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Socialist OUTLOOK

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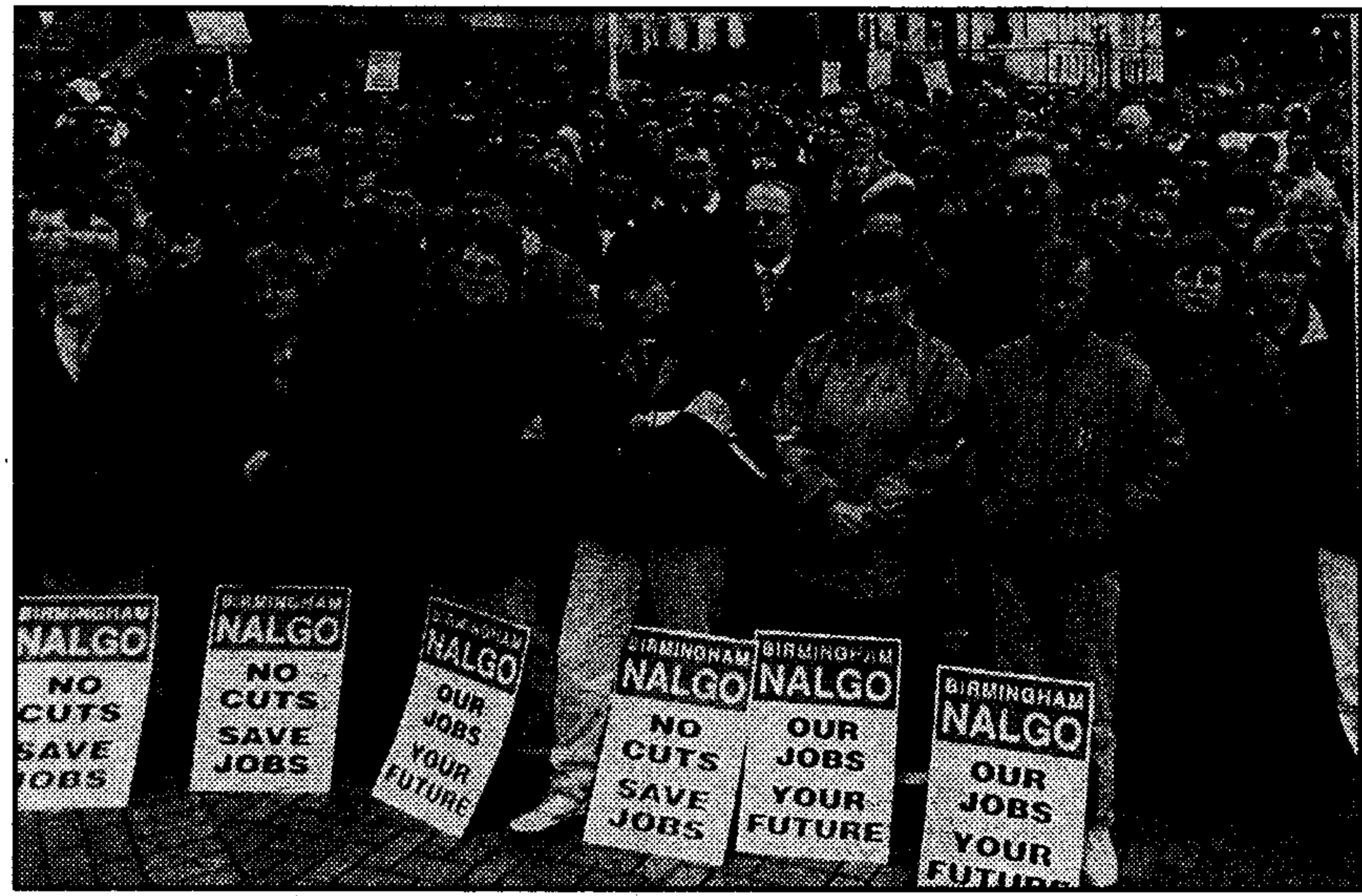
**“Publicly owned,
publicly accountable”**

Stop Rail



sell-off

KEEP CLAUSE 4!



No cuts or job losses; act and unite to defend public services and jobs

Birmingham Labour caves in to Tory cuts

By Bob Whitehead

The Tory cuts in the rate support grant have left Birmingham £45 million short of a standstill budget. The withdrawal of last years "damping grant" will also force up the council tax.

Given the unpopularity of the Tories, their dismal prospects at the local elections, and the election to leader of a long term attendee of the Socialist Campaign Group, will we see Birmingham pioneer the fightback over local government cuts?

Not a bit of it! Plans have been drawn up for a level of cuts unknown in years: children's and old peoples' homes, libraries, swimming pools and neighbourhood offices are to be closed.

It is a massive attack on social services - 6 per cent cuts across the board outside of education.

Up to 1,000 job cuts are in the pipeline, although it is possible they will be all voluntary redundancies.

There has been some talk of a public campaign over the council

tax hike but the vast majority of Labour councillors are intent on doing the Tories' dirty work for them.

At present there are only three councillors who have declared they will vote against cuts budgets. That number will have to be more than doubled to bring a halt to this betrayal.

The campaigning is being led by the "Birmingham Community Conference" in liaison with trades union branches.

Lobby

Thousands of leaflets and posters have been produced. A lobby of the Labour Group on January 30 followed by a rally is planned.

There could well be a city centre demonstration before the budget is finally set in March. And there have been calls for industrial action.

There can be no compromise with the Labour council which is reneging in this way on its priorities.

Our banner will have written on it 'No cuts or job losses; act and unite to defend public services and jobs!'

New fudge on employment rights for disabled

Don't be vague: say no to Hague!

By Harry Sloan

TORY moves to head off the disability rights lobby with a package of largely cosmetic measures could take 15 years or more to show any results.

New legislation tabled on January 12 by William Hague, the Minister for Disabled People would scrap the existing, almost universally flouted quota system, which ought to ensure that large employers include at least 3 percent of disabled people in their workforce.

Rather than attempt to enforce or tighten up this legislation, Hague has decided instead to legislate a 'statutory right of non-discrimination' for people with disabilities, which is equally certain to be ignored in practice.

There is no mechanism to enforce this even more vague policy, while the accompanying measures to make workplaces and premises accessible are so timid and general that they are most unlikely to make any real difference.

Employers would be required to make "a reasonable adjustment" to working conditions to make them accessible for potential disabled employees - were they to take any on.

They would also be called upon (politely) to remove barriers and provide aids to ensure access to goods and services - but only "where reasonable and readily achievable".

Companies would have until the year 2010 to make these changes, though there are no definitions of what is 'reason-



specific and comprehensive civil rights Bill for the disabled (wrecked by Tory ministers and back benchers) would have cost a staggering £17 billion to implement, the government now asserts its own proposals would cost just over £1 billion. No business would have to spend more than 5-10% of the rateable value of its premises.

While some right wing Tory hawks baulk even at this limited commitment, it is not surprising that most employers bodies have been giving the new Bill a welcome limited only by concern that the vagueness of the plans could mean some issues could wind up the subject of costly legal action.

Quango

Hague's Bill would also set up a new quango 'council' for the disabled, with even more vaguely-defined role and powers, aiming to defuse anger when the employment proposals, inevitably, fail to deliver the much-needed employment.

The new legislation reflects the sustained campaign pressure of disability groups which have shamed Tory MPs into a pretence of action. But it falls far short of the changes that could give disabled people access to public transport, buildings and a proper chance of employment.

That fight will go on.

able', and no explicit sanctions against those who fail to comply.

The limited nature of the changes to premises is underlined by the estimated average cost to an average business of just £500- £1,500. Giving employers 15 years to make the changes means they are being asked to fork out a far from lavish £35-£100 per year!

No lifts

"We can't have businesses going bankrupt," Mr Hague told the *Financial Times*. "A company will not be expected to put a lift into a building at a cost of tens of thousands of pounds. But it might be expected to buy a piece of office furniture costing much less."

After insisting that Labour MP Roger Berry's much more

WELFARE STATE

Action

for health & welfare

Newspaper defending the Welfare State

Bundles of 25 £6 (unions)/ £4 (pensioners) Individual subs £5/£3.

Union and LP affiliations £25, pensioners & unemployed £10

Write to WSN, c/o Southwark TUSU, 42 Braganza St London SE17

Welfare State Network Working Conference

Job Seekers Allowance Incapacity Benefit Benefits for Youth and Students Workshops and discussion

SATURDAY
February 18
University of London Union
Malet St London

Speakers include: ● TONY BENN MP ● ALAN SIMPSON MP ● JILL MOUNTFORD (Welfare State Network) ● SARAH WELLINGS (NUS) ● KEVIN SEXTON (NUS) ● JOHN LISTER (London Health Emergency)
Credentials/details ring 071-639-5068

NHS beds crisis

BIRMINGHAM and Cambridge are the latest areas to face a serious shortage of NHS emergency beds as the Tories forge ahead with their hospital closure programme.

Both cities saw desperately ill patients shuttled long distances in ambulances in search of treatment. The London area is fast becoming a net exporter of patients.

60 miles

December saw a young girl from North London taken 60 miles to Addenbrookes Hospital in Cambridge for lack of suitable beds anywhere in the capital.

Since then two patients from the same area have been taken almost 40 miles to Hemel Hempstead, which turned out to be the only available Intensive Therapy Unit beds.

One of these patients, an elderly

man with emphysema, was subsequently transferred again - in a coma - to Watford General Hospital so that another patient could have his bed. He later died.

More such scenes must be expected as a new wave of bed closures begins, led by the closure this month of the casualty unit at Bart's Hospital.

The cuts are striking deep into the Tory heartlands. Planned closures of A&E services in Hertfordshire have triggered mass demonstrations in the unlikely surroundings of Welwyn Garden City and Stevenage.

All ten district and borough councils in the county - many of them Tory-led - have banded together to fight the closures.

With Guy's campaigners preparing to occupy against threatened closure, the going could get even rougher for Virginia Bottomley.

Plug that political gap – with Clause IV



Clause 4 fight will determine fate of Labour government

IF CLAUSE IV is such an electoral liability for Labour, why is it that of the last seven Labour leaders the only one to win an election was Harold Wilson – who not only defended the Clause, but even nationalised industries?

And if being politically right wing wins elections, why have the most consistent failures been those most obviously opposed to socialist policies – an inglorious line from Hugh Gaitskell through Jim Callaghan to Neil Kinnock?

This question, raised by Tony Benn in speeches and interviews as the debate hots up in the media and the Party, goes to the nub of the issues at stake.

Opposition

The scale of opposition whipped up against Tony Blair's proposal to junk the Clause in the hunt for a new political identity for the Labour Party has gone well beyond the predictable knee-jerk reactions of old-guard lefties and sectarian socialists.

The headline-grabbing gesture by more than half of Labour's Euro- MPs, many of them barely meriting the label 'left wing', was more than a

cynical stunt to remind British voters of their existence. It reflects a deep-going unease through wide layers of the Labour Party and broad sections of activists in the unions that the ditching of the Clause is ditching a political reference point which makes the Party different.

It is no coincidence that decision to hold a special conference on the issue, and to ensure that it takes place in the Spring rather than the summer, means that rank and file activists at union conferences will be denied any collective voice in the decision.

Blair hopes that in this way union delegations can be bounced and manoeuvred into nodding through his newly formulated 'mystery clause', freed from any mandate from their membership.

Even so, he may find the going harder than he expected. And even if all works according to plan, the real problem would remain unresolved.

Because even if a herculean effort managed to sweep Clause IV into the dustbin of history, the central problem the Clause addresses – the chaos, inequality and exploitation of the capitalist market system – would remain untouched.

Growing public disenchantment and hostility to this same

market system is a consistent underlying factor in the sagging fortunes of the Tories. Privatisation, once apparently the magical elixir of electoral success for Thatcher, has come back to poison the chances of Major: it has become synonymous with profiteering, rip-off prices, redundancies and scandals.

Polls now show that not only do a large majority of the general population oppose rail privatisation, but so do 48% of Tory voters.

But if Labour is to be opposed to privatisation and the disasters it generates, then what is the Party to propose instead?

Gaping hole

The ditching of Clause IV and embarrassed retreat from any notion of nationalisation leaves only a gaping hole where a policy should be – one which Blair may divert from but not conceal by his attempt to focus debate on other issues, such as devolution and constitutional reform.

This policy vacuum is what leaves many Labour activists uneasy. Few see the impenetrable utterances of shadow chancellor Gordon Brown on the market economy as an electoral asset: and though few may explicitly embrace a full socialist

programme, many clearly want at least a token clause to preserve their view that Labour is in some way an anti-capitalist party.

Of course Clause IV is by no means incompatible with capitalism.

Indeed each time Labour has been elected in the post-war period on what was seen as a radical alternative economic policy to the Tories, it has proceeded to swing rapidly to the right.

In 1945, pledges of large-scale nationalisation and the creation of the welfare state won a landslide for a far from left-wing Attlee government.

In 1964, Wilson's radical-sounding challenge to 'thirteen years of Tory misrule' again served to secure election of a government committed not to socialism but to reorganise and reconstruct British capitalism in the 'white heat of the technological revolution'.

Ruins

And in the ruins of the Heath government, with its soaring unemployment, its three-day week and rampant inflation, Labour again ran and won on a platform of radical economic policies offering what appeared to be a completely different approach, only to run aground as it at-

tempted to enforce repeated rounds of wage controls.

In each case the governments ran into difficulty not because of their left wing excesses but because they began openly to attack the working class.

Blair appears now to be offering a platform that would eliminate any 'honeymoon period', and cut straight to the chase, with the full-blooded, undisguised implementation of market-driven policies.

That is not only a recipe to alienate thousands of existing Labour activists, but it is also a formula that offers little to the voters seeking desperately for a genuine alternative to Major.

There is no guarantee that the gamble would pay off. Blair's Labour Party could sell its soul, and still be cheated of the electoral reward. In his crusade against the Clause, Blair has no more avid a supporter than Neil Kinnock. Perhaps that says it all.

