

Socialist OUTLOOK

**FIGHT TO SAVE THE
WELFARE STATE p 6-7**

**BUILDING INTERNATIONAL
SOLIDARITY - centre**

**FASCISTS BEHIND TURKISH
'DEMOCRACY' - p 10**

MANDEL ON TROTSKY - p 13

Issue 81 ● 50p ● April 8 1995 ●

● 30BF ● 5FF ● \$1 ● 2DM ● 1500 lire ● f1

Throw out Tory racists!



Architect of immigration laws: Home Secretary Michael Howard

JOHN MAJOR's cabinet are desperate.

Every opinion poll forecasts a Tory disaster in the coming local elections.

Even staunch Tory supporters have been rejecting Major's policy of axing schools, old people's homes and social services to pay for tax cuts in the next general election.

Even the promise of tax cuts has been discredited, with 20 separate tax increases since the 1992 election and living standards plunging as the latest cuts in mortgage tax relief kick in.

The old stand-by of privatisation, too, has been thoroughly undermined by the scandalous profiteering of privatised utilities, the sky-high salaries of their directors, and the unpopularity of rail and Post Office privatisation.

Law and order has been neutered as a political weapon by the extreme right wing line of Tony Blair's Labour Party, and the mounting evidence that crime is linked to the social and economic decay of post-Thatcher Britain.

So whatever next? Predictably, the bankrupt party of that 'nice' Mr Major has wheeled out one of the oldest cannons in the Tory arsenal: racism.

A full seven months before the next Queen's Speech in the autumn, ministers leaked to the media the fact that they are planning a new crackdown on 'illegal immigrants'.

In fact the legislation would target not immigration - which previous racist Tory laws have reduced to an insignificant trickle, causing misery among divided families - but asylum seekers, who have already been victimised in the Asylum Act two years ago.

Hundreds of innocent asylum seekers, refugees from wars and dictatorships around the world, are currently incarcerated in grim prisons like Campsfield near Oxford. Bosnian refugees already face the closure of the miserable handful of reception centres, and the slashing of government funds for their support.

The Tories want to make it even harder to get into Britain - so they can make it easier for themselves to win racist votes.

This is a sick, cynical trick by a desperate and reactionary Party. The council elections offer workers a welcome chance to throw some of them out of office now: we'll have to wait a little longer to kick out the rest.

Vote Labour: Fight for socialist policies!

Hardest stage of the battle for Clause Four

By Steve French and Alan Thornett

THE DEFEND Clause Four campaign now faces the hardest stage of the battle. Whilst it was ahead on points in the first five rounds, the phoney consultation and the NECs vote have been presented by a helpful media as the turning point in the campaign.

It must be remembered that in what was heralded as the biggest ever consultation within a political party resulted in a mere 1.5% of individual members indicating that they wished to make Clause IV 'more clear and concise'. Even many of these put pre-conditions about common ownership and full employment.

The newspapers have now dropped the issue as though 'it's all over bar the shouting'. Yet politically there is still a lot to play for.

Public ownership is more popular than for decades. The new bulletin from Defend Clause 4 - Defend Socialism (DC4) highlights a recent survey of Labour Party members. 63% disagreed that "the production of goods and services are best left to the free market". A Gallup poll in January asked voters if they broadly agreed with Clause 4. 37% said "yes" - a greater proportion than voted Labour at the last general election!

Only 28% said "no".

On figures like that it is hard to see how the campaign to defend the Clause could possible fail, yet Blair has begun to turn the tide. Whilst it is not inevitable that Blair will win - it is the most likely outcome. Why?

Vote loser?

A lot of people, particularly in the CLPs, will reluctantly vote for something they do not believe in. They think that this will help deliver a Labour government - a defeat for Blair might be seen as a divisive vote loser. This would be a big mistake. The Tory agenda really is not a vote winner presently. For Labour to constitutionally enshrine support for capitalism would draw the political agenda rightwards. This would open the door to further shifts to the right - particularly a challenge to the Union link.

The campaign must be waged right up to the wire. There is still a big fight to be had. In the CLPs, many of which are conducting OMOV ballots, we must ensure that DC4's material is distributed. The membership must see both sides of the argument.

Unions

In the Trade Unions the situation is not so unfavourable. The TGWU, RMT, ASLEF, UCATT, GPMU, FBV, NUM and the Bakers are all likely to vote for retention.

UNISON will now hold a special 'Affiliated Political



GMB chief John Edmonds, seen here speaking at a 'Tribune' conference, is backing Blair's Clause.

Fund' conference on April 13. This body includes regional delegates. Many regional APFs have voted for retention. The UNISON executive has insisted that re-nationalisation of the utilities must be included in any new clause.

MSFs conference delegates will decide their vote. Their President has pledged that in chairing the delegation meeting, he will advise that the union's policy is to support Clause IV and this should

be followed. The new communications union are holding a members ballot this month. USDAW holds its conference a week before the Special Conference.

The outcome on April 29 will be heavily determined by procedures. We must oppose delegates being forced into a straight jacket with only the option of voting for or against the Blair clause. Clause IV defenders must argue for a democratic conference procedure with the right to move amendments. Moves to refer back Blair's proposal should be supported.

