debt to his astute 'investors', and many are demanding their money back with interest.

Since Young used CKL's address and stationery to work the scam, around 60 of them are pursuing the company, on the grounds that it should have been aware of his activities.

Herein lies an irony. The person with supervisory responsibility is CKL's chair, one Mr Brian Worth. Worth is a former head of the investi-



gations committee at the Institute of Chartered Accountants. This week, the ICA's disciplinary committee is likely to find against him. And they say accountancy is boring!

Unfair shares

A City investment broker staged a bogus share issue, swindling clients out of hundreds of thousands of pounds to prevent his business from going under, Inner London Crown Court heard last Friday.

Kenneth Renton, of Virginia Water, Surrey, pleaded guilty to 14 charges of theft and four offences of obtaining property by deception, involving around £645,000. A further 20 charges of theft and deception, concerning a further £1m, were denied and not proceeded with.

Renton had been chairman and managing director of Wentworth Asset Management. Part of Wentworth's sales pitch was that actor Sean Connery invested in it, and that it had assets of over £60m.

Nevertheless, it ran into financial difficulties, leading the Bank of Scotland to call in the company's overdraft.

Unable to pay up, Renton used his non-executive directorship of Leeds-based Mount Charlotte hotels group to per-

suade people to invest in a 'share issue', offering sure-fire profit.

In April 1992, Renton disappeared after failing to keep an appointment with his former accountant. On the same day, he phoned his wife from a hotel and said he had attempted suicide.

The next day, he was arrested at Heathrow airport. The case has been adjourned until December 3, with Renton granted £75,000 bail.

Putting the con into contracts

AND LASTLY, what is believed to be Britain's biggest-ever corruption case. Excellent!

Gordon Foxley, a former director Ministry of Defence ammunition procurement department until his retirement nine years ago, was found guilty on 12 counts of corruption at Snaresbrook Crown Court last week. All told, he took bribes totalling £1.5m between December 1979 and August 1984.

Basically, Foxley fed multi-million contracts to three favoured companies, including a FIAT subsidiary in Italy and companies in Germany and Norway.

His 5 per cent kick-back was paid to companies which Foxley set up in both Britain and Switzerland, and from them channelled into Swiss bank accounts. This covered his tracks so successfully that the scam was not revealed until 1989, and MoD police have still not recovered any of the money.

Foxley, who was granted leave to appeal, was released on bail of £100,000 until December 10, when he will be sentenced. Mind you, every cloud has a silver lining.

While the offences currently carry a maximum sentence of seven years apiece, they were committed before legislation was amended in 1988. Thus he can only be sentenced on the old two-year maximum.

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

Name

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What's HAPPENING

WANT YOUR event included?
Send details by 19 November to
What's Happening?, P.O. Box 1109,
London N4 2UU.

NOVEMBER

Wednesday 10

LOBBY fascist Beakon's first meeting of Tower Hamlets council 6pm (be early) Town Hall Mulberry Place E14

Thursday 11

ON THE BORDER of a Police State. Public meeting with Michael Mansfield QC and others 7.30pm Halkevi Community Centre 92-100 Stoke Newington High Street N16 £1/50p

Friday 12

VIGIL to commemorate the Santa Cruz massacre 5.30pm-7.00pm St. Martin-in-the-fields church Trafalgar Square

FREE East Timor: Social 7.30pm Caxton House St. John's Way N19 tickets £4/£2

Saturday 13

DEMONSTRATE against the BNP 11.30pm Read School Park Bloxwich West Midlands

Sat 13 & Sun 14

LIBERATION! committee opens 11.00am

Sunday 14

ANTI-NAZI mobilisation 12.00 noon Cliffords Tower York
FREE East Timor fringe meeting at CND national conference Bradford

Thursday 18

POLICE Harassment is a crime! United picket of Plaistow Police Station 444 Barking Road E13 6pm-8pm
NAC evening with Jo Brand Mark Thomas Donna McPhasil and The Brenda 8.30pm-2pm The Rocket 166-220 Holloway Road London £8/£5

Friday 19 - Sunday 21

DISCUSSION weekend sponsored by SOAS SU and the Marxist University. Tickets £12/£8/£6 from MUL, SOAS SU, Thornhaugh St WC1H OXG

Saturday 20

TUC demonstration in defence of the NHS. Socialist Outlook sellers meet 11am Jubilee Gardens (Waterloo tube) details/leaflets UNISON 071 388 2366