In defending Clause IV and rejecting the defeatist logic of those who call for it to be jettisoned in deference to the market system, socialists are waging a crucial fight. It must be stepped up in the next three months; the price of failure could be paid for years to come.

Mixed signals on Railtrack

JUST because an idea is mad does not mean the Tories will not implement it.

The party that brought us the Poll Tax and the Child Support Agency is now offering the hurried privatisation of Railtrack – as a desperate device to raise cash to fund tax cuts to win the next election.

At first sight the chaos already created on the railways is bad enough, with the old BR split into a baffling array of franchises and self-contained businesses, while Railtrack has taken control of track and signalling.

There have been warnings from various sources that the outcome of privatisation could be a catastrophic halv-

ing of the rail network.

But when the (Tory appointed) "independent" regulator announced the possibility that as few as 300 stations might be able to sell through tickets for the remaining network, leaving passengers to drive as far as 50 miles before being able to board a train, the whole situation appeared to have degenerated into total farce.

Blank cheque

Transport Secretary Brian Mawhinney replied that there was nothing he could do about this, because of the powers given to the regulator by the 1993 Railways Act, which is a blank cheque for the Tories to do anything they

like to the railways.

At first sight the entire system is doomed to failure. So why is it expected that Railtrack can be sold off to investors for an estimated £4-£6 billion?

The answer, of course, lies not in train services but in the land. Railtrack is one of the largest landowners in Britain, with hundreds of square miles of property, much of it in inner cities, which developers would just love to get their hands on.

Mawhinney's main concern is simply and cynically to fragment the existing rail networks in such a way as the privatised sections are almost impossible to piece back together, and to promote the sale of Railtrack –

so that the new shareholders can carve up the assets while trains become as rare as rock- ing horse dung.

However Mawhinney's manoeuvres have had one positive effect: they have forced Labour's leaders into their first firm political pledge appearing to offer renationalisation when John Prescott promised "To ensure a publicly owned, publicly accountable railway."

Not only socialists but millions of rail users will welcome this policy, but some might ask if it makes sense for the railways, why not renationalise other privatised services and utilities? And if Labour is to fight the election committed to public owner-



Prescott: mixed signals

ship of a key industry, why bother scrapping Clause IV?

Just because a policy is mad, doesn't mean Tony Blair won't go for it, either!

TGWU campaign badgers union-busters

By Roger Welch

MINUTES before the Eastern National bus arrives, a TGWU one pulls up. This happens dozens of times a day.

It is the latest tactic in the continuing dispute between Eastern National and the 105 busworkers that the company sacked in Chelmsford in November.

On January 4 Bill Morris was once more in Chelmsford to launch the free minibus service

driven by sacked drivers on some of the local routes.

Talks between Bill Morris and Orbell (Eastern National Managing Director) took place on the same day but did not produce any shift in Eastern National's position.

While Morris was clearly angry with the company's continued refusal to re-instate the sacked workers, and also with the company's statement that the financing of the minibus service was a mis-use of union funds, he told the local press that he would not

be calling for a national strike across the bus industry

Here lies the nub of the current problem for the sacked workers. Their union is giving some support and the alternative bus service has certainly upset Orbell. However, this in itself will not force the company to back down.

Orbell is also clearly sensitive to how the union has drawn attention to Eastern National's position as a subsidiary of the Badgerline group.

Here lies the key to victory – solidarity action by T&G mem-

bers throughout Badgerline. Ideally this would be extended throughout the industry to force Eastern National to re-instate the 105 sacked workers.

The T&G nationally should also call and properly mobilise for another Saturday demonstration which would provide the numbers necessary to close down Chelmsford depot.

Money and messages of support will also help maintain the morale of busworkers. *Socialist Outlook* readers should ensure individual sacked workers are in-

vited to their workplaces, colleges, union and ward branch meetings to talk about the dispute and help build solidarity action.

■ Messages of support, requests for speakers and donations can be sent to: Roger Welch, Chelmsford TUC, 87 Mildmay Road, Chelmsford, Essex, CM2 0DR. Tel. 0245 - 263727.

Cheques should be made payable to TGWU (Chelmsford Bus Drivers Support Fund).

Protestors reject new vealism

By Aidan Day

"Kept in the dark, abused and unable to move. And that's just our agriculture minister."

The RSPCA's full page newspaper ad captures well how the campaign against veal shipping is developing into something broader.

Headlines

What started as a marginal issue has grabbed national headlines and now looks like affecting European agriculture policy. It is mobilising a constituency that rarely takes part in political activity.

Cruelty toward cuddly animals with large dark eyes has always animated a disproportionately large number of people on this island. But the depth of feeling this time around seems to indicate something more.

Jonathon Porritt was taken aback at the radicalism of the movement which shows "princi-

pled positions defended beyond compromise and sometimes beyond reason; an aptitude for the tactics of attrition that would have done credit to the Vietcong".

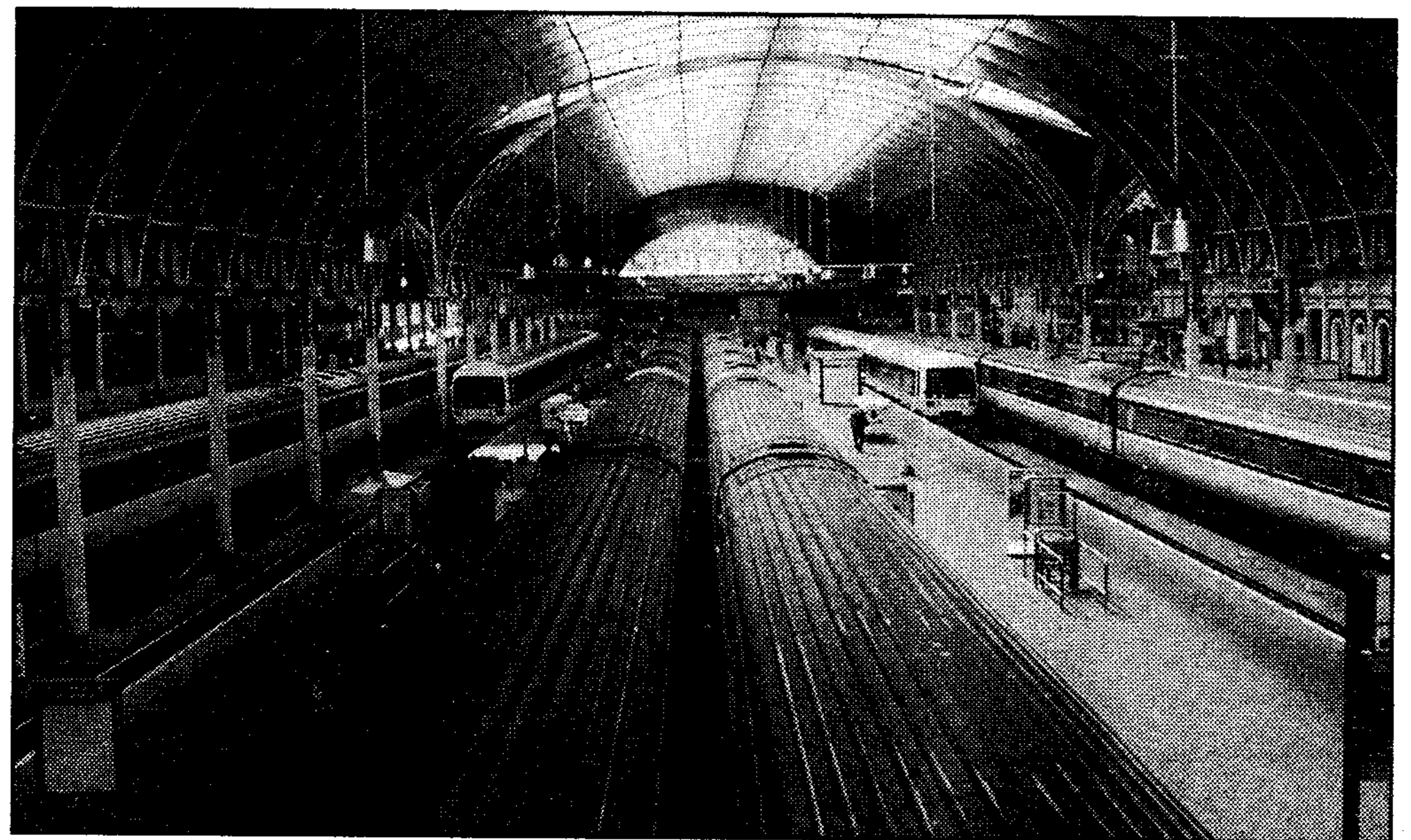
But really the issue is immaterial. This movement indicates how a whole social layer is becoming disenchanted with government and the established procedures of social order.

Margot Norman of the *Times* gave an insider's view: they are people "who already feel so powerless and disillusioned with the processes by which their lives are governed, that the sight of the crated calf gives them a sudden jolt of identity.

Lashing out

That's how they feel themselves. They are merely lashing out as an expression of their own cratedness".

Exaggeration? Well not really. Is not "cratedness" an apt description of the feelings of powerlessness Tory Britain en-



Tory promises to defend railways are hollow: Labour must renationalise the whole of British Rail

genders in its inhabitants?

And these are not the forgotten millions the Tories are trying to marginalise. This is probably why the government has not used the Criminal Justice Act against them, even as the demonstrations bankrupt Sussex police.

The core of these protests is made up of people with well paid jobs, often liberal professionals, people who own houses and have a regular income – just the layer that Tory England relies upon to administer the day to day running of society.

When this layer considers itself outside society then the ruling classes really do have a problem on their hands.

Fighting rail privatisation

What price Labour's promises?

TORY promises to protect the railways have been constantly shown to be hollow. Labour guarantees have been less than cast iron.

The RMT is relying on legal action to halt privatisation instead of depending on the industrial strength of the workforce.

To get the Railways Act through Parliament the Tories promised their backbenchers that services would be protected. But the Rail regulator has announced that franchises will be allowed to restrict the sale of tickets to a small number of "core" stations.

Transport Minister Brian Mawhinney at first tried to deny this – and instructed the Regulator not to make the proposal. But the Regulator, having independent powers, merely issued the proposal in the form of consultation.

The Tories have constantly been let off the hook by Blair's prevarication over renationalisation. Last years Labour Party conference unanimously passed a resolution calling for the renationalisation of all sections of the railways.

Indeed Prescott has been using the issue to show how public ownership is still part of la-

bour's programme whatever happens to Clause Four

When pressed on the Blair has refused to give any spending commitment in advance of an election. Despite some much publicised comments he has still given no firm commitment.

Rather he is seeking to give an impression of a commitment in the run up to the Clause Four special conference. But public ownership is a slippery concept when it's spoken of by a Labour Party leader. For Tony Blair it may mean no more than taking back only one or two of the 100 different companies that make up British Rail.

Railworkers must insist on renationalisation of all sections of the railways. Plans are now being drawn up to lobby Labour's NEC over the issue.

The RMT legalistic tactics may result in a decision in their favour but this is no long term solution – the government will just change the law as it suits them.

The signal workers strike last year did more to halt privatisation than any legal campaign. Now the RMT must be prepared to commit itself to further action to stop privatisation.

TRADE UNION NEWS

A NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
AGAINST
RACISM

Saturday 4th February 1995 10am-5pm
York Hall, Old Ford Road, London, E2 (Bethna Green tube)

Plenaries and workshops

Speakers include: John Monks, general secretary TUC; Diane Abbott MP; Joan Lester MP; Piara Khabra MP; Joan Ruddock MP; Jim Murphy, president NUS; Leela Ramdeen, Cardinal Hume's Committee for the Caribbean; Harry Cohen MP; Kashmir Singh, British Sikh Federation; Society of Black Lawyers; National Black Caucus; Indian Workers' Association (GB); Ken Livingstone MP; Kumar Murshid, Tower Hamlets Anti-Racist Committee

Step up Clause IV fight in unions

By Steve French

WITH JOHN Edmonds sitting on the fence muttering about not supporting change unless it retains a commitment to common ownership (BBC 15.1.95) the key next stage of the campaign is to strengthen its work within the trade unions.

The delegations to the special conference on April 29 will probably be the same as those delegated to last year's Labour Party conference.

Union activists must do all they can to pass motions in support of Clause IV and in support of common ownership, and ensure the questionnaire being circulated to every affiliated union (which must be returned by March 3) indicates a desire to retain Clause IV in answer to every question.

It is also crucial to build attendance at the National Steering Committee of the Campaign on January 28 in Manchester which will debate tactics for the Special Conference and building support within the trade unions.

■ **Affiliate to the Campaign** - c/o the NUM, Huddersfield Road, Barnsley. Phone 071 207 3781 for bulk copies of model resolutions or the newsletter.

Reach out to Labour's membership

THE CAMPAIGN to Defend Clause IV gathers support and pace every day.

Packed rallies and meetings are being held up and down the country bringing together a broad alliance of forces not seen in the labour movement for years. It is clear the tide is turning against Blair.

Within the constituency Labour Parties it looks as though the NEC at the end of January will be advising them to hold a 'one member, one vote' ballot.

This makes it even more important to build debates which involve as many party members as possible. Where parties do not hold such a ballot, delegates need to be mandated to vote for common ownership and the retention of Clause IV.

Labour Party Women's Conference on 1/2 April is another opportunity to build support



Defence of clause 4 is essential front-line of struggle for public services and full employment under a Labour government

Why Blair picked fight on Clause IV

By Ellen Moore

TONY BLAIR is on a bumpy ride in his attempt to change the Labour Party constitution - attacked by MEPs, wrangling with the trade union leaderships and temporarily deserted by many erstwhile supporters in the constituencies.

What is all the fuss about? What is it about Clause IV which has touched a nerve amongst so many in the labour movement?

Superficially Blair's project is interpreted as an attempt to

make the Labour party modern and electable - acceptable to the middle classes in the south east. But it is clear that this current fight is part of a far wider project.

Blair knows that in order for 'New Labour' to win and to govern far more must change. He is attempting to shift the perceived values at the heart of the Labour Party; to move it from its traditional social democratic, collectivist framework onto new ground.