Despite the present defensive state of the movement, DC4 has forced the biggest policy debate within the Labour Party for years. This has greatly reshaped and repoliticised the left in the CLPs and especially the unions. Whilst we are beginning to see the early stages of the new wave of struggles, particularly around the NHS and education, it is very important that these gains are consolidated.

These latest attacks will do nothing to encourage black membership and can only serve to fan the flames of racism both inside and outside the Party.

event to map out a fight on key issues - full employment, the defence of the welfare state, public ownership, minimum wage - to be fought for between now and the election.

This would begin to prepare for the battles which are to come under a Labour government.

Of course a Blair victory at the conference would be a serious defeat. Blair wants to turn Labour into a left of centre capitalist party which would maintain some links with the union leaders, purely to ensure they deliver the working class vote. The existing structured relationship with the unions would be removed.

Losing Clause IV would be the loss of a battle - not the war. Blair wants to remove the Clause to clear the decks for a Labour government's attacks on the working class. The left should use the political momentum which the campaign has developed, to prepare the fightback.

Conference

For this reason *Socialist Outlook* is strongly in favour of a conference, before the summer holidays, of all Clause IV defenders. This is currently being discussed within the campaign.

Such a conference should be as broad as possible. We must argue that key unions involved in the defence of the clause should call such an

'New Labour' spies on its members

Labour officers told to become DSS snoopers!

SIX NOTTINGHAM Inner City Labour Party wards have been denied the right to select their own candidates - that's 12 candidates in safe Labour seats!

The East Midlands Regional Executive have alleged membership irregularities. Their decision was endorsed by the NEC.

The first the branches knew about the decision was when an article appeared in the local press.

A number of the branches had already selected their candidates and had canvassing prepara-

tions well underway.

It is no surprise that all of these wards are in areas comprising of large afro-caribbean and asian communities with significant black Labour Party membership.

It is also no surprise that these impositions follow hard on the heels of the expulsion of leading black activist Hassan Ahmed.

The membership secretary of Nottingham East started the whole process off when he discovered that there was a large number of reduced rate members in the Inner City.

The fact that all the wards are in areas of very

high unemployment seems to have escaped his notice!

All the wards in the constituency were told to check the status of their unemployed members, with branch officers being asked to behave like DSS Snoopers!

When asked how they should check their members unemployed status, one DLP official suggested that people be asked to explain "what they do during the day!"

The allegation of membership irregularities appears to be a smokescreen to disguise the real purpose behind the impositions: to ensure that left

DAY SCHOOL
Socialism, Social
Democracy &
REVOLUTION
 Saturday May 13, North London
 See page 15

CLAUSE FOUR FIGHT

Labour Women's Conference A defeat that settles nothing

By our
correspondent

TO READ the *Guardian* might make you believe that all is over on the Clause Four fight bar the shouting: but the truth, as so often with the *Guardian*, was different.

According to their report, the first set-piece conference since the publication of the lengthy new Aims & Values clause apparently saw the unions vote 82% for Blair.

In fact most large unions did not vote at all, but abstained. The 82% relates only to the unions which did cast a vote. On the sidelines were such major players as the TGWU, UNISON, GMB, GPMU and MSF, none of which have yet decided a policy on the new clause.

And although Blair's vote predictably included the hard-right AEEU, it also included the divided Communications Workers Union, whose delegation spent much of the conference in acrimonious debate after being instructed by their general secretary to vote for the new Clause. In fact both unions now merged into the CWU had previous policy of defending Clause Four.

In fact there was strong



UNISON must vote against market values

support for Clause Four from a determined element at Women's Conference. Out of 500-600 delegates, 50-60 attended a Defend Clause Four fringe meeting, while others equally committed to the Clause made up a good number at the rival fringe meeting called simultaneously on the new Aims and Values statement.

Throughout the conference delegates also voted for resolutions which fly in the face of Tony Blair's re-assertion of market values. Resolutions calling for the renationalisation of the railways and the scrapping of Compulsory Competitive Tendering were combined

with opposition to the opting out of schools like the one to which Blair so ostentatiously chose to send his son.

Even at this late stage Blair's supporters continue to misrepresent the new statement. Clare Short actually claimed that it means full employment: perhaps she should try to convince Tony Blair of that!

In fact what Women's Conference shows is that far from being done and dusted, there is still much to play for in the Clause Four fight. Key unions have yet to decide: they could yet tip the balance at the Special Conference on April 29.

Canadians spark row over net profits

By Bala Kumar

HALIBUT have been the most unlikely cause of a diplomatic war between Canada and Europe since the days of the British Empire.

But the commandeering of a Spanish fishing trawler off its territorial waters and threats to prevent other Spanish ships from fishing in the area threatens to awaken an animosity long buried.

At the heart of this latest incident is the depletion of fish, and the increasing competition among fishing na-

tions. Whereas in 1938 the world fish catch was 15 million tonnes and in 1978 64 million tonnes, by 2000 it is estimated to reach 100 million tonnes.

This phenomenal rise is related to the advances in fishing technologies, particularly on the giant commercial trawlers.