Rave for Justice Free Oliver Campbell benefit 8pm till late One Love Community Association 1 Bishops Avenue off Plashet Road Plaistow E13 £2
Peace Education Congress 10.30am-4.30pm Friends Meeting House Euston Road London

Closure of P & O strike ballot

CAMPAIGN against Double Punishment conference Cheetham Community School Halliwell Lane Manchester

Wednesday 24

STOP the refugee prison! demonstration against the opening of Campfield Detention Centre 5pm Carfax central Oxford

Thursday 25

EUROPE and Ireland Troops Out Movement Public Meeting with Geoff Bell and Mary Mason 7.00pm University of East London Water Lane Stratford E15

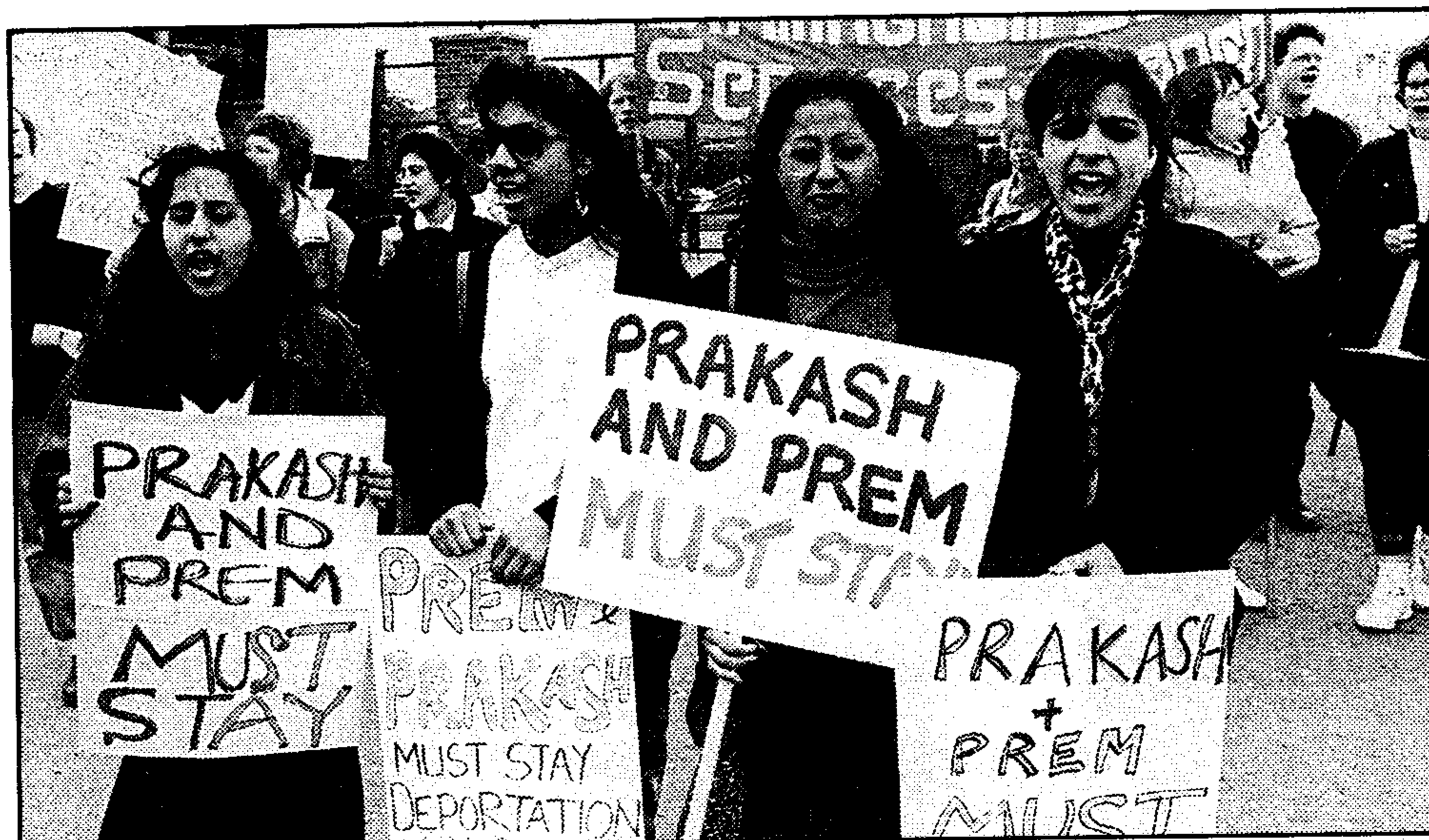
Saturday 27

MARCH against deportations organised by West Midlands anti-deportation campaign and UNISON Handsworth Birmingham details 021-551 4518
MARCH and rally before budget day assemble 10.30am Forth Street by Newcastle Central Station rally 11.30am Civic Centre