Previous discussions in the Labour Party and the media about Lib/Lab coalitions have temporarily disappeared but Blair's vision for the Labour party is entirely consistent with that agenda.

His aim is to situate at the heart of the Labour Party's constitution a form of words which reflects a 'radical' democratic agenda totally dissociated from any 'radical' social and economic principles.

Europe

The Labour Party's aims must include aspirations to equality and democracy, in Blair's eyes bringing the party into line with 'modern' European social democracy, without any commitment to the economic and social policies which can create even the previously inadequate welfarism of the post 1945 Labour Party.

This line of march follows on from the earlier 1980s projects of *Marxism Today* (the magazine which pronounced 'the end of the working class'), the current interest by many Blairites in 'communitarianism' (focusing on the individual's responsibility within the family as the key to social stability) and follows exactly the framework laid out in Robin Blackburn's article before the last election, 'The Ruins of Westminster' which advocated a Lib/Lab alliance.

Blair is above all engaged in making Labour acceptable to the Liberal Democrats and the pro-European bourgeoisie.

The Liberal Democrats press officer who attended the recent press launch of the Defend Clause IV campaign was in no doubt. When asked what would be the difference between Labour and the Lib Dems if Clause IV were changed her reply was succinct and to the point, 'there won't be one'.

Clearly this is an exaggeration. The Clause IV fight is merely one - albeit important - part of a deeper and more lengthy project to change the nature of the Labour Party.

A victory for Blair would open up further assaults on the trade union link. This wider process is what makes its defence so crucial to the left.

The scale of victory or defeat is crucial to the speed and severity of future attacks on the left and trade unions.

The battle to change Clause IV is not about defending 'socialism'; Clause IV does not and never did represent socialism.

It is clear that this is recognised, if not articulated by the very varied and heterogenous groupings currently involved in defending the existing wording.

The alliance to Defend Clause IV ranges from David Winnick MP and the MEPs to Scargill and the Campaign Group. This issue has not just reactivated the old Bennite left but a far broader alliance is being created in defence of social democracy.

Battle

It is a deeply ideological struggle, absolutely linked to the class struggle. Its importance for the left cannot be underestimated.

It is not just about winning or losing this important battle, but about affecting the balance of forces in the longer war.

This fight is about how far Tony Blair will go in embracing the Thatcherite view that 'there is no such thing as society' and her stress on the utter centrality of the individual.

It is about individualism ver-

sus collectivism. As David Marquand, pro-Liberal intellectual put it at the Labour Co-ordinating Committee conference for a new Clause IV, the struggle is about Marxism or Liberalism as the predominant ideology amongst those opposed to the Tories.

It is a struggle taking place amid the evidence of the failure and inadequacy of social democracy to provide any solution to the gathering crisis of global capitalism.

DEFEND CLAUSE IV rallies BIRMINGHAM

Friday Feb 10
CLAUSE 4 rally with Arthur Scargill 7.30pm
Union Club Pershore Road Birmingham.

SUSSEX

Weds Feb 15
CLAUSE 4 meeting with Alan Simpson, Haywards Heath.

CARDIFF

Friday Feb 17
CLAUSE 4 rally with Arthur Scargill, Cardiff.

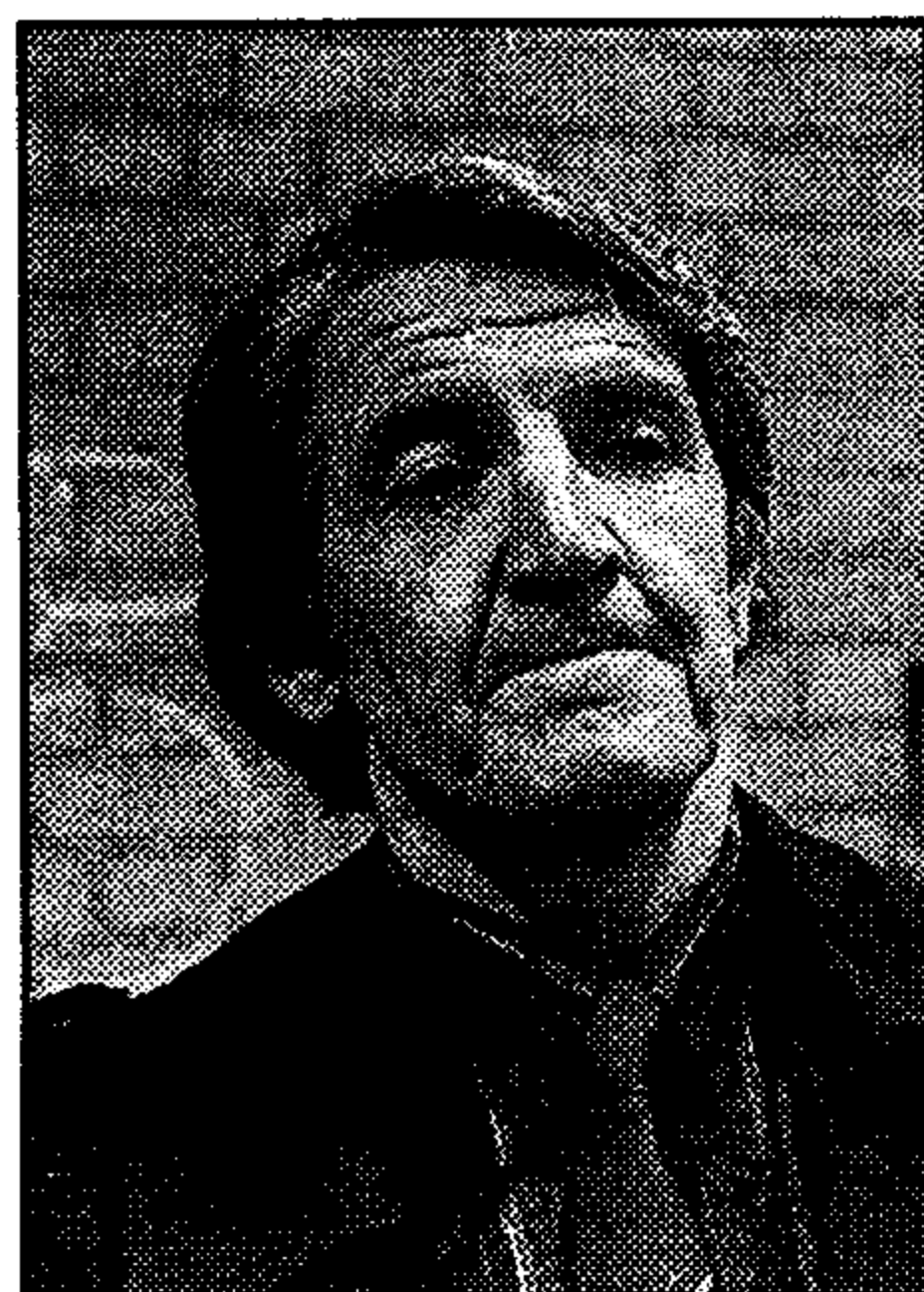
LIVERPOOL

Thurs Feb 23
CLAUSE 4 meeting with Arthur Scargill

LONDON

Friday Feb 24
CLAUSE 4 London rally, Conway Hall

CLAUSE 4



Skinner: defender of Clause 4

Clause IV in the classroom?

Blair and Blunkett opt out of comprehensive schooling

By Richard Hatcher

"THE MOST conservative education available in London outside the private sector." Where else would a Labour Party leader want to send his son?

The *Sunday Telegraph's* description of the London Oratory captures well how reactionary the opted-out, grant-maintained school is.

Tony Blair's decision to send his son there is a calculated political move designed to mollify the fears of potential Labour voters deserting the Tories, at the expense of undermining Labour's traditional commitment to the comprehensive school system.

The London Oratory's head, John McIntosh, helped draft the educational passages of the 1987 Conservative manifesto, and claims to have invented the idea of opting-out.

Complaints

Senior Catholic officials have complained to the Department for Education that the School operates a covert selection policy. It is run by the Oratory Fathers, one of the most reactionary fundamentalist sects within the Catholic church.

But it would be a mistake to see this as an individual aberration by Tony Blair. On the contrary, he has simply walked through the door that was opened by David Blunkett in his first statement as Labour education spokesperson.

Speaking just after the 1994 Labour Party conference which reaffirmed Labour's policy of a comprehensive school system under local authority control, Blunkett made clear that he would disregard conference policy.



Mass action is needed to defend education

Opted-out schools, he said, along with City Technology Colleges, would not be abolished but would be treated 'equitably' by a Labour administration within 'a flexible and acceptable framework to achieve their and our goals.'

The problem is that their aims and ours are completely incompatible.

The GM schools have opted-out precisely in order to escape control by local councils. Blunkett is currently trying to negotiate with the GM heads a

lective schools, he refused to give any commitment to abolish selection by the existing 150 grammar schools, or the selective grant-maintained (GM) schools.

What Blunkett and Blair are really doing is sending out a clear message that Labour represents no threat to the GM schools or the grammar schools, which will not be made answerable to locally elected councillors, and can carry on operating selective policies.

Blair and Blunkett are taking

Blunkett and Blair are sending out a clear message that Labour represents no threat to the grant-maintained schools or the grammar schools, which can carry on operating selective policies.

formula which will camouflage their privileged status.

Blunkett's speech at the recent Fabian Society education conference marked a further departure from the comprehensive principle.

While rejecting any new se-

Labour education policy further to the right than at any time since the 1960s. But it would be wrong to accuse them of betraying Labour's education policy document *Opening doors to a learning society*.

'Modernised'

They are simply following its logic. The whole thrust of this document is not to defend the interests of working class children and students, but to create a 'modernised', though still class-divided, education system.

No nursery education is to be expanded, but only to half-time provision for 3 and 4 year olds. Class sizes are to be reduced, but no targets are set. Special needs are to be met in mainstream schools, but no extra funds are guaranteed.

No details are given of whether schools will be funded according to need rather than on a competitive numbers-led basis. Labour's acceptance of market logic, and its fear of offending dominant interests, also explains why *Opening doors to a learning society* shies away from the principle of elected democratic control.

The Training and Enterprise Councils will remain quangos outside local democratic control. The private schools will retain their privilege.

Blair's hurried retreat from the suggestion that Labour might levy VAT on private school fees is further evidence that as the general election ap-

proaches he will sacrifice any element of Labour's policies which might be thought to deter wavering Tory voters.

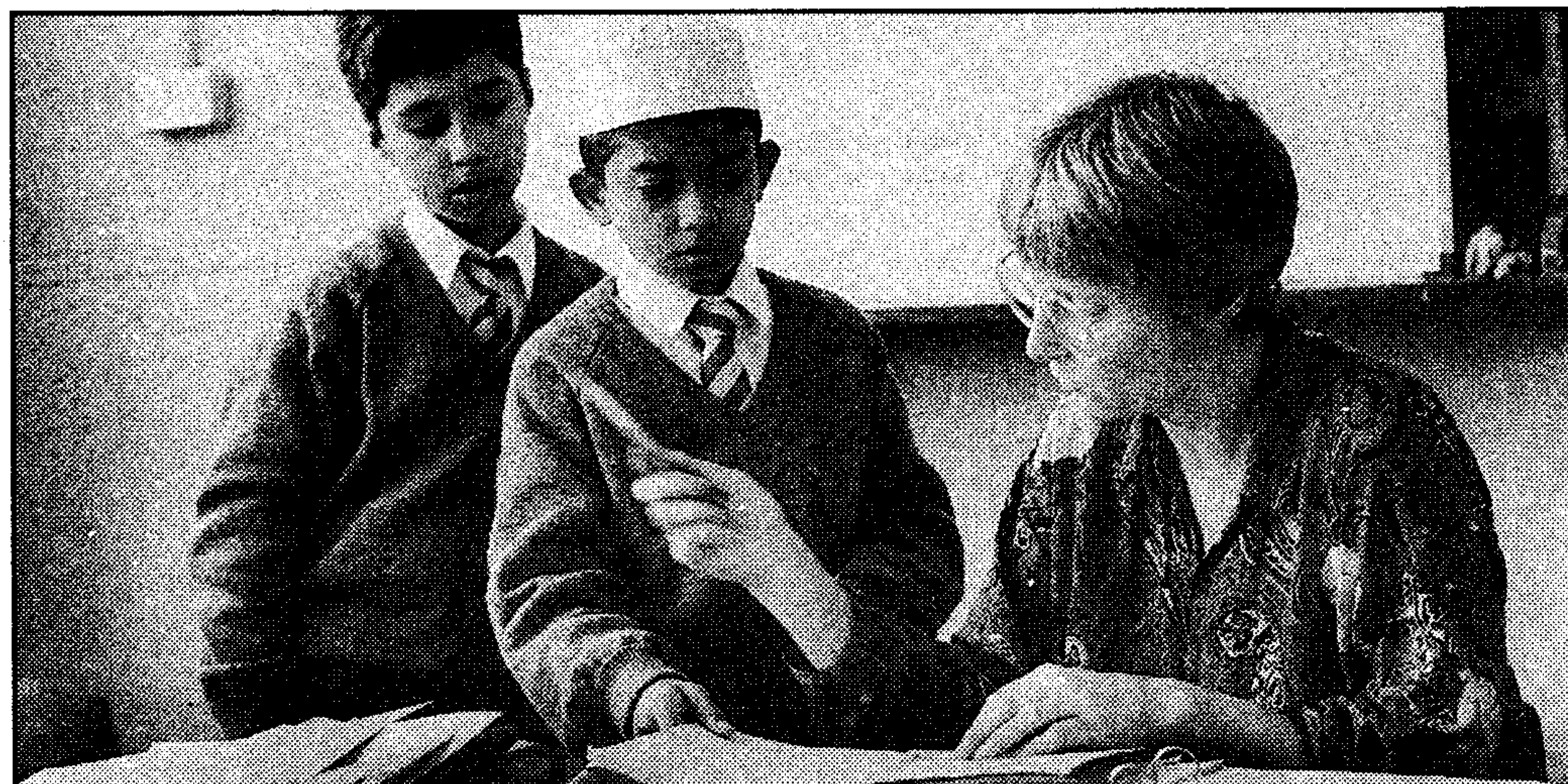
But it is the abandonment of the comprehensive principle that has aroused the greatest opposition. This is education's 'Clause Four'.