20 000 jobs in Newfoundland alone have already gone and the Canadian government spends C\$400 million annually on those made unemployed.

Part of the problem is that the nets used to catch fish are wasteful and often dangerous.

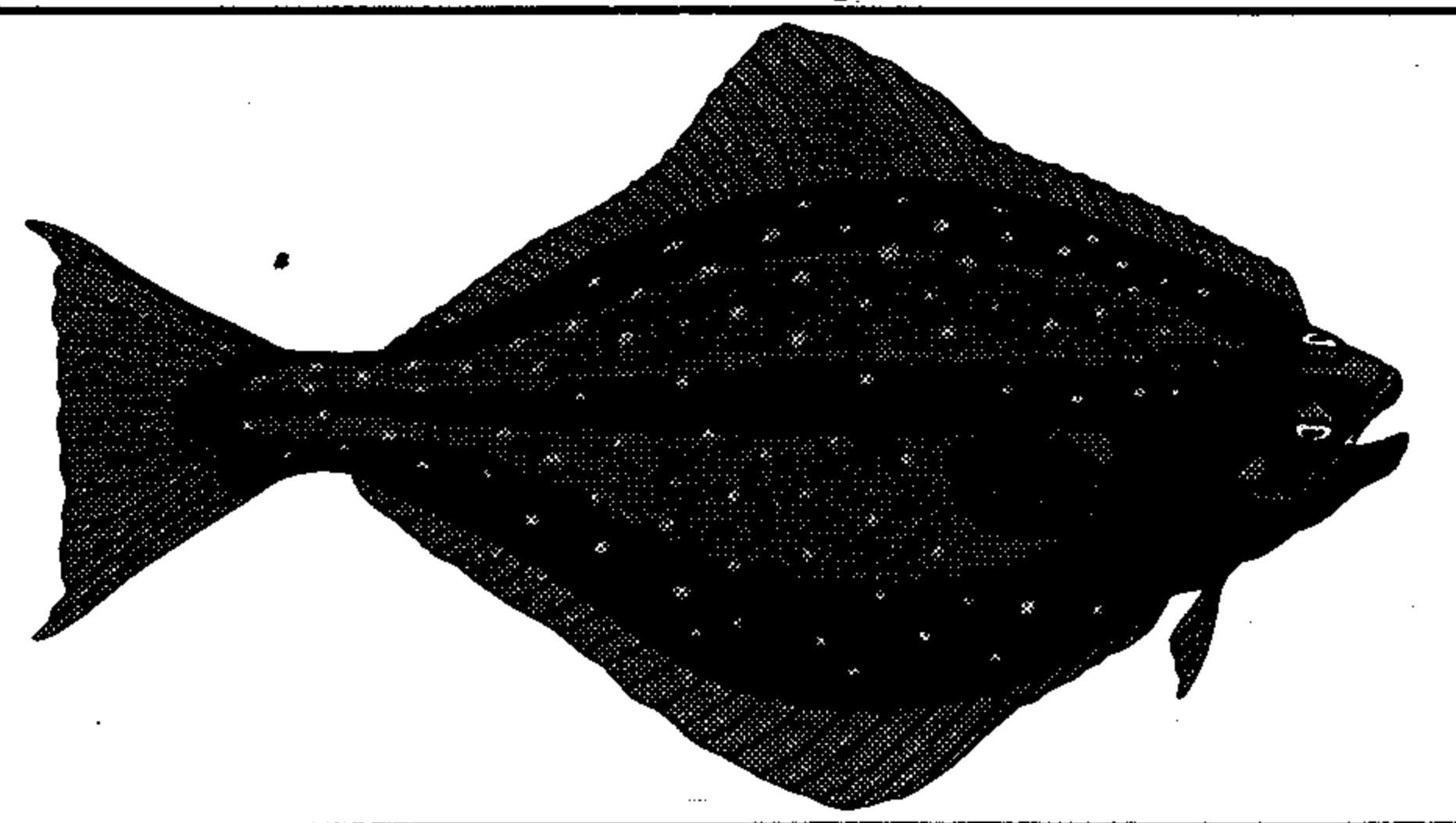
The nets are often 30 miles wide and are held between two or more ships. As they are not permeable, they catch and kill everything in their way - including unwanted marine life and young fish before they can mature and breed.

As the nets are not biodegradable, when cut loose they can drift along trapping larger marine animals like dolphins or entangling themselves in vessels.

Fishing on the high seas is monopolised by big business which squeezes out individual fishermen and threatens the survival of fishing communities.

The people who rely on fish for their protein intake are generally poor. As fish become scarce and as East Asian trawler companies catch for western and domestic markets, fish becomes unavailable and unaffordable to many in the Third World.

This is of more long-term consequence than the present episode.



No plaise for us? A young halibut

What we think

Portillo's vision of sweatshop Europe

IT'S NOT TRUE that Tory Euro-sceptics are opposed to any European link-up.

They have their dream of a single Europe market in which capital is free to roam in search of cheap labour, where welfare spending is forced down to the barest minimum, and where wages are forced down to the lowest possible level.

They have done their best at home to reduce British workers to the paupers of Europe, and now oppose any proposals that might support or improve pay and conditions in Europe.