JOHN Maclean 75th Anniversary Meeting 1.00pm with Peter Berresford Ellis Lucas Arms Grays Inn Road Kings Cross
COMMUNITY demo against the Nazis Caerau near Maesteg Glamorgan

Monday 29

MILITANT Labour International Rally doors open 7pm Conway Hall Red Lion Square WC1



The Saturday 27 demonstration against deportations on marks a big advance for the right of UNISON member Prakash and her son Prem to stay in Britain.

Birmingham anti-racists rally for Satpal

ON TUESDAY 16 November a rally will be held outside the Handsworth, Birmingham, restaurant where Satpal Ram faced a racist attack.

He has been in prison for seven years for defending himself from the assault. In November 1986 Satpal went for a meal with a man and woman friend at the Indian restaurant.

A group of six white men who had been drinking at another table objected to the music being played: 'We don't want any wog music and it's black crap.' When the music was not changed they became even more abusive, shouting racist abuse at the staff. Satpal objected and the group

abusively turned on him, throwing plates and glasses at him.

The one of the racists walked towards Satpal, took up a wine glass, broke it against a table and violently attacked Satpal who was subsequently cut on his wrists and face.

Knife

In order to save his life Satpal, weighting only nine and a half stones, picked up a knife and defended himself against his thirteen and a half stone attacker who was five inches taller.

The attacker died in hospital. He was so drunk he refused treatment and bled to death.

The right to self-defence is recognised in British law, but

only it seems if the person is white. Satpal was charged with murder. His defence counsel put forward the argument of self-defence. It was not considered by the judge or jury.

Three key witnesses, Bengali-speaking waiters, were not provided with interpreters and Satpal was not allowed by his lawyers to give evidence. He was convicted of murder by an all-white jury. They appealed but the appeal was turned down.

Self defence is no offence. In 1993 at least 12 black people have been murdered by racists.

For speakers donations and further details contact the Campaign at 101 Villa Road, Handsworth, Birmingham, B19 1NH. Tel 021-551 4518.

DECEMBER

Saturday 11

CENTRE for Alternative Industrial and Technological Systems AGM with Jeremy Corbyn and Carole Tongue 11am-3.30pm London details 404 Camden Road N7 0SJ

Monday 13

GLOBO-COP: the New World Order SOCIALIST OUTLOOK forum 7.30pm Stationers' Park Community Centre Mayfield Road off Weston Park London N8

Sat 18 & Sun 19


LIBERATION! editorial meeting

MARCH

Saturday 19

NATIONAL demonstration against racism called by TUC General Council

SEND US details of your local events: listings are free of charge!



Should newspapers take sides?