There is the possibility now, and the vital need, to build a very broad campaign around a simple but fundamental principle: 'For a fully comprehensive state school system within elected local education authorities'.

■ The Oratory Fathers also control St Philip's Sixth Form College in Birmingham, which they have been trying to purge of non-Catholic, mainly Asian, students.

It is little known that in 1992 McIntosh joined the board of governors of St Philips to aid this racist policy which some have called 'ethnic cleansing'.

The governors were recently heavily criticised by a Further Education Funding Council report for mismanagement. Their response has been to try to close the college altogether.



TRADE UNION NEWS

**March for Union Rights
SATURDAY 21 January
Called by National
Union of Journalists**

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US right declares war on poor

By Aidan Day

FIRST he entered with a scalpel. The next day he brought in a Bowie knife. The third time round it was a machete.

Congressman Bob Livingston's showy illustration of what his Republican Party are going to do to the US Federal budget leaves no avenue for misinterpretation. They are going to butcher it.

It was supposed to be humorous. If you happen to be a fat cat living in riches on Capitol Hill then maybe it was. For the majority of America however the new Republican majority in Congress will mean a ruthless attack on living standards.

Most of all, the victory of the right signifies a new war on the poor.

They call it a drive to end 'big government'. This is just rhetoric.

Just like the British Tories, the right in America uses the public perception of bureaucracy as a cover for social dumping. Behind the talk of 'freeing the individual' from state control lies another intention - dropping all responsibility for the welfare of its citizens.

The Republican amendment to the constitution that will compel the administration to 'balance its books' is an essential ingredient of this offensive.

Ever since the Reagan allowed the federal budget to spi-

ral deep into debt economists have been looking for a solution. The plan before Congress is to amend the Constitution so that by 2002 deficit budgets will be forbidden.

According to the Congressional Budget Office, it will require \$1,200 billion of cuts over seven years to achieve the 2002 target. Clinton and his cohorts ask where it is supposed to come from. They have a point.

The US budget can be divided into three - defence, interest payments and so-called 'entitlements', which includes social security, health and welfare.

Of these only the third is being considered for cuts. The Republicans' 'Contract with America' actually calls for an **increase** in military spending.

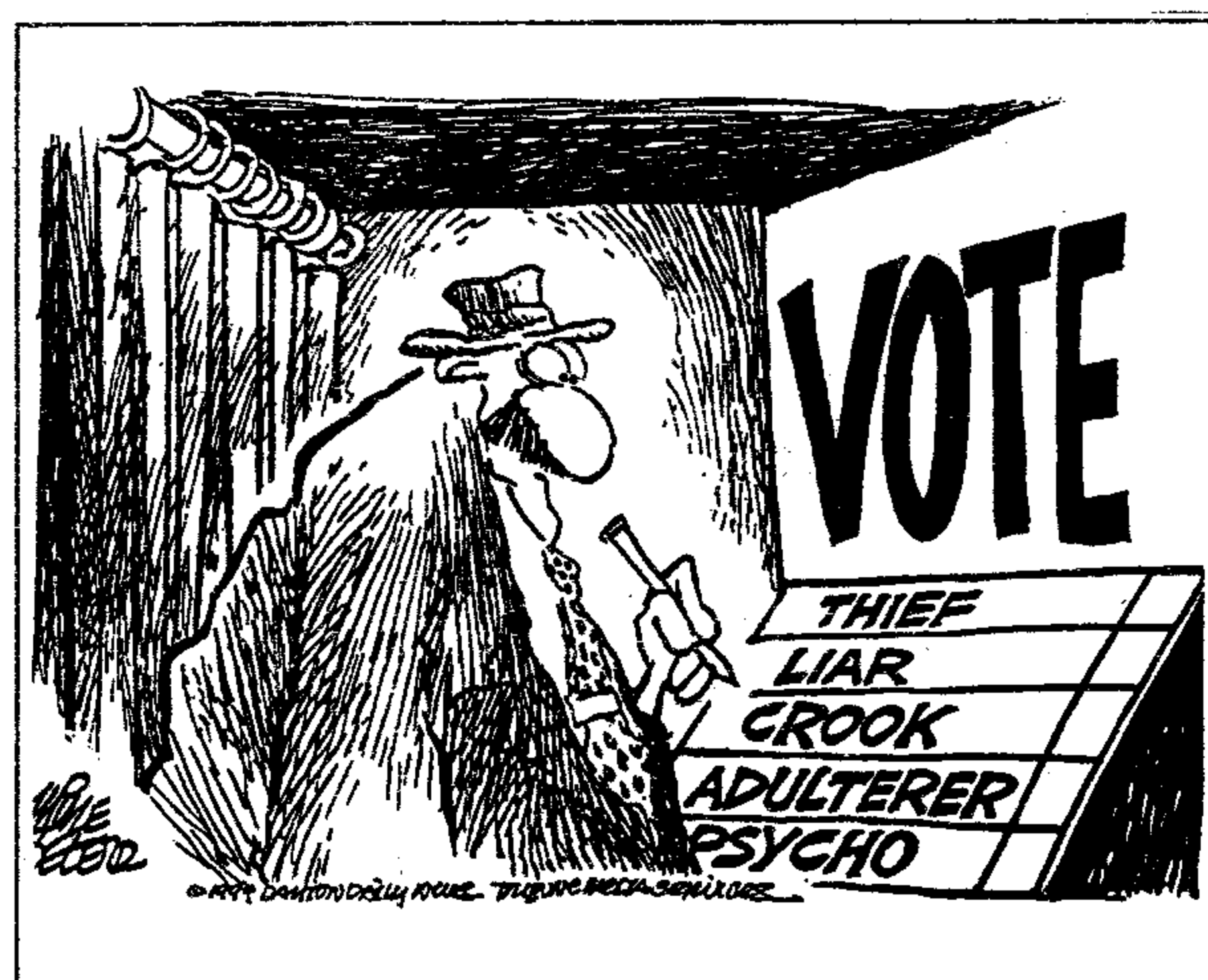
But even if there were massive reductions in military spending combined with the slashing of welfare it would still be insufficient to cope with the projected \$322 billion deficit forecast for 2002. Aid for families with dependent children cost the federal budget less than \$14 billion last year.

The really big money goes into Medicare and Medicaid - \$600 billion in 1995. And the people who benefit most from these packages are not the poor.

To cut them would mean not only taking on the companies who make a fortune out of private health care, but also directly attacking the better paid constituency on which the political system relies. It's one



Clinton: make-over or push-over?



thing to halt Bill Clinton's limited health care reforms, quite another to pile even higher medical bills onto millions of hard-pressed middle income US families.

It's hard to see how either of the parties of big business in the USA would even countenance such a move.

Pensions

With an increasingly aging population the difficulties deepen further. It has been calculated that by 2015 pensions and health care alone will need the total budget revenue. Dick Arme, the House majority leader acknowledged that the extent of cuts required - "will make the knees of congressmen buckle".

Both Republican and Democrat politicians are well aware of this. But neither party wants to make it an issue for fear of sparking off mass opposition.

The scale of cuts required is

staggering. Perhaps this is why the Republicans have left a number of loopholes for themselves. The amendment does not specify what would happen if the budget was not balanced. It could also be waived in the face of 'imminent and serious military threat'.

They have also been careful to place the requirement of 'balancing' upon the President, not the President who was seen as responsible for the cuts.

In a sense then the Republican proposed law is not intended for implementation. Economic commentators are unimpressed by the move.

The *Financial Times* editorial sniffs its nose, declaring "as is well known, the economic logic behind such a rule is flawed, at best".

Alan Greenspan the chairman of the Federal Reserve board has warned that the markets would react badly to any change in the budgeting system.

What is in no doubt however is that it is intended to prepare the ground for massive cuts in welfare and set in course a profound restructuring of society into what the new House speaker Newt Gingrich calls 'the conservative opportunity society'.

This is a code word for social dumping, mass unemployment, the strengthening of the repressive state and the war on the poor. Gingrich has promised \$500 credit for every child in a tax-paying family and to halve capital gains tax.

Moreover the 'Contract with America' commits itself not only to restoring defence spending, but to financing a new development of the hugely expensive Strategic Defence Initiative - more money to big business less to those who need it most.

The Democrat response has

been pitiful. They are hiding behind a supposed shift to the right in American society evidenced by the Republican poll victory. But a second glance at the supposed 'Republican landslide' indicates otherwise.

In the November 1994 election only 38 per cent of those eligible to vote took part. It was a 'landslide' of 20 per cent of eligible voters! The real landslide was one of rejection - a rejection of an electoral and political system that is totally failing the majority of Americans.

The lack of resistance by Clinton to the ultra right offensive led Gingrich to conclude after their meeting that there was a "real willingness to try to find a way to work together".

All the mock radicalism in which Clinton draped himself before his election has disappeared. He is even proposing a bill to deny benefits to single mothers.

There is no more sorry a sight than Hillary Clinton confessing to how she had been "naive and dumb". On the focal point of the Democrat election campaign she now says "I regret very much the efforts on healthcare were badly misunderstood, taken out of context, and used politically against the Administration. I take responsibility for that, and I am very sorry for that".

Instead of fighting back, the President has taken to the road with his "middle-class bill of rights" - a half hearted attempt to honour some of his campaign promises.

In every significant area the Democrats accede to the Republican agenda - they are just as committed to the 'conservative opportunity society' as the other party of big business.

British 'bastards' ape rabid Republicans

IT'S NOT just in the USA that the loony right is gunning for the poor and oppressed. In some ways the US Republicans are taking a lesson from Thatcher's politics of grasping individualism.

But now the American example appears to be galvanising a fresh offensive by the Tory right.

On top of this year's brutal attacks on unemployment, sickness and invalidity benefits - designed to slash payments to tens of thousands of

claimants, John Major's top cabinet 'bastards' are lining up to inflict more welfare cuts.

In three closely coordinated speeches last week, Tory ministers Michael Portillo, Peter Lilley and John Redwood set out new plans to slash state spending.

Every proposal is to be shrouded in the kind of anti-government rhetoric that would make Newt Gingrich proud.

Portillo, the heir apparent of the Tory right, is trying to reinvigorate laissez-faire capitalism and Victorian values of

private morality.

The state is, he argued, "in danger of making the people its servant rather than serving the people".

Peter Lilley went a step further. He is paving the way for the return of the Poor Law.

Addressing the Social Market Foundation, he signalled the end of the principle of uniform national social security provision, claiming that "there can be advantages in some circumstances in devolving responsibility to a local level".

WORLD OUTLOOK

PUBLIC MEETING
Feb 1st, 7pm
Friends Meeting House
 (opposite Euston Station)
Free East Timor!
 Speakers include JOSE RAMOS HORTA, External Representative of the National Council Of Maubere Resistance.

Bloodbath in Chechnya

The causes and consequences

A special report from Russia, by ALEXANDER BUZGALIN, a professor and a Council member of the Party of Labour, and ANDREI KOLGANOV, also a professor, and a member of the Organising Committee of the Union of Internationalists.

DURING the time we take to write this article, several dozen more people will almost certainly be killed or maimed in the North Caucasus.

Dozens of mothers will cry out their unending grief; no-one can give them back their sons or daughters.

Dozens of wives will have become widows, and their children, orphans.

At one pole in this conflict are several thousand fighters and hundreds of thousands of peaceful civilians. At the other are several divisions of Russian troops, together with hundreds of tanks, aircraft and armoured personnel carriers.

Almost a month of senseless bloodshed ... this is terrifying and amoral, monstrous and disgraceful.

Human beings need to do more than simply to show indignation and compassion. They have to understand what can and must be done, and by whom, in order to stop the slaughter, to prevent the renewal and spread of fratricidal conflicts.

The causes of this senseless war on Russia's southern border, a war which has now become the epicentre of pain and anguish for our homeland, unfortunately run very deep.

Russia for a long time has been proceeding along the road of bloodshed and official arbitrariness. The Yeltsin government started with mass beatings of demonstrators on the streets of Moscow in 1993.

But it finally abandoned all restraint in October of the same year, trampling on the constitution and not only dispersing its own parliament, but also opening fire on it with tank artillery and machine guns.

The people behind that episode were the same Yeltsin, Grachev, Yerin and co. who are now directing the carnage in Chechnya. At that time, however, they still had with them a number of people who now seem to have regained their powers of sight - people like Yegor Gaidar and Gleb Yakunin.

Even Sergei Kovalyov, now showing genuine heroism defending human rights in Chechnya, looked on passively in Oc-



tober 1993 as hundreds of defenceless Moscow citizens were murdered, as deputies were arrested and beaten, and as police savagely beat their fellow citizens.

Both then and now, the violence was no accident. The authorities in Russia have been implementing policies which cannot possibly be put into practice through peaceful, democratic methods.

These are the strategies of 'shock without therapy', which have resulted in a steep decline of output, disorganisation of the economy, government corruption, legal arbitrariness and a terrifying increase in crime.

Can a president and a government who are incapable of enforcing a minimal degree of order in their own home 'restore order' in Chechnya or anywhere else?

Is it any surprise that the peoples of Russia should want to take a different road from the one of inflation, decline and disorganisation that is typical of Yeltsin's Russia?

And what about the impoverishment of the majority of working people as social inequalities increase?

Yes, we are now seeing a rise in average real incomes following their collapse in 1992. But this 'normalisation' is like quoting a 'normal' average body temperature of patients in a hospital. One may have already died while the other is tossing about in a fever, but their average

could be 'normal'!

So it is in our country. The 'new rich' in Russia are bloated with wealth, and have become living legends among the big spenders on the international scene. Meanwhile the 'new poor', who include almost half the population, pine nostalgically for the Brezhnev era - which only a short time ago was condemned as a time of low living standards.

How could the policies of the present regime fail to provoke citizens to indignation, and the authorities to violence?