In pursuit of this vision of a 'Europe without benefits', hard right Employment Secretary Michael Portillo has now formed a bizarre alliance for low pay with Irish and Portuguese opposite numbers.

Their common objective is to block an EU directive that would prevent foreign building workers undercutting local pay and conditions in member states.

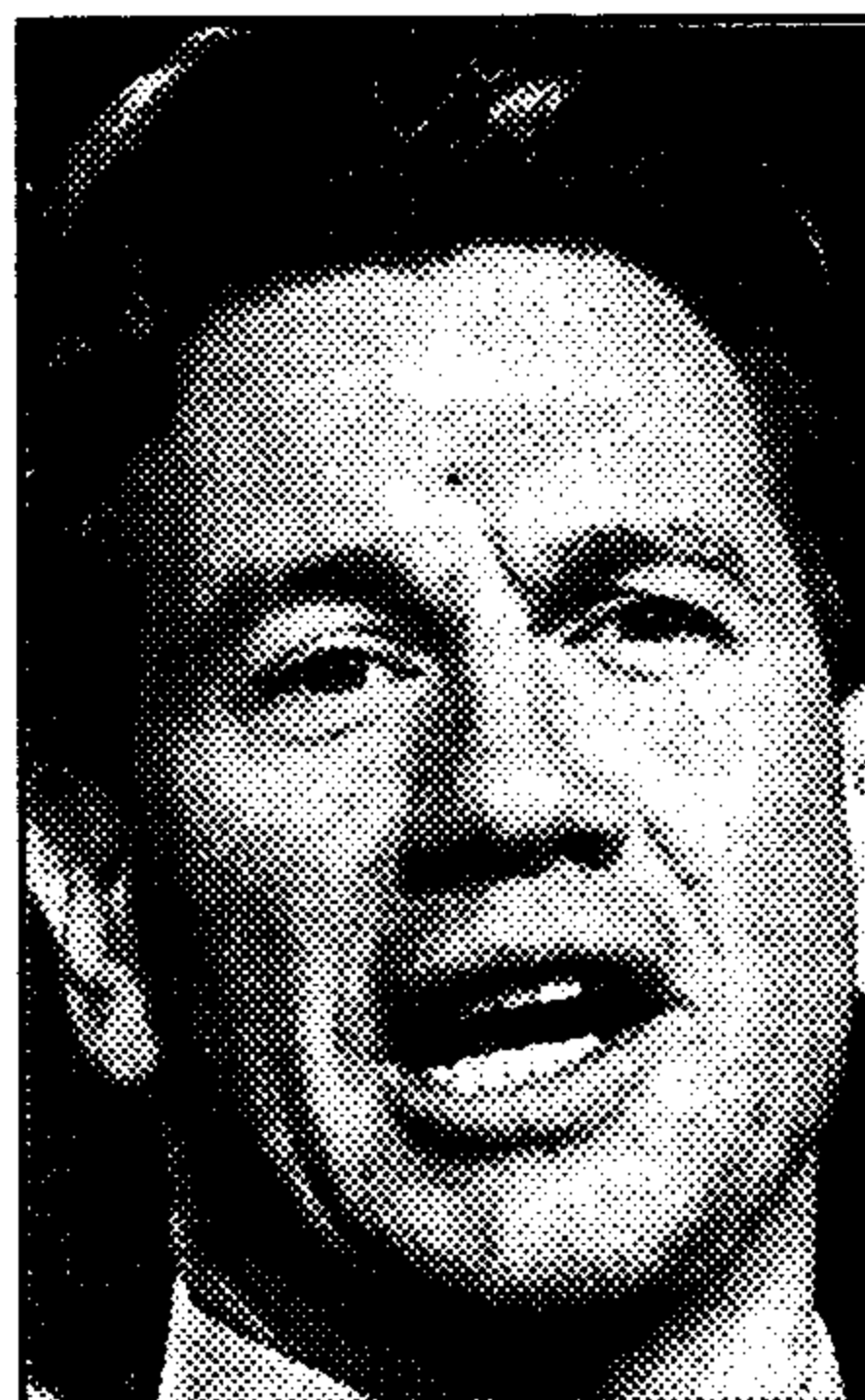
The directive is strongly supported by France, Belgium and the Netherlands where national laws lay down that local pay rates should apply to outside labour from day one, and by Germany, Sweden and Austria, where prevailing wages are high.

At the same meeting, Portillo also rejected proposals to insert a social clause in EU international agreements that would require countries trading with member states to recognise trade unions - and ban child labour.

Although the Euro-row has been shelved until June - after the French elections - Portillo's stubborn stance underlines the Tory commitment to low pay, which has found such a weak response from the trade union and Labour leaders.

All of the figures show the extent to which the relentless Tory onslaught on pay and social benefits has thrown millions into poverty.

More than a million people in work in Britain are earning less than £2.50 an hour. A third of a million are on less than £1.50 an hour. Cheap-skate employers exploiting this sweated labour are being subsidised by the Tories to the tune of £2.5 billion a year in top-up benefits for the lowest-



Wage-cutter Portillo

paid.