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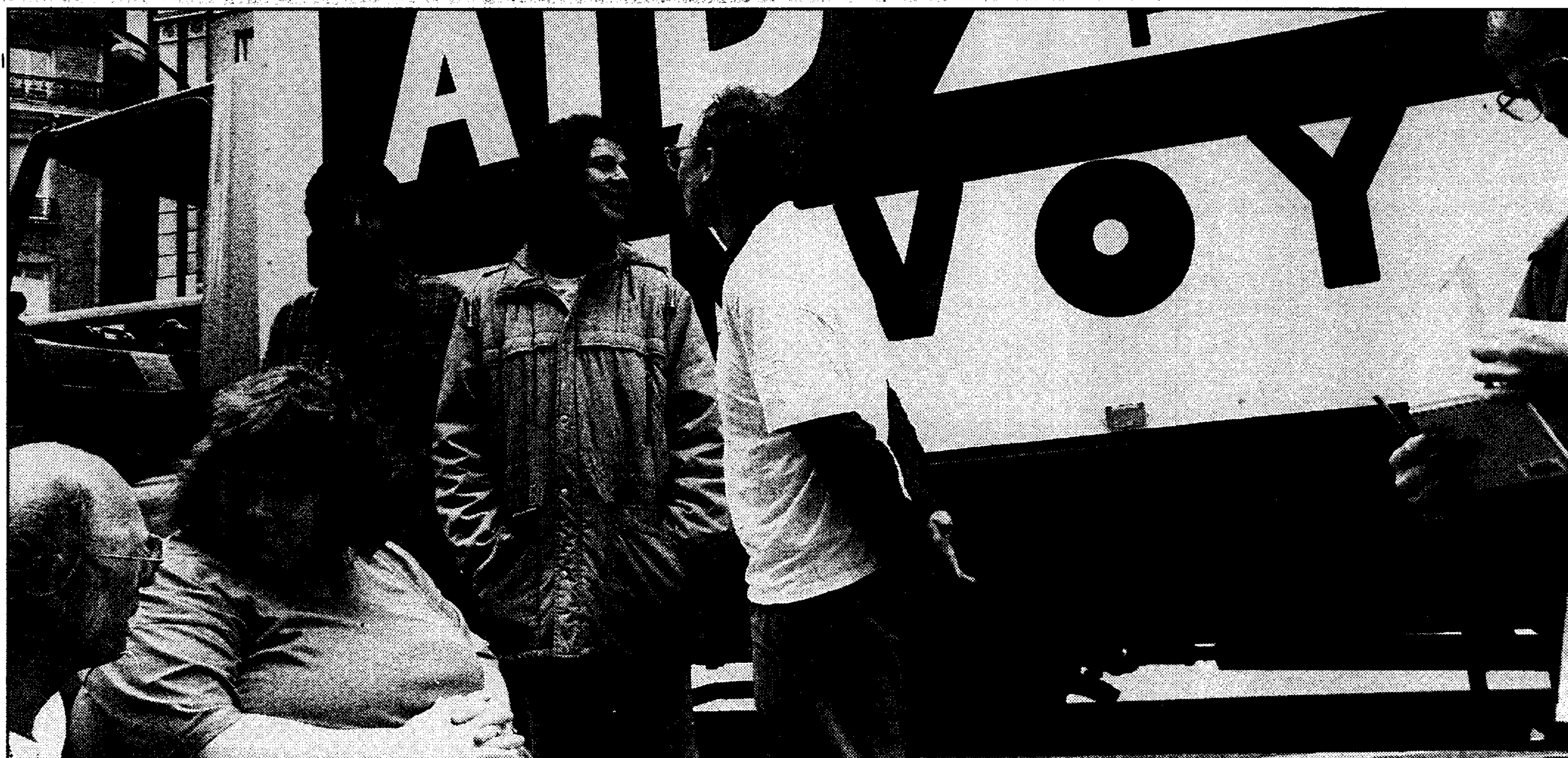
HOME NEWS

Socialist OUTLOOK

INTERNATIONAL

WORKERS AID

All money collected for International Workers Aid and its projects should be sent to: IWA, PO Box 30, London SE15 5EP.



International Workers Aid reaches Bosnia!

Open Tuzla airport!

As Socialist Outlook went to press, news came in that the three remaining lorries of the International Workers Aid convoy were just one hour from Tuzla, the original objective of the convoy.

Deep inside Bosnian-held territory, nothing now stands in the way of their 40 tonnes of aid reaching the beleaguered town.

Socialist Outlook supporter Mick Woods and other Fourth Internationalists are with the convoy.

Other lorries of International Workers Aid are making ready to

immediately follow-up this success.

This represents a major victory for the international campaign, formally established on 31 October in Manchester by delegates from many European countries.

The meeting decided to launch an international campaign for the opening of Tuzla airport.

Tuzla is the working class centre of multi-ethnic Bosnia. One million people in the town and its surrounding area are still under seige from Serb nationalist militias.

As the winter approaches their situation is becoming desperate:

food, medical supplies and the other necessities of life are running out.

The simplest and most direct solution to get the aid in is to open Tuzla airport. The failure of the UN to take this action amounts to an attempt to squeeze the Bosnian leadership to accept a deal which would carve Bosnia into three ethically-based enclaves.

International Workers Aid is launching an international day of action on 11 December in which the opening of Tuzla airport will be a central demand.

An office is being maintained in Zagreb to further consolidate links

with trade unionists in the region. And preparations are being made to launch a new convoy next year.

Other projects to aid education for Bosnian children and give material assistance to women's and other self-organised groups will be launched.

There is no short term end of the war in sight. It is certain to go on through the winter. Every effort must now be turned towards building solidarity with multi-ethnic Bosnia and all the working people of the Balkans.

* Manchester conference reports, see page 2.