Sovereignty

And what of the government's policy on the national question? When Yeltsin still needed to oust Gorbachev, he told the republics of the Russian Federation: "Take as much sovereignty as you can handle!" Then when he came to power the screws were tightened, and any attempt at independent behaviour was met by the rattle of automatic weapons.

How are the nationalities and ethnic groups of Russia supposed to see this?

These questions have a rhetorical character, because power in Russia today lies with socio-political forces that benefit from instability, disorganisation, unjust methods of rule, and violence.

Those who make up these forces are the 'new Russians' who, unlike 'normal' Western entrepreneurs, do not aim at sta-

ble profits of 10 to 20 percent, but at rapid enrichment.

Their goal is profit rates of hundreds of percent a year, the super-concentration and centralisation of capital through extra-economic means - speculation, corruption and violence.

(There is, to be sure, a sector of Russian private business today, in which the 'primitive accumulation of capital' has already been carried out. In this sector a point in the concentration of wealth has been reached at which stability is more important than rapid enrichment. This explains the fact that some of the right-wing parties which at first gave their silent assent to a 'police action' against Chechnya, later came out against an escalation of the war.)

Another sector of these forces is made up of corrupt bureaucrats who can only receive their privileges and bribes in a general context of lawlessness and institutional chaos.

The scale of these illicit gains beggars the imagination. Boris Fedorov, sometime finance minister of the Gaidar government, let slip at one point that the market value of the dachas, hunting lodges and other properties at the disposal of the President is close to a billion dollars - that is the total loan funds promised to us by the world community!

The cost of the fence that was erected

CENTRE STAGE

recently round the House of Government is equal to the price for which a large Siberian oil and gas complex was sold at about the same time.

Unfortunately, very similar processes are under way in the autonomous republics and regions of Russia. The power wielded by Dudayev is a small piece of mirror glass in which our general problems are reflected.

In Chechnya we see the same low level of legitimacy (three years ago, Dudayev, with support from Moscow, dissolved his own parliament). We see the same massive disorganisation of economic and social life, the same domination by all-powerful mafia clans, the same inability and unwillingness to solve the differences between ruling groups and oppositions through democratic methods.

Yes, we now have a ruling layer which finds incessant armed conflicts unavoidable. The more savagely the Yeltsinite centre behaves, the greater will be the wave of local separatism. The stronger the nationalism in the Russian borderlands, the more powerful will be the outbursts of great-power Russian chauvinism at the centre, and the more real will be the danger of an authoritarian, semi-fascist regime in our country.

So who are the people supporting Yeltsin today?

Expansionist

Zhirinovskiy, notorious for advocating a 'push to the south' (an expansionist policy aimed at creating a 'Greater Russia'), and Barkashov, the leader of the semi-fascist organisation Russian National Unity.

In addition there are a few jingoist patriots, as well as former members of Yeltsin's administration and government. And that's all. Even Gaidar and his colleagues have turned their backs on the President.

This is no accident. Four years ago we were shouting at the top of our voices: "Yeltsin is not an alternative, simply a pedestal for Zhirinovskiy and co. to climb up on!"

Then a year ago, after the bloody events of October, the President began openly trying on the cloak of Russian chauvinism, borrowing the vocabulary and slogans of the Prokhanovs and Zhirinovskys.

It remained only to be seen when Yeltsin would try his own 'push to the south', or begin struggling against a non-existent 'Jewish-masonic conspiracy'.

The first outburst came in Chechnya. But Russia and its army were in decay, so instead of the hammer blow of a great power, what we saw was the clumsy groping of fat, blindly-spread fingers.

The result was the corpses of our young men, in Russian and Chechen uniforms, and the bodies of Chechen and Russian children and old people.

To give them their due, the majority of Russian political organisations criticised the conflict, although in different ways, almost as soon as it began.

For Gaidar and his associates from the Russia's Choice party, until recently the President's best-known supporters, denouncing the war served as no more than a means of distancing themselves from an obviously disastrous campaign by their hero of earlier times.

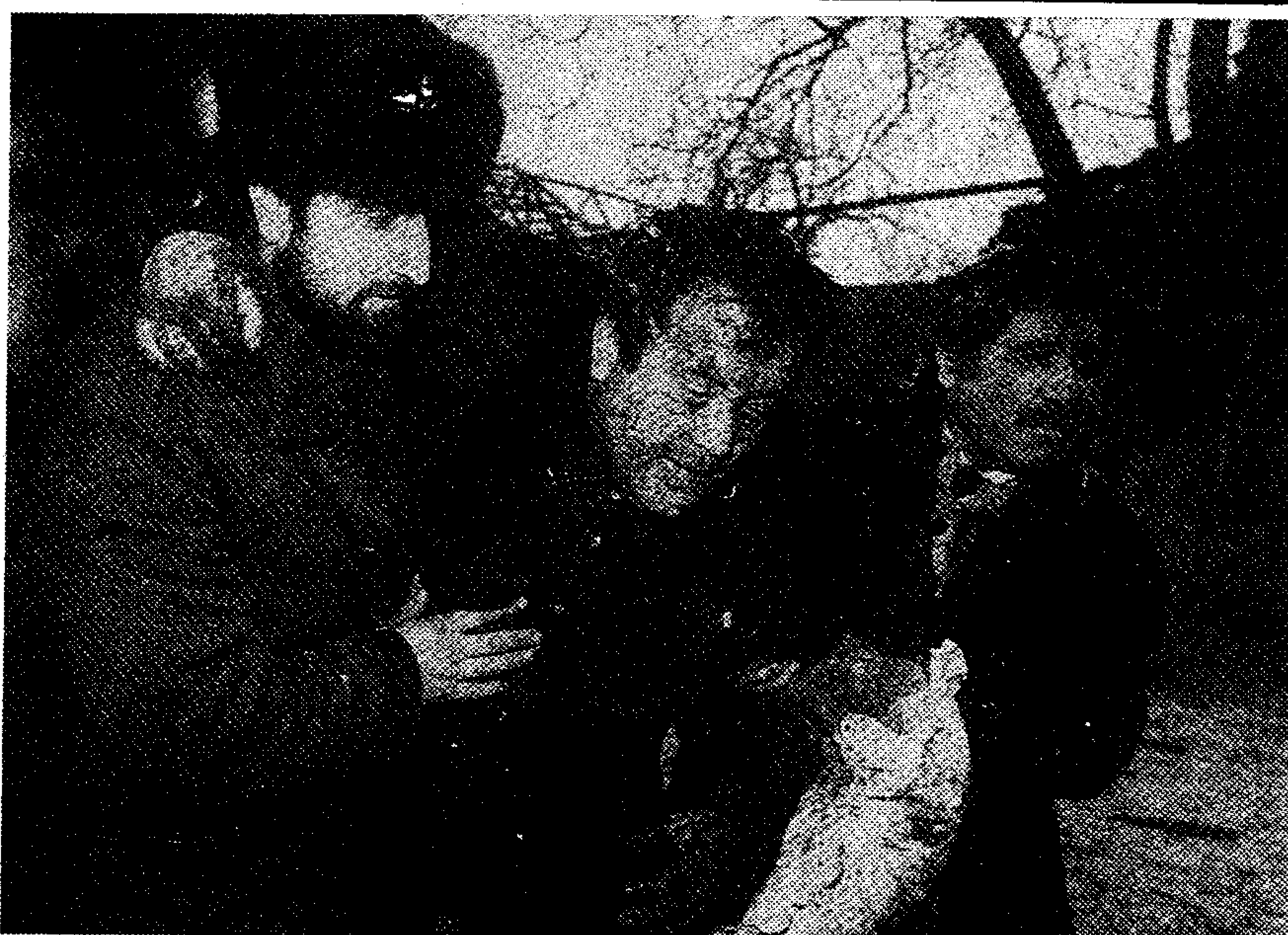
Having supported the use of tanks to pacify Muscovites in the autumn of 1993, Gaidar and his colleagues spoke out against using tanks in Grozny in the winter of 1994-5.

The centrists (Yavlinsky and his colleagues) adopted a much firmer position, struggling consistently both against the war and against the high-handedness of the President and his administration.

The majority of human rights organisations, including the Movement for Democracy and Human Rights in Russia, Memorial and others, took a similar stand. Among the most active individuals



Left: campaigning against the war in Moscow. Below: victim of Russian-chauvinist assault of Grozny.



was Sergei Kovalyov, the President's commissioner for human rights. After spending several weeks in Grozny, Kovalyov returned to Moscow, and did a great deal to tell the truth about Chechnya to the citizens of Russia and the whole world.

Social democratic parties took a somewhat ambiguous stand on the conflict, on the one hand calling for the integrity of Russia to be maintained, and on the other pleading the necessity for the defence of human rights.

By contrast the Communist Party of the Russian Federation forgot (thank goodness!) its usual great-power rhetoric, bluntly condemning the war and the authorities responsible for the destruction and casualties.

The relatively small democratic so-

cialist tendencies such as the Union of Internationalists, the Party of Labour and the Russian Party of Communists were extremely active. We organised something like a dozen pickets, rallies and round-table discussions, as well as issuing press statements and collaborating with defenders of human rights.

So practically all the major political forces in the country lined up on one side of the barricades: on the other was a bloc of Yeltsin, Zhirinovskiy and Barkashov.

Disagreements

Although all the anti-war forces were in favour of a halt to the bombing and military action, and called for negotiations to be opened up, beyond this point disagreements began to appear.

The Gaidarites were opposed on princi-

ple to calling on Yeltsin to resign, and many social democrats 'forgot' this demand.

Democratic leftists were demanding the withdrawal of Russian forces from Chechnya, and for the Russian government to respect the right of the peoples of Chechnya to decide independently and on a democratic basis whether they would remain in the Russian Federation and if so, with what degree of autonomy.

However this demand received only feeble support. Many rightists argued that a rapid and professional 'police action' in Chechnya was desirable, and condemned not so much the 'big stick' as the 'unprofessionalism' of the army wielding it.

There is reason to fear that if the war had been organised 'professionally', only the democratic left and a few human rights defenders would have spoken out against it.

But the struggle against the war is continuing. Citizens of Russia are more and more beginning to understand that the slaughter in Chechnya is a crime whose consequences will remain for a long time to come. It will weigh on human souls, sowing still more seeds of inter-ethnic hatred, nationalism and separatism.

It has strengthened the authority of Dudayev and his supporters, and is strengthening separatist tendencies throughout Russia.

And it is an economic crime. Billions upon billions of roubles have been spent on senseless slaughter.

Already high inflation is edging up still further. Budgets for health care and culture are being cut to pay for military spending. The 'realistic' 1995 budget will have to be recalculated, drawing still tighter the already suffocating noose of inflation and economic collapse.

It is necessary to say "No!" to the war and to the authorities which have unleashed it. This must be done by military personnel refusing to carry out illegal orders, by civilians participating in acts of protest in their neighbourhoods, their villages, their workplaces.

If we can stop this slaughter, if we can learn to struggle together at least against such obvious crimes of the authorities - if this can be achieved, then at least to some extent the sufferings and sacrifices of this winter in Chechnya will not have been in vain.

According to reports in the leading Moscow newspaper Izvestia, the order to storm Grozny was given by Defence Minister Pavel Grachev in the midst of a heavy drinking bout. Grachev and vice prime minister Oleg Soskovets hit the bottle to celebrate Grachev's birthday on New Year's Eve. Hours later the army's Caucasus command received orders by phone to take the Chechen Presidential palace, triggering the attack. Grachev has since been relieved of command of the Chechnya operation.

CENTRE STAGE

Beginning of the end for House of Saud?

HEADLINE news on the Saudi troop build-up on the Yemen border points to deeper-seated problems. PAUL WALKER probes the facts.

A DEEPENING crisis is developing in Saudi Arabia.

At the centre of this process are the now visible signs of the end of the House of Saudi, the family which has governed Saudi Arabia, with western backing, for over half a century.

Rather than strengthening the dictatorship in Riyadh, the Gulf War has unleashed forces which are now undermining a regime which practices torture, murder and wide spread repression as everyday tools for maintaining control over its own population.

At the heart of the crisis is the instability which the war brought to Saudi finances. The Saudi contribution to the war was some £35 billion – more than a drop in the ocean for a nation which has an annual GDP of around £80 billion.

Borrowing

Annual domestic borrowing has spiralled out of control, from nothing to £56 billion in the last six years. Combine this with the historically low oil prices since the mid-1980s and the coffers begin to look empty.

In response the Saudi monarchy introduced a 19% cut in state spending in 1994, and there are more cuts to come in 1995.

The international impact of this has been for a number of institutions to lower the Saudi credit rating.

Both NCM Credit Insurance, which handles 80% of Britain's short term export credit guarantees and Coface, the French export credit agency, tightened terms for Saudi credit at the end of 1994 sighting payment delays to companies exporting to Saudi Arabia and the "very grave" financial situation which the Saudi monarchy faces.