Poverty in Teesside is so widespread that councils are pumping cash into providing free school breakfasts to counter malnutrition among children. 3.7 million children are now living in families dependent on skid-row state benefits or receiving income below benefit levels.

Yet Labour leaders, their eyes firmly on the votes of the prosperous middle class, have been frantically back-peddling from any specific commitment to legislate a minimum wage of £4.15.

Now it seems the TUC, too, is in retreat, and could offer a concession to Tony Blair by slashing back its target to just £3.60.

Exactly what advantage this would offer to Labour's timid front bench is not clear, since the Tories and hard-line employers will oppose any minimum wage on principle, claiming that if employers cannot hire workers for next to nothing they may not hire them at all.

Yet in Germany and other European countries booming capitalist enterprises pay far higher average wages than in Britain's crumbling industries.

Unlike the British unions, whose half-hearted NHS lunch-time protest on March 30 spelled out a refusal to mount a serious fight on pay, European workers are demonstrating increased confidence in their wage demands.

German engineering workers led the way, with the 4 million members of the IG-Metall union making important gains from a 12-day selective stoppage backed up by the threat of national action. Other big German unions are now in the queue for pay increases of up to 6 percent.

In France, too, massive pay strikes last week halted planes, trains, and Paris bus and Metro services as well as Renault car plants.

British workers, however are saddled with a deadly combination of a class-conscious government, and a cowardly, ineffective union leadership.

As Portillo sets his sights on replacing the Social Chapter with a Cowboy's Charter, reducing pay to sweatshop levels across Europe, the British rail unions, health unions and others are debating whether or not to fight for a pay increase that matches inflation.

With the Tories so weak and isolated, a serious fight now could deal them a decisive blow - and that would be a huge step forward for workers throughout Europe.



On the right lines: striking German rail workers

EDITORIAL

Pay insult triggers wide lunch-time protests

NHS: that was the campaign, that was!

By Harry Sloan

TENS OF thousands of health workers turned out at an estimated 420 lunch-time protest rallies and pickets outside hospitals on March 31.

But the danger is that unless a big campaign is mounted in UNISON and other health unions to demand more substantial industrial action, that show of anger will be the end rather than the beginning of any real fight.

Originally called by nursing unions in protest at their insulting 1 percent pay award from the review body, the limited action was joined by almost all sections of health workers, who have now rejected similarly inadequate increases.

The Tory bid to confuse and buy off some sections with the announcement that up to 2 percent more could be negotiated locally with Trusts has not convinced many health workers.

They know that if they do this they are destroying their national pay agreement, and that any cash conceded this year by Trust bosses may well be taken away again next year.



Health unions should have gone all out to build the mood for strike action

In any even many Trusts are struggling financially and unwilling to fork out the additional money unless job-cutting strings are attached.

With so little on offer, it would have seemed that the

unions should have gone all out to build the mood for strike action on a decent pay claim. Instead there have been weeks of inaction, and discussion has been reduced to fighting for the 'full 3 per-

cent' - hardly the way to galvanise the troops.

For national union leaders terrified of calling any real action, the 'Out to Lunch' protest was an ideal device.

If nobody turned out, they

could claim that there was no mood for a fight. But if thousands did respond, then unlike a one-day strike, bureaucrats could still argue that this limited action was as far as many were prepared to go.

In the event, the response was respectable, but patchy. The low demands and low-key action failed to win any real enthusiasm among staff, although those who did turn out on the day won the predictable warm support from the general public, with horns tooting in all directions.

In some hospitals unions left the running to the no-strike Royal College of Nursing. In others union members responded strongly, holding militant meetings and asking what comes next.

'Consultation'

UNISON the biggest NHS union, had announced that there would be a six-week 'consultation' on whether to take any further action.

It is quite clear that top leaders are desperately hoping that in this period the RCN will drop its pretence of opposition, allowing UNISON to follow them into surrender.

To combat this UNISON activists, and other health trade unionists must demand branch meetings to discuss the next steps and send resolutions to regional councils and health group bodies and officials demanding a mobilisation for industrial action.

Momentum builds behind Chelmsford busworkers

By Roger Welch

Over a thousand people marched through Chelmsford on Saturday March 25 in solidarity with the sacked 105 busworkers.

It would have been even bigger if the TGWU leadership had not clashed the demo with the big FACE event.

Over a hundred people attended a public meeting addressed by Paul Foot organised by the strike committee in the continuing campaign for reinstatement.

Solidarity

More marches and pickets must be called by the busworkers with the aim of getting other trades unionists to Chelmsford so that we have the numbers to close down the Eastern National depot.

It is now essential that the sacked workers take the running of the dispute into their

own hands. There is a very real danger that the free bus service - useful tactic though it is - is becoming an end in itself.

The key remains solidarity action throughout Badgerline and the bus industry. The 105 must continue to speak di-

rectly to other busworkers to secure support and to pressurise the TGWU leadership into giving official backing.

Messages of support, requests for speakers and donations can be sent to: Roger Welch, Chelmsford

TUC, 87 Milday Road, Chelmsford, Essex CM2 0DR. Telephone: 0245 263727

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

NUJ march challenges Sheffield Star union busters

By an NUJ member

The successful NUJ Sheffield demonstration on April 1 is a victory for the left's campaign to turn the union outwards.