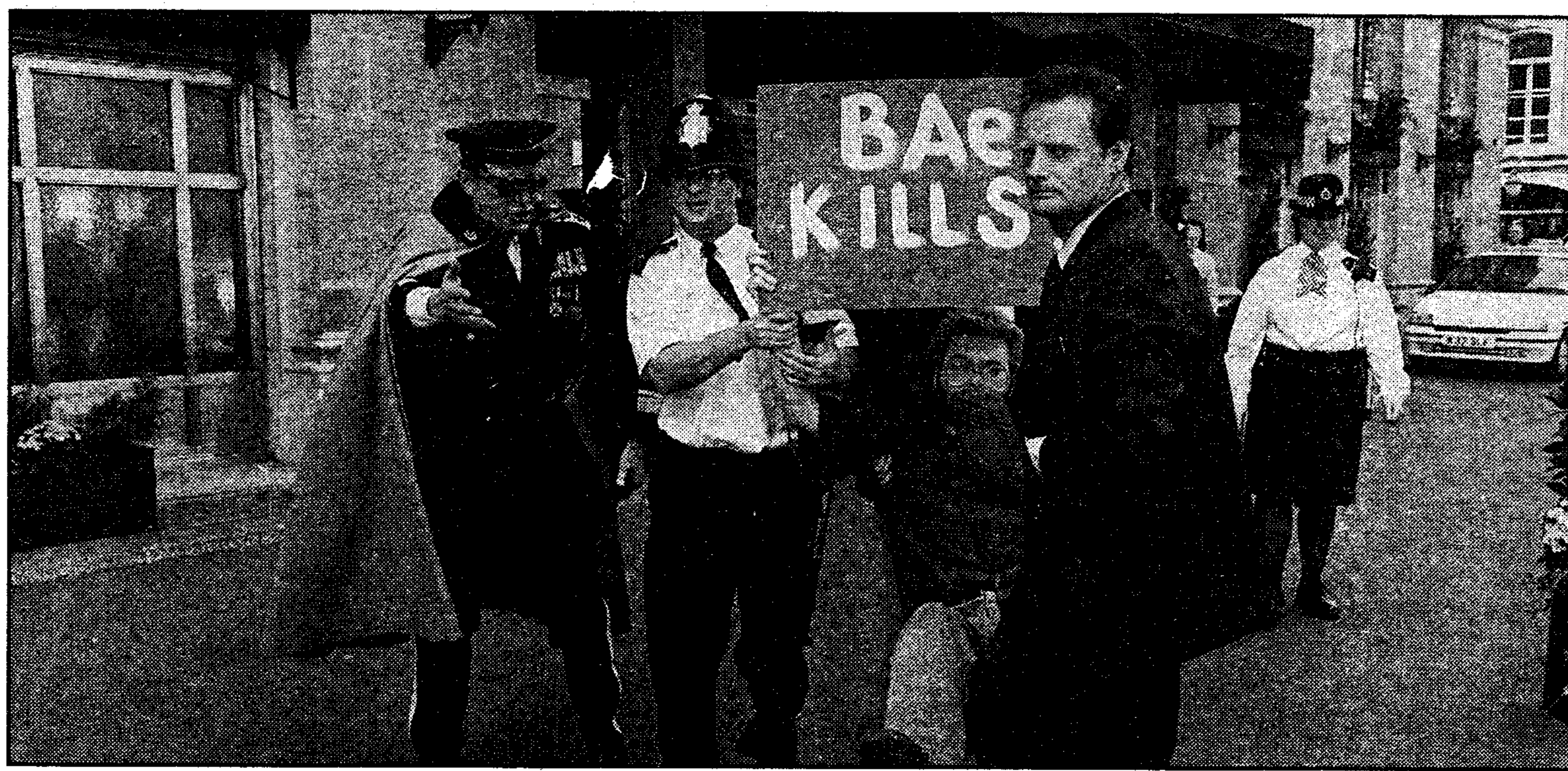
Such a crisis has opened up a space for a domestic political opposition to emerge. There are two opposition groupings, both of which work within the political framework of Sharia Law.

To the right is the development of a pro-Iranian fundamentalist grouping, based in Qasim, a town in the heartland of the Nejd desert.

Clerical radicals

The radical clerics at the centre of this movement are a new generation of thirty somethings whose politics are relayed on cassette tapes sold in shops throughout Saudi Arabia.

They are the product of Islamic universities and schools set up by the Saudi regime. Poor



British Aerospace: friend of torturers regimes through the world

Saudi families received grants to send their children to these institutions.

The result, according to Saudi Arabia specialist, Kathy Evans, has been "tens of thousands... of young men untrained in the skills that modern Saudi society needs... Unemployable and unversed in anything but the Koran."

The poor social background of many of these Islamic graduates make them a perfect social base for fundamentalist ideas which attack the House of Saud for corruption, hoarding of wealth and subservience to the United States.

The liberal opposition, organised around the Committee for the Defence of Legitimate Rights, is made up of clerics and university professors.

It has no social base to speak of and while it represents a genuine development of political forces in Saudi Arabia largely exists outside of the country itself given that its domestic backers, who publicly launched the Committee in May 1993, were immediately jailed.

The Saudi regime, faced with such opposition has resorted to widespread repression.

Crackdown

Over 1,600 people were arrested at the end of 1994 in dawn raids throughout Riyadh. This was the most recent chapter over events over the last two years which have witnessed both an upsurge both in public discontent and public executions.

The traditional tactic of a ruling class in deep trouble is to try and unite the nation against a common foe. This perhaps explains the increase in tension between Saudi Arabia and Yemen.

In the last month there have been a series of clashes between Yemeni and Saudi troops on their disputed border. The most serious fighting erupted on January 1st 1995 in the al-Yatmah and Khanjer regions, near

the strategic oil fields in northern Yemen.

There followed negotiation and a supposed mutual agreement to stop massing troops there.

On January 15 this agreement broke down as Saudi Ara-

bia moved large numbers of troops and military hardware to the disputed area.

Whatever the outcome of this particular series of events it is evident that things are not what they used to be for the House of Saud.

It is also clear that the oft repeated claim of the British Foreign Office and British Aerospace, the main military supplier to Saudi Arabia, that Saudi Arabia is not another Iran, are beginning to ring hollow.

The Saudi torture trail starts in Britain

By Aidan Day

"The British police would be delighted to have something like this" said the arms dealer clutching an instrument of torture. Little did he know that they are already testing electro-weapons.

Channel Four's *Dispatches* investigation went deep into the murky world of the slaughter industry on Wednesday to reveal just how much British companies are involved in the production and distribution of equipment that can be used for torture.

Behind all the official denials and formal bans the government also stands directly culpable. As *Dispatches* revealed, it seems that in with the £20 billion Al Yamamah arms deal negotiated by Thatcher was a consignment of electro batons.

Just before the Gulf war began Britain was selling torture equipment to the Saudis by the caseload.

These frightening weapons deliver a 40,000 volt shock. An Amnesty International spokesperson explained how they have become the favourite tool of torturers. While they are capable of inflicting horrendous pain upon the victim, they leave no external marks.

The shocks are applied to

blindfolded prisoners to 'soften them up' before interrogation.

These 'non-lethal weapons' are part of a growing industry. Torture is big business. And Britain is at its centre.

The military's experience in Ireland has made them world experts in matters of what is delicately termed 'internal security'.

All prison camp guards in China carry the terror devices. The General Secretary of Amnesty said that their use "has become so endemic that it is almost impossible to document and follow the cases of the number of victims".

Officially their export is banned from Britain. But when Channel Four's undercover reporters approached the Royal Ordinance they found no problem in arranging purchase. Philip Morris the sales manager offered to put a multi-million electro-shock baton deal together.

Two more new pieces of information emerged from the programme. One was the sale of 8,000 shock batons to Saudi Arabia as part of the Al Yamamah deal – an arrangement the government must have known about.

Whether British Aerospace, the Royal Ordinance's parent company, has included another batch in with the Hawks deal to Indonesia is a question yet to be answered.

Another striking thing the programme touched upon was

the use of shock weapons by the British police. This has gone unreported here so far.

The police appear to be already in possession of the shock shield. Under the guise of an anti-dog protection shield they have already got hold of these fearsome weapons.

Like the baton the shields deliver a non-lethal shock that incapacitates the victim. They disrupt the nerve control of skeletal muscles, producing extreme pain by high voltage. The salesman told Channel Four's hidden camera that 40,000 was the 'optimum voltage'.

The programme makers could have made a lot more of this. The plans to use terror weapons in Britain is something we should know about.

Dispatches revealed how the ICL Technical Plastics firm in Glasgow manufactures a whole range of instruments of repression with the complicity of the Scottish Office.

Its boss Frank Scott said that he had sold shock batons to South Africa, in Abu Dhabi and to the Chinese. He was filmed in preparation for a trip to South America part funded by the Scottish Office.

Channel Four has done a very valuable service in exposing the extent to which Britain backs the torture regimes throughout the world. They have also indicated what the police have in store for us if we don't stop them.

Bloody Sunday: litmus test of 'peace process'

By Piers Mostyn

THIS YEAR'S Bloody Sunday demonstrations will be the first since the IRA declared its ceasefire over four months ago.

In January 1972 in Derry, the British army murdered thirteen people on a peaceful mass demonstration protesting against internment without trial.

Historically, the annual commemorations of this event have been something of a ritual, symbolising a lack of political strategy rather than mass political resistance to British rule in Ireland.

But in recent years they have been used by the republican movement to experiment with a new strategy that has now emerged more clearly with the ceasefire.

In particular, the 'Bloody Sunday Initiative', in which Sinn Fein members took a leading role, was one of the first united front campaigns on the national question to be set up by republicans which openly tied itself to non-violent methods of campaigning.

As a major show of strength of the militant wing of the nationalist community, this year's march will reflect any new political direction of the republican movement and its ability to mobilise the community behind its new course.

New questions

Since the ceasefire little has happened to contradict what appears to be the British viewpoint that the republican movement's leadership has abandoned the armed struggle as a method of achieving its historic aims. But new questions have arisen.

Has armed struggle been replaced by mass action as the strategic orientation? Or is an alliance with the governments of Dublin and Washington the new central tactic?

Does the movement envisage achieving Irish self-determination through campaigning for unconditional British withdrawal and Irish unity? Or is the perspective one of a process in which these are only later stages?

Is Irish self-determination still defined in terms of the people of the island as an indivisible whole acting without British interference? Or has Sinn Fein nuanced distinction between the 'consent' of the unionists and a unionist veto become, along with a new conception of the British state as potential 'persuaders', a cover for agreeing to accept de facto partition as part of a new settlement?

These questions have all been thrown up by Sinn Fein's public stance over the past year or so. Although they are very unlikely to be answered in any explicit way through the Bloody



Has republican leadership abandoned armed struggle for mass action?

Sunday marches, the commemoration is particularly symbolic this year for a number of reasons.

Until 1972 there had been a mass civil rights movement. Although flawed in many respects, it involved mass action, mobilised the whole nationalist community on the streets, and commanded extensive support in the South and internationally.

The Bloody Sunday shootings represented the high point of a British terror campaign that effectively drove mass action politics off the agenda for almost a decade.

The result was an increasingly depoliticised movement and the strengthening of its militarist tendencies.

The 1969/70 split in the republican movement widened the gap between a militarist 'provisional' wing and a political, increasingly anti-nationalist, 'official' wing.

Hunger strikes

The hunger strikes of 1980/81, the accompanying mass campaign and the turn towards an electoral strategy repoliticised the movement. But it failed to develop a strategic mass orientation out of these openings.

The mass action did not outlive the hunger strikes. The electoral strategy reached its limits by the mid 1980s, and the main strategy since has been to seek alliances with bourgeois nationalist parties and call for negotiations with the British.

Since the ceasefire, Sinn Fein's insistent focus has been

on two demands: an acceleration of the process towards round table talks that include Republicans; and the need for symbolic but substantial gestures towards British demilitarisation.

British strategy

If Bloody Sunday represents a key moment in the history of mass resistance to British rule, it is also seen as symbolic of British strategy itself. Behind it lies everything from murder campaigns to curfews and mass raids; emergency laws denying fundamental civil rights, and disinformation and censorship.

Immediately after Bloody Sunday there was an official inquiry by Lord Widgery. It is now widely accepted that this was a whitewash that exonerated the British army and blamed the victims, using lies and smears. Army officers in charge on Bloody Sunday have been promoted and decorated.

Although the official position has been thoroughly discredited, the state has yet to utter the smallest word of recognition or apology for what can only be described as a war crime equivalent to recent atrocities in Bosnia.

Nationalists of many hues demand that a precondition for any 'demilitarisation' must involve the British government removing the military and accompanying oppressive strategies.

The British state will not have seriously begun to turn its back on such strategies until the truth about events such as Bloody Sunday is publicly ac-

knowledged. If the 'peace process' itself is to mean anything, the symbolism of Bloody Sunday cannot be taken for granted.

Meanwhile, despite the ceasefire, harassment and intimidation by British forces continue on a daily basis.

Though soldiers are no longer patrolling the streets in daylight hours, the enormous military presence remains, the vast panoply of emergency powers remains untouched, and the RUC and UDR remain armed to the hilt as local sectarian militias.

Negotiations

Sinn Fein has finally reached a negotiating table of sorts. Substantive round table talks may begin this year (with or without the Paisleyites).

A form of words may be found to enable republican participation without a surrender of arms (the RUC having indicated their view that this should not be

an obstacle). The joint London-Dublin document providing a framework for a new settlement will emerge.

Sinn Fein paper *Republican News* has rightly described 1995 as a 'Year of Decision'. The question is - what will be decided?

Having got the talks, what hope is there that they will lead to a real expression of Irish self-determination and a British withdrawal?

The history of British involvement and the majority of parties involved suggests an extremely depressing answer. After all, what pressure can Sinn Fein bring to bear that would lead to meaningful progress? The only answer seems to be to trust London, Dublin and Washington.

Militant nationalism will only come out of the process better off if the balance of forces outside the negotiating room are strengthened in favour of genuine Irish self-determination. Hence the importance of Bloody Sunday and other initiatives this year.

Withdrawal movement

The withdrawal movement in this country faces similar issues. Having suffered from a process of disorientation and decline over the last five years, it has been wracked by division over the ceasefire.

The leadership of TOM (the main organisation), breaking with its traditional opposition to British organisations taking positions on the tactics of the Irish struggle, has unsuccessfully sought to transform the movement into a campaign for negotiations and a support group for Sinn Fein's new strategy.

Organisational and political differences continue. It is unclear whether 1995 will see the continued existence of a viable British-based solidarity movement.

This year's Bloody Sunday demonstration in Manchester will be an important signpost, as will events in Ireland.

A good mobilisation from the left and the labour movement may well be decisive.

**1995 Bloody Sunday
Memorial March
PEACE THROUGH BRITISH
WITHDRAWAL!
Saturday 28 January
12 noon Platt Fields
MANCHESTER**

SPEAKERS include Labour MPs Jeremy Corbyn and Bill Etherington, Sinn Fein, a relative of a Bloody Sunday victim, Bloody Sunday Justice Group.

Details: TOM 0171-609-1743

IRELAND UNFREE

Anger mounts as Palestine peace deal goes sour

By Roland Rance

GROWING Palestinian discontent with the Israel-PLO 'peace' deal has led to the establishment of a new Palestinian Democratic Party.