Marking the first anniversary of the derecognition at the Sheffield Star the rally was addressed by union rights campaigners, including Arthur Scargill.

The Sheffield attack was a crude attempt to crush collective organisation in the wake of protests over health and safety. The management have victimised

Greg Challis and Julia Armstrong for continuing to hold chapel meetings.

The demo follows hot on the heels of the protest march outside the Murdoch plant after the sacking of Today sub Maria Hoyle.

The NUJ is making union rights its top priority as part of a growing willingness among activists to fight the anti-union laws.

The issue is fast becoming a key line of divide in the labour movement in the run-up to Labour's general election manifesto. This will give us opportunities to gain an even bigger hearing than the Fight for the Right to Strike campaign.

Detainees victory

By Bill MacKeith

Two of the hunger strikers held at Campsfield have been released.

Sita Kamara was released from the beehive detention centre on March 11 after four weeks on hunger strike.

On March 24 Anne-Marie Saman, also from the Ivory Coast, was released from Oxford's Churchill Hospital, where she had been moved in her sixth week of hunger strike - five days after her appeal had been turned down. The British government turned down 100 per cent of asylum applications from Ivorian refugees in 1994.

Although both women have gained only "temporary admission status" theirs is a huge success. The Ivory Relief Action Group celebrated at a meeting of over 200 Ivorian refugees and supporters at Lambeth Town Hall. The discussion addressed the collaboration of the British and French governments with arms exporters and big business in keeping the Ivory Coast dictatorship in place.

There is an increase in racism in the press and among political parties. Charles Waddle's resignation has set the tone. Jack Straw feels free to talk about "innumerable immigrants".

Mike Rahman of the National Union of Refugee Organisations predicts mass deportations of refugees and so-called - illegal immigrants.

These moves can be stopped.

Local Labour Parties must vociferously reject Jack Straw's twisted version of reality. We must also step up campaigning and our direct material support for detainees - visits, phonecards, personal necessities etc.

The Haslar Stop the Detentions Campaign has backed calls for a National Day of Action at all detention centres and prisons holding immigration detainees on Saturday June 24. Phone 0705 832260 for details.

• The Campaign To Close Campsfield can be contacted at: 111 Magdalen Road, Oxford. Phone: 01865 724452; 01865 726804.

School cuts: FACE steps up the fight

A June conference – and another demonstration in the autumn – are among the next steps being planned by the Fight Against Cuts in Education (FACE) campaign after its successful March 25 demonstration. Socialist Outlook spoke to FACE National Chair SUE LISTER.

SO: YOU must have been very pleased with the turn-out in London on March 25?

SL: Yes, it was a tremendous day for the campaign, to turn out between 15-20,000 people on a national march just six weeks or so after FACE was set up.

There were coachloads from all over the country, from Newcastle to the West country – even some from cities where there are no education cuts this year.

I was especially pleased that we got over 1,000 people from Warwickshire, where FACE was first

set up, and another 1,000 from Oxfordshire, where I'm a chair of governors and where the NUT called the first one-day strike.

It was good to have Ben Elton on the platform.

But on the day the precise numbers and personalities didn't matter quite so much as the enormous amount of media coverage that we got for the issue in the run-up to the march – we were on every national radio and television network, putting the arguments against these cuts.

SO: You seem to have got the Tories pretty much on the run.

SL: Yes, there were some good clashes on *Newsnight* and on the radio. It's interesting that we had summed up the campaign as 'the rise of middle England', and it seems that now the Tory party is going out to try to win them back.

We argued that the education cuts were being imposed by the government to finance tax cuts, and now the press is full of suggestions for cutting taxes to win the next general election.

I think the strength of our campaign in reaching wide layers of what were formerly Tory voters suggests that John Major has got it wrong this time, but we have to keep up the pressure, keep the issue in the headlines, so people

can't forget that their kids' schooling is being cut in order to buy a few extra votes.

SO: Has there been any feedback since the march?

SL: Yes, it seems that in many areas people who came on the demonstration have gone back and begun building new FACE groups where we didn't have them, or planning new activities.

The phone keeps ringing with requests for us to send speakers. There is no sign that the campaign is dying down.

SO: It must be hard to sustain the momentum, with the new financial year having started, and the cuts beginning to take effect.

SL: The anger is still there. And many councils are already warning that there will be more cuts next year. People want to fight on.

In some areas it is a question of exposing the cuts that are being imposed, the numbers of teachers to be lost. In others it is easier to keep up the pressure, because FACE



groups can build support for schools where governors have set deficit budgets (which we now call 'needs budgets') and there is the question of whether or not councils will intervene.

SO: So what is FACE planning nationally?

SL: Firstly we are working to consolidate our links with some of the organisations that have supported us, and hopefully build better links with the teaching unions which have supported us locally but not nationally.

I will be speaking for FACE at an STA fringe meeting at NUT Conference.

We will also be producing some FACE publicity, to ensure that our name cannot be used by small groups claiming to speak on our behalf.