It describes the Oslo and Cairo agreements as a 'consolidation of all Israeli demands' and calls for 'free and democratic elections... based on the principle of the unity of the Palestinian nation'.

This party is backed by the Popular and Democratic Fronts for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP & DFLP), by independent activists, and by several prominent members of Arafat's Fatah, including Dr Haider Abdel Shafi, former head of the Palestinian delegation to the negotiations, Fatah co-founder Hani al-Hassan, and former PLO executive member Shafiq al-Hut.

The recent murder by Israeli troops of several sleeping Palestinian police (Israel claimed that the police, while asleep, had fired through a concrete wall and across the border at an Israeli patrol!) is a further sign of Israel's contempt for Palestinian opinion, and for its supposed partners in the deal.

But it would be a mistake to assume that the agreement is failing. On the contrary, for Israel it is succeeding well in its purpose of coopting the PLO into an unequal relationship as protectors of the occupation, while Israel continues with its projects of regional domination



Israeli troops help to enforce regional domination

and colonisation of Palestine.

The past few weeks have been marked by clashes between Israeli troops and Palestinian residents, backed by Israeli activists, protesting against land expropriations for new settlements in the Bethlehem area.

This is just one of several planned expansions of settlements. For example, the Israeli settlement of Eli Zahav, on the lands of Kufr al-Deik village near Nablus, is projected to increase from 65 to 4400 families. By Israeli law, only Jews will

be permitted to live in these settlements, whose lands are officially described as 'redeemed'.

Meanwhile, Israel continues to consolidate its political gains and expand its influence in the Arab world.

Visit

Following the treaty with Jordan, King Hussein made a well-publicised visit to Israel, where he was promised a continuing role in Jerusalem affairs – a further snub to the PLO and insult to the Palestinian people. Israeli Prime Minister

Yitzhak Rabin visited Oman, the first Arab Gulf state to welcome an Israeli leader. It cannot be long before Saudi Arabia too signs a deal with Israel, with which it has no border dispute and much common interest.

As if to symbolise this deepening alliance with Arab reaction, Israel has now threatened a preemptive air strike against Iranian nuclear reactors, to prevent the development of nuclear weapons by Iran.

Ironically, Iran and Israel had earlier been nuclear partners, collaborating to assist the South African nuclear project.

Sheikhs

The loss of these two former staunch allies has encouraged Israel's turn to the sheikhs and colonels of the Arab regimes – a direction long advocated by a part of Israel's military establishment, notably Rabin himself, who has reportedly for many years viewed Iran as a greater long-term threat than the Arab states.

In confirming these threats to Iran in a BBC interview, Rabin repeated Israel's standard claim that 'Israel will not be the first to introduce nuclear weapons into the Middle East'.

This is a lie; Israel has had nuclear weapons since a project was developed by Shimon Peres, now Defence Minister, in the 1950s, and currently has about 300 nuclear warheads.

Some days before Rabin made his threat, Israeli prisoner of conscience Mordechai Vanunu passed his 3000th day in solitary confinement.

Vanunu, a former nuclear technician who leaked details of Israel's nuclear industry to the *Sunday Times* in 1986, was enticed from London to Rome, and on 30 September 1986 he was kidnapped, drugged, and flown back to Israel.

Tried under conditions of strict secrecy, Vanunu was convicted of treason and espionage, and sentenced to 18 years imprisonment.

He has spent the entire time since his kidnapping in solitary confinement, permitted no physical contact even with members of his family, in conditions described by Amnesty International as 'cruel, inhuman and degrading'.

Vanunu's brother, Meir, now lives in exile after an Israeli court ordered his arrest for publishing details of Mordechai's kidnapping; the British government has rejected his application for political asylum.

Insanity

Israeli officials have claimed that Vanunu's conversion to Christianity is a betrayal of his family and his country, and evidence of insanity.

By their treatment of him, they seem to be driving him towards a breakdown, though people who have visited him report that he is surviving and has great inner strength.

Vanunu has been nominated several times for the Nobel prize, and has been supported by the European Parliament, as well as by many British MPs and labour movement bodies.

Indian voters reject new economic policy

By K. Govindan

INDIAN Premier Narasimha Rao's days in office look numbered after his Congress(I) party was crushed in four recent state elections.

In Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Sikkim, Congress(I) state governments were soundly defeated, and they may only be able to form a minority government in the tiny state of Goa.

It was on Rao's home state of Andhra Pradesh that attention was focused as the campaign became a personal referendum on the Prime Minister and the economic liberalisation policies being pursued by the central government.

In a humiliating defeat the Congress(I) state party was reduced from 181 members of the legislative assembly to just 25.

The regionalist Telugu Desam Party, led by charismatic

ex-film star N.T. Rama Rao swept to victory, along with its allies of the Communist Party of India and Communist Party of India (Marxist), who scooped 34 seats.

Populist election promises of sale of rice at two rupees a kilo, and total prohibition of alcohol won favour in a state where landlords are also arrack (hooch) sellers, and where women have mobilised in their thousands on this issue.

However the loss of hundreds of millions of rupees in alcohol taxes may compromise the ability of the TDP to deliver on other promises like employment-generating development projects.

Similarly in Karnataka the state wing of the opposition Janata Dal party scored a convincing win, reducing Congress(I) from 178 to 35 seats in the 224-member assembly.

It too promises to subsidise the sale of rice and to create 100,000 jobs in the state sec-

tor.

However what lost these elections for Rao is the record of the Congress(I) both in state governments and at the centre.

At state level its administrations were perceived as corrupt and indifferent to the poor, and at the centre its New Economic Policy which is reducing the enormous state sector and opening India to multi-national companies is causing tremendous convulsions.

The Muslim minority which has traditionally voted for the Congress(I) due to its secularist roots in the anti-colonial movement have deserted it in droves.

The central government has been dithering on the Ayodhya issue (where a mosque was torn down in December 1992 by supporters of the Hindu right wing Bharatiya Janata Party BJP). The hurt of this episode and the scars of the anti-Muslim riots

which followed endure.

Rao's administration had sought to retain muslim support and win over the BJP's base by referring the question of the mosque to the Supreme Court, which wisely declined.

All he ended up doing was alienate both constituencies.

While the BJP have been on the defensive since the Ayodhya tragedy, and lost the state elections in 1993, they remain the largest opposition party at the centre.

The BJP has led demonstrations against GATT and protested at removal of controls on foreign capital while in the same breath accusing Congress(I) of stealing its economic policies.

It is here that the contradictions are greatest and where the BJP must be confronted to prise its working class and depressed caste sections away from its upper caste, rich leadership.

The victory of two constituent parties of the bourgeois

centrist National Front in these elections has revived its fortunes but not necessarily its ability to form an alternative government.

The mainstream Communist parties are strategically committed to an alliance with the National Front which they hail as 'secular democratic', while their state government in West Bengal pursues an aggressive policy of courting industrial bosses and siding with employers against workers in struggle.

Five more states go to the polls in February and March, this time in the Hindi-speaking heartland of Congress(I).

A defeat here will heighten pressure for Rao's removal ahead of a general election in 1996, and the need for united front candidacies of mass organisations of workers, peasants, the oppressed and the exploited in opposition to neo-liberal disaster and communal politics.

Italy turns to 'unbiased' banker

By Aidan Day

Last week John Paul prayed for a speedy resolution to Italy's political crisis. This week it has a new prime minister.

The installation of Lamberto Dini ends 22 days of drift since Berlusconi stepped down after losing the confidence of his alliance partners.

Dini, a former "independent" minister in Berlusconi's cabinet, is a former director general of the Bank of Italy. He spent 16 years at the International Monetary Fund in Washington and is known as a dedicated free-marketeer.

Technocrats

Dini accepted the nomination saying "mine will be a government of technocrats" whose task it is to "contribute to a sense of absolute confidence in the stability of this country's democratic and republican institutions".

He has declared his intention to form a cabinet of "people without links to political groups" instead they will be selected "solely on the basis of their professionalism and abilities".

Far from being independent however Dini is actually the man behind the pension reform proposals that mobilised millions in protest last November.

He is also largely responsible for much of Italy's privatisation programme - in particular that of the INA, the state insurance group. He is committed to keeping the privatisation bandwagon on the road.

Right winger

Although he is being hailed as an unbiased technocrat, in fact Dini has always been close to the Christian Democrats. He was always on the right of Berlusconi's cabinet.

He has already promised a mini-budget to begin economic reform and has been widely welcomed by big business.

Most importantly he wants to find £7.3 billion in cuts in the 1995 budget. Also on the shopping list is reform of the pension scheme, changes to the system of proportional representation and "transitional" measures to control the use of television.

This last aspect means directly taking on Berlusconi - his far reaching control over the media is one of the central issues in Italian politics.

If the left is able to maintain the momentum that was established last year then Dini won't be around for long - however hard John Paul prays.

Sky's the limit in big bucks sport

By David Thomas

EVEN Tony Blair now says things have got out of hand. £7 million. Who could possibly be worth that amount of money?

Well, according to Manchester United Andy Cole is and they have stumped up the cash in the belief that he will help them retain their Premier League title, thus ensuring mega bucks in the European Champions League next season.

In fact they paid £6 million plus a player in part exchange for him. Football clubs do that - swap players as if they were cigarette cards or telephone numbers. According to Cole he did not know about his transfer until 11 p.m. the day before he was sold.

Currently English football is rolling in money - or at least the Premier League is. In the same week that Andy Cole was transferred for £7 million, Third Division Gillingham, with an average attendance of less than 4,000 spectators and spiralling debts, went into receivership.

In a bizarre move the players 'union' the Professional



Alex Ferguson: laughing all the way from the bank

Footballers Association has agreed to pay the team's wage bill until the end of the season. As Glenn Moore in Thursday's *Independent* commented "it is as if the TUC had bailed out Swan Hunter's shipyard". Why should a union pay its members' wages?

Sponsorship of the Premier League has reached staggering proportions. Over a four year period Carling will give the league £12 million.

Lucozade lay out a million a year to be the leagues' official drink (presumably Carling don't mind!) and Citizen pay the preposterous sum of £300,000 to be the official time-keeper at Premiership matches!

Individual clubs have not been slow to join the money

merry-go-round. Manchester United earned £14 million from merchandising last year. Much of it has come from the enormous number of different kits they have worn in the past two seasons.

Indeed they launched a new away strip two days after Christmas - ensuring that any budding Ryan Giggs (swoon!) would insist that the replica kit bought for them was no longer any good and could they have the new one please.

Even Tony Blair - not known for his condemnation of market forces - was forced to comment "Loyalty does not seem to be enough any more; rather it is exploited to make us pay more".

The massive influx of cash into the Premiership over the past three seasons has led to

worrying developments for spectators. Leading clubs seem to have taken a conscious decision to change the social basis of the people who attend matches.

In London it is now virtually impossible to watch a top game for less than £12. Children, the unemployed and O.A.P.s who used to be admitted at half price now have to pay the full whack on the basis of that they are occupying a seat rather than a yard of terracing.

This means that a whole section of working class fans are excluded because they can no longer afford the admission fee. Unlike the 1980s, when top games were screened live on ITV and BBC, supporters are unable to watch their teams live on television. Sky has exclusive screen rights to live Premiership matches.

Football clubs should be, and in the past sometimes have been, part of the local community.

Changes in the organisation and structure of football in the past period have pushed fans, particularly working class fans, further away from the clubs they support. It's about time we reclaimed the game!

Threepenny Opera sets new Standard

By Emma Vanden

CITIES are alienating, full of hate. Places where people can only trust themselves.

The culture of cities, dangerous cities, was what Bertolt Brecht wanted to convey in his Threepenny Opera. That is also the spirit of the new Donmar Warehouse production.

The play is set in London in the London of 2001. It is the London of the underworld, with its nasty nightlife in and around King's Cross, Stepney Green and the Soho. We are as familiar with the everyday reality of homelessness, begging, prostitution and petty stealing as was Brecht.

The well armed Police force is also a familiar sight. The level of Police surveillance was perhaps one of the only things that did change since the play was written.

The production assists the spectators in developing a detached attitude to the protagonist. This is achieved by bringing the media into the theatre. Around the stage we

are surrounded by 50 video screens sharing every detail with the audience. The harsh cold light of news reportage banishes every trace of sentimentalism from the work.

A special edition of the *Evening Standard* was manufactured specially for the production: "From Southall High Street to Stepney Green they know him simply as Mack The Knife, the man who will gut you like a fish as soon as look at you... from the underworld to high society his cockney accent with its penchant for slicing people has become the essential ingredient in smart parties".

For most people however Mack the Knife is a harsh, violent repulsive man - no hero of the masses.

Urban killer

Mack is the ultimate urban killer, a "Great White Shark in Armani", about to graduate to the exclusive "clean" crimes of the City.

The famous career begins as a juvenile. He is discharged from the Army after stealing three submachine guns and explosives.



In London he hacks into the National Lottery computer system, raids banks, and deals drugs - specialising in the designer variety of course.

Mack the Knife is assisted in his career by his best friend from his days in the Major 'Tiger' Brown, Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police.

The Donmar Warehouse production is part of a revitalisation of old lyrics and music.

Only this time around they are shed of all traces of rosy sentiment. They have become harsh satires, criticisms of a Britain in decay. It's a million miles from Frank Sinatra's version of Mack the knife.

REVIEWS

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!

Please tell me more about *Socialist Outlook*

Yes, I want to become a *Socialist Outlook* supporter

Name

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

FeedBACK



"This reminds me of Lenin's famous line about carburetors"

Aid solution?

One result of Republican gains in the US congressional elections [US aid budget faces axe, *Socialist Outlook* 75] will be the slashing of the aid budget to some of the poorest countries in Africa.

The \$800 million annual Development Fund for Africa seems set for the chop. Of course we are not against aid to Africa or anywhere else that is ravaged by the effects of capitalism, but aid is not in any way a solution to the problems faced by the 'Third World'.

Capitalist 'aid' is for capitalist projects – or do we believe that the US ruling classes, or at least the up-till-recently dominant sections, really are concerned about the world's black masses? Get real!

Finally the article lets us in on the idea that '... prospects of the 'new world order' and the capitalist market improving life for the African masses seem further away than ever.'

Well, did we ever believe that capitalism was ever making life better?

Steve Revins, Warrington.

SOCIALIST OUTLOOK

Big Big Big Prizes

300 CLUB

Every month *Socialist Outlook* outdoes the National Lottery for just one minute while we draw our 300 club.

Labour Party committee rooms, trades union halls, student union buildings and entire workplaces are covered by an intense hush. This week we have a double treat. Since last month's draw would have happened after the previous issue was printed the prizes have *rolled over* to make this month's draw extra special. Not two, but **five** lucky winners can be announced!

Stephanie from north London wins *Your rights at work*, described by TUC General Secretary John Monks as 'a clear guide to the main effects of the law on their working lives.'

Jane from south London meanwhile gains an auto-graphed copy of John Lister's *Cuba: radical face of Stalinism*, re-released this month on the tenth anniversary of its first publication.

Deborah of east London's prize is *Ethnic Conflicts in World Politics*, the latest book from the CIA's Westview Press. Barbaba Harff of the US Naval Academy concludes the

right-wing volume predicting "the reemergence of xenophobia, a fear of cultural dilution, that subordinates Europeanism to pan-Germanism, Franco-philia and British insularity."

In Oxford, **Tony's** superb booty is to get a hardback edition of Seumus Milne's *The Enemy Within*, recently reviewed in *Socialist Outlook* by Alan Thornett.

But the fickle finger of fortune has picked out **Roy**, also from Oxford, for our bumper £50 cash prize.

Acapulco here we come!

Join the Club!

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Please return to 300 Club, PO Box 1109, London, N4 2UU.

What's HAPPENING

To advertise your event in the next *Socialist Outlook*, post in details to 'What's Happening', PO Box 1109, London, N4 2UU by Friday 3 February.

JANUARY

Thurs 19

CLAUSE 4 debate with Jeremy Corbyn and Margaret Hodge 7.30pm Red Rose Club Seven Sisters Road N7.

CLAUSE 4 debate with Alan Simpson and Dennis McShane, Sheffield.

Sat 21

BUILD a Wapping Union! March for trade union rights assemble 9.45am Tower Hill tube, march to rally on green opposite News International. Called by NUJ.

DEMONSTRATION against Oxford County Cuts.

Tues 24

MASS lobby and day of action against Oxford Cuts.

Weds 25

'STOP the SATs' lobby of NUT executive 4.00 - 5.30pm NUT HQ Mabledon Place WC1

'STOP the SATs' rally Friends Meeting House Clinton Rd WC1 5.30 - 7.30pm.

Fri 27

CLAUSE 4 meeting with Arthur Scargill Stoke-on-Trent

Sat 28

BLOODY Sunday march in Manchester from Platts' Field to Albert Square.

Speakers include MPs Jeremy Corbyn and Bill Etherington. *Socialist Outlook* sellers meet 12.00 noon at Platt Lane entrance. Travel from London/ other details: 0171 609 1743.

CLAUSE 4 campaign National Steering Committee 11.00 am Manchester Town Hall.

FEBRUARY

Sat 4

NATIONAL Assembly Against Racism, 10.00am - 5.00pm York Hall, Old Ford Road, London E2. Registration: £7/£4 from 'National Assembly', THARC, c/o CAG, 22 Hanbury Street, London, E1.

Weds 8

FABIAN Society Clause 4 debate Central Hall Westminster SW1.

Thurs 9

NEXT issue of *Socialist Outlook* on sale.

Fri 10

CLAUSE 4 rally with Arthur Scargill 7.30pm Union Club Pershore Road Birmingham.

Sat 11

INTERNATIONAL Dayschool organised by Socialist Campaign Group Supporters' Network. 10.30am - 5.30pm

Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, WC1. Holborn tube. Registration/Creche - £7 waged, £3 unwaged from SCGN, 1 Gorefield House, Canterbury Road, London NW6.

Weds 15

CLAUSE 4 meeting with Alan Simpson, Haywards Heath.

Fri 17

CLAUSE 4 rally with Arthur Scargill, Cardiff.

Sat 18

WELFARE State Network working conference on benefits at University of London Union, Malet Street, WC1.

Sat 18 - Sat 25

YOUTH CND week of local DIY action details 0171 607 3616.

Thurs 23

CLAUSE 4 meeting with Arthur Scargill Liverpool.

Fri 24

CLAUSE 4 London rally.

Sat 25/Sun 26

GREATER London Labour Party Conference.

Sun 26

CLAUSE 4 steering committee meeting.

MARCH

Fri 3

CLAUSE 4 questionnaire return deadline.

Sat 4

CLAUSE 4 debate hosted by Leeds Fabian Society.

Sun 5

Labour Party central region conference.

Fri 10 - Sun 12

Scottish Labour Party conference, Inverness.

Sun 12

CLAUSE 4 meeting with Steve French, Leicester.

Weds 15

NEC meeting to discuss new Clause 4.

Sat 18 - Sun 19

Socialist Movement Trade Union Committee AGM.

APRIL

Sat 1 - Sun 2

Labour Party Women's Conference, Derby.

Sat 8

WELFARE State Network Conference.

Sat 29 - Sun 30

Labour Party special conference.



Jane Kelly (right) explained transformation of Marxist theory in light of 1871 Paris Commune

Successful organisers' weekend

OVER 30 of *Socialist Outlook's* local sales organisers came to a successful weekend school held at London's Caxton House on January 7 & 8.

Jane Kelly (pictured above at the school with Alan Thornt) opened the weekend with her session on the development of the marxist position on the state. Other sessions at the school discussed the Leninist theory of party-building, modern 'parliamentary roads to socialism', revolutionary finance and the need for the

Fourth International.

The organisers' school, one of a series planned by the *Socialist Outlook* editorial board, was marked by a collaborative and confident mood.

'Militant' pamphlet

Socialist Outlook's best selling pamphlet this month has been a re-printed 1978 *Socialist Challenge* pamphlet called 'The politics of Militant.'

While *Socialist Outlook* does not criticise Militant in the same way today, the pamphlet remains a useful tool in educational discussions.

The author, Dave Packer of

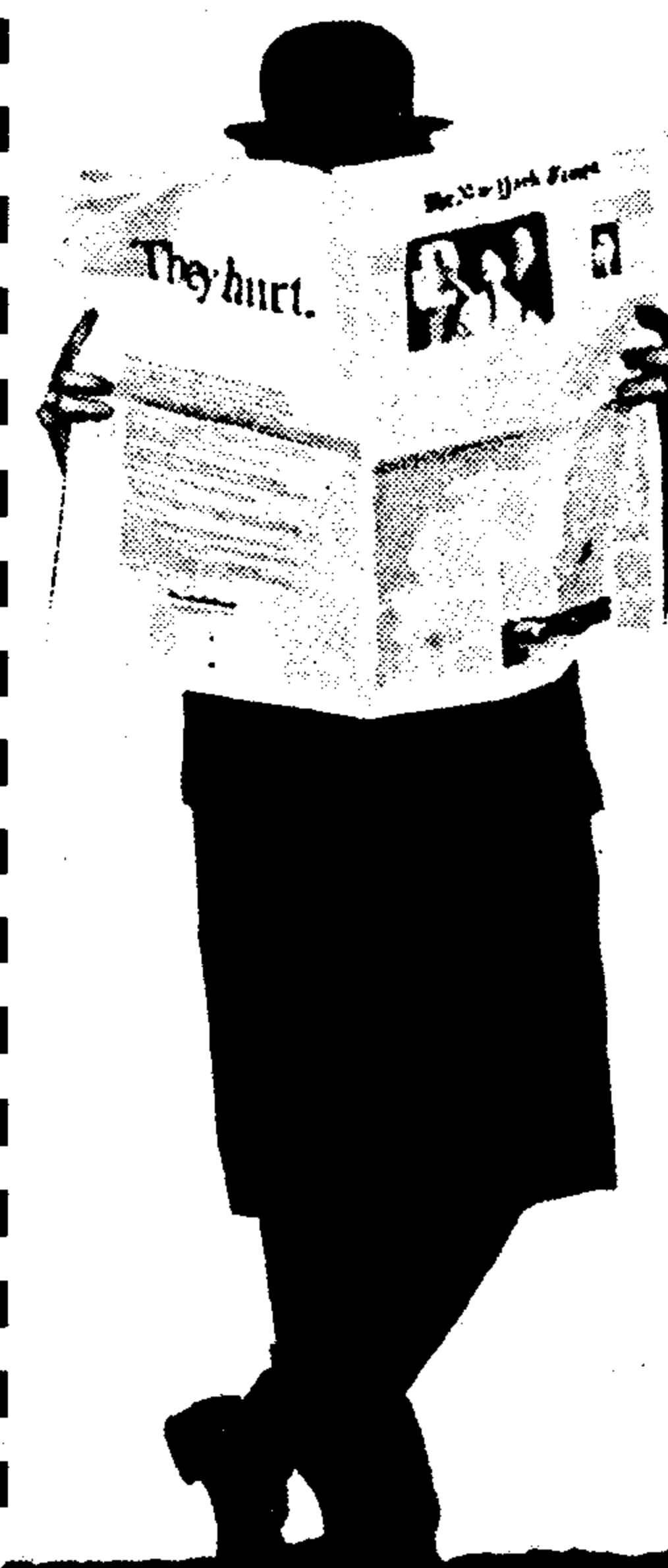
the *Socialist Outlook* editorial board, was previously a long-time Militant member.

Socialist Outlook

Socialist Outlook is printed twice each month, except for December and August double issues.

In order to keep to this schedule, we have to take break a fortnightly schedule twice in the coming months in order to avoid shipping out three issues in January and April. Our next issues will be shipped out on 18 January, 8 February, 22 February, 8 March, 5 April, 19 April, 10 May and fortnightly from then until our August double issue.

Tired of reading between the lies?



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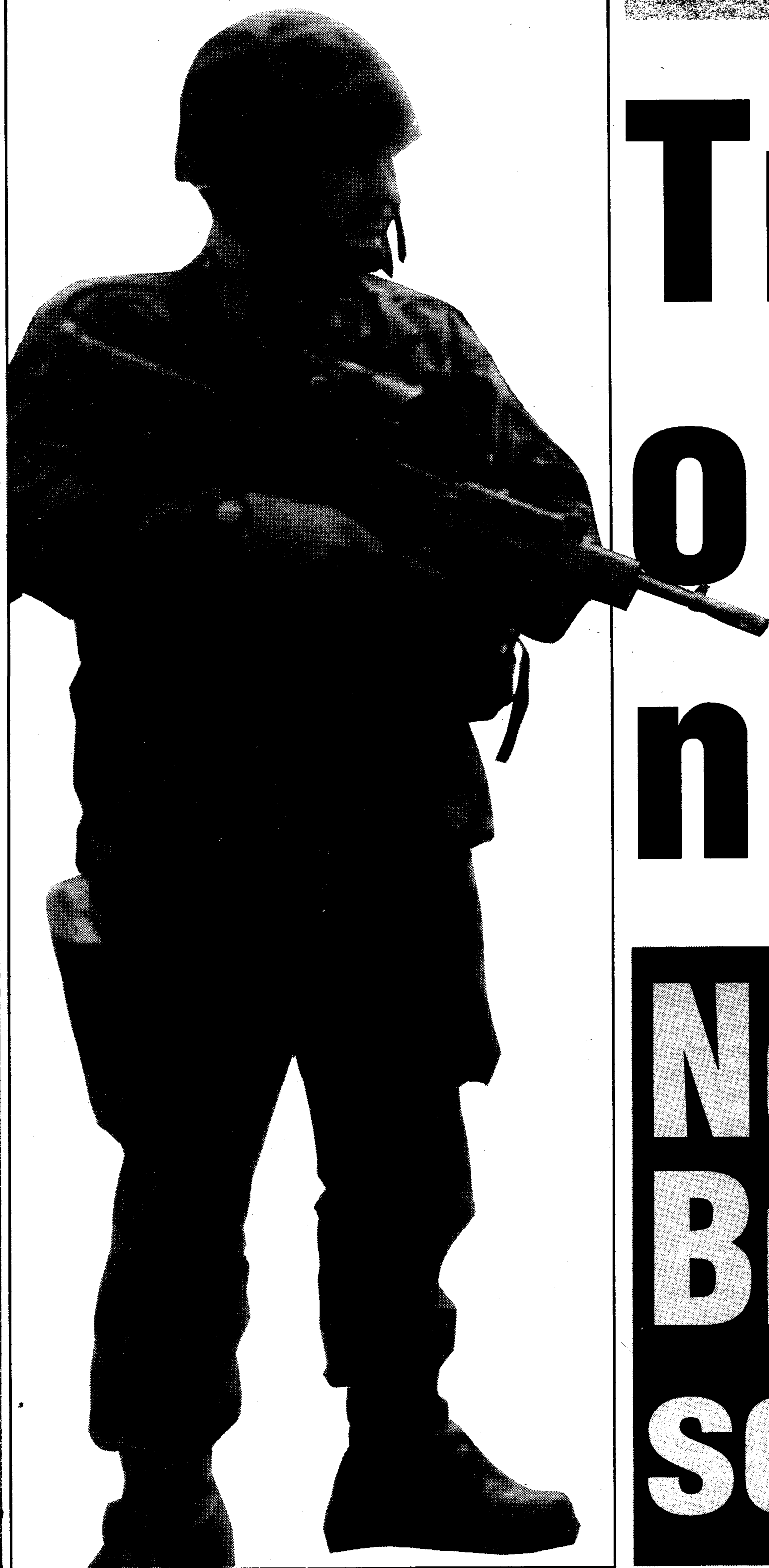
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SOCIALIST OUTLOOK

Socialist OUTLOOK

Bloody Sunday
Demo
Sat JAN 28,
Platt Field Park
MANCHESTER
12 noon



IRELAND

Troops out now!

No British solution