But we are also building for a

national conference, to be held in Coventry on June 10. We want this to be very broad, reflecting the base of the campaign.

And we want to organise another demonstration in September, as the process of preparing a new round of cuts gets under way.

But perhaps most urgent of all is to raise some money to cover the costs of the campaign. Some of these are at present being underwritten by generous NUT branches, but we have to pay some back.

A fund-raising benefit is being planned, but we do need to urge local FACE groups and anyone that supports us to send a donation.

■ Contact FACE c/o St Giles County Middle School, Hayes Lane, Exhall, Coventry CV7 9NS. Phone 0589-789104.

Day school fights East Midlands racism

THERE ARE worrying signs in the East Midlands that the political vacuum created by the Labour Party's increasingly right wing agenda is being filled by racism.

The Tories won a by-election in Keith Vaz's Leicester East constituency standing on a "No Mosques or Temples here" ticket.

The BNP has not been idle either – they are to stand a candidate in Kirkby. They have leafleted inner city areas of Leicester, Nottingham and Derby as well as at football grounds. There are regular Blood and Honour gigs in the Notts and Leics areas.

Chased out

In Loughborough they chased the SWP out of a town centre pub. There is a unit of Skrewdriver Security in the area as well as a Nazi Skinzine and Nazi band English Rose in nearby Coalville

The local Asian community, concerned at the increasing level of racist attacks have been told by the police that there is no organised presence of racists and fascists in the area!

Work around the issue of travellers rights and provision of sites for travellers has been important for anti-racist activists in Leics.

The BNP and the Tories have been active in campaigning against a site in Thurstaston. They have drawn in a motley crew of outraged residents and preservationists arguing a "green" case for opposing sites.

The local Labour Council claims the best reason for the site is the increased police powers given to evicting travellers from unofficial sites. Both sides are keen to use racist arguments.

Both Leics and Notts Anti Fascist Alliance have had their resources stretched to breaking point in trying to respond to racist and fascist activities. The Labour movement has got to organise now to prevent the further growth of racism and fascism.

The Leicestershire Anti Fascist Alliance has organised a dayschool on fighting racism and fascism in the workplace and the community, on **April 22** at the **Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate, Leicester**. The school is especially designed for trade union activists.

Left must fight do-nothing leadership NUT leaders face to FACE in witch-hunt 'scandal'

By Roy Leach

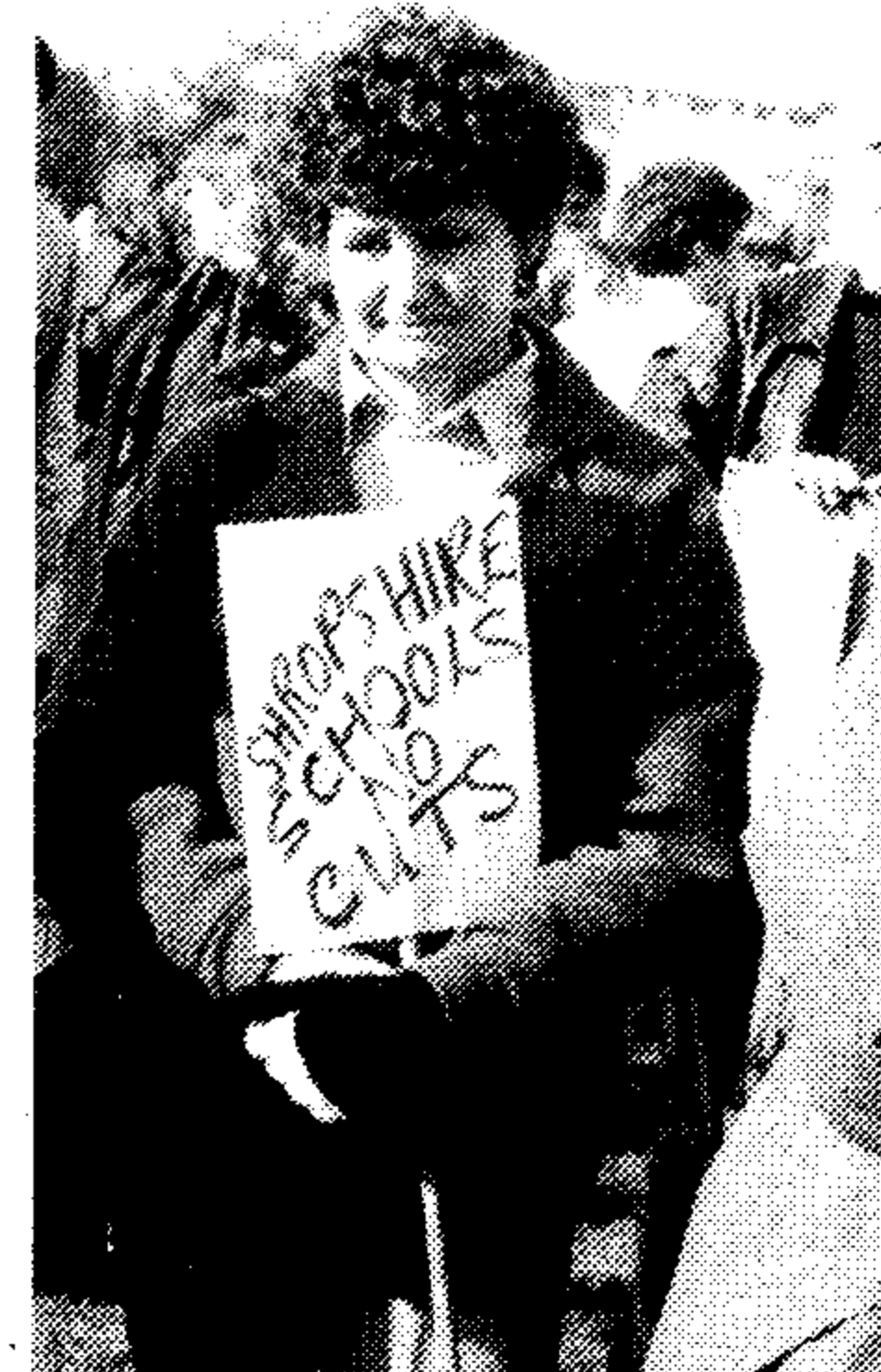
THE NUT conference in Blackpool this Easter will meet against the backdrop of the massive underfunding crisis afflicting education.

Local Education Authorities are slashing school budgets, leading to thousands of teachers facing the sack. Isolated strikes by NUT Divisions (branches covering an LEA) – including Newcastle, Oxfordshire, Ealing, Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire and many others – have failed to stem the flood of job losses.

A national campaign is the only way to defeat the cuts, which emanate from the Tory government.

Motions and amendment at the conference from the Socialist Teachers' Alliance and the Campaign for a Democratic and Fighting Union seek to commit the NUT to launch such a campaign with a national one-day strike in the Summer.

This will be the central de-



bate at the conference. If the right-wing led Executive can fend off calls for national action there is a very real risk that the anger and confidence of teachers, reflected in a string of 'Yes' votes nationwide, will be dissipated and demoralisation will set in.

The issue of national action against the cuts will call into question the NUT's scandalous attitude towards FACE. 'Fight Against Cuts in Education'. NUT General Secretary Doug McAvoy has tried to characterise FACE as a front for the Socialist Work-

ers' Party.

The success of the FACE's national demonstration on March 25, and the massive support the campaign has received from parents, governors and NUT members, make it difficult for the leadership to maintain their opposition.

Demonstration

The left should seek to commit the NUT to support the next demonstration, planned for September. With official backing there could be hundreds of thousands on the streets of London.

Although the SATs boycott has been called off, it remains very much a live issue. The Executive try to hide their capitulation behind the fig leaf of having 'won' a review and continued opposition to league tables.

The problem for the union's right wing this that this puts the NUT in opposition to Labour's education policies, which are now practically indistinguishable from those of the Tories.

They are desperate to

ditch any reference to renewing the boycott if the review fails to meet the principles they outlined six months previously.

If the left avoids merely denouncing this sell out, which was endorsed three to one by the membership, it can win a majority for continuing an effective campaign against government education policies.

The simple faith of the leadership in the ability of the TUC and a 'high profile campaign' with no strategy to improve pay will produce a left-right split.

As usual they will bitterly oppose the alternative of linking up with other public sector unions in coordinated strike action.

It is essential the left links pay to the broader issue of education funding.

Even if the conference agrees to the sort of campaign that is needed to break the Tories public sector pay policy, the membership will need a lot of convincing that their pay won't be at the expense of other teachers' jobs.

EDUCATION CUTS

Health care: what a socialist policy could do

By John Lister,
London Health
Emergency

THE NEWS that rail privatisation has already cost the government £1 billion came in the same week as the publication of a report on the tragic death of the Bexley man who had to be flown to Leeds for a neurosurgery bed after a road accident.

As campaigners had warned, the report was a whitewash, aimed at blaming an individual consultant for the appalling shortage of acute and specialist hospital beds in the capital.

Indeed the report's argument is that there were, in fact, two Intensive Care Unit beds available, at the Royal Free Hospital.

But this effectively claims that just two beds are sufficient to serve the emergency needs of a population in excess of 12 million in the South East of England: in other words the biggest city in Europe has been reduced to the level that its hospitals could not cope with a serious car crash, let alone any larger disaster.

This is no accident. Under the Tories the NHS has been starved of cash and resources, with a rapid reduction both in the acute beds that handle emergencies and in long-stay beds for the elderly and the mentally ill.

The remaining psychiatric beds are under enormous pressure, while mental health community care schemes are hopelessly under resourced. Almost all long-term care of the frail elderly has now been

privatised, with thousands consigned to profit-making nursing homes and forced to pay for the privilege through means-tested charges.

And acute beds are now under increasing stress, as a sudden upsurge in emergency admissions, itself apparently a product of the market system and GP fund-holding, swamps hospitals across the country.

The £1 billion for the rail sell-off shows that there is cash to spare for projects the Tories think are important, while the NHS grinds into crisis.

A key difference in a socialist policy is to put health care near the top of the agenda for action rather than regard health spending as an obstacle to greater tax cuts.

A second difference is that socialists reject the argument that demand for health care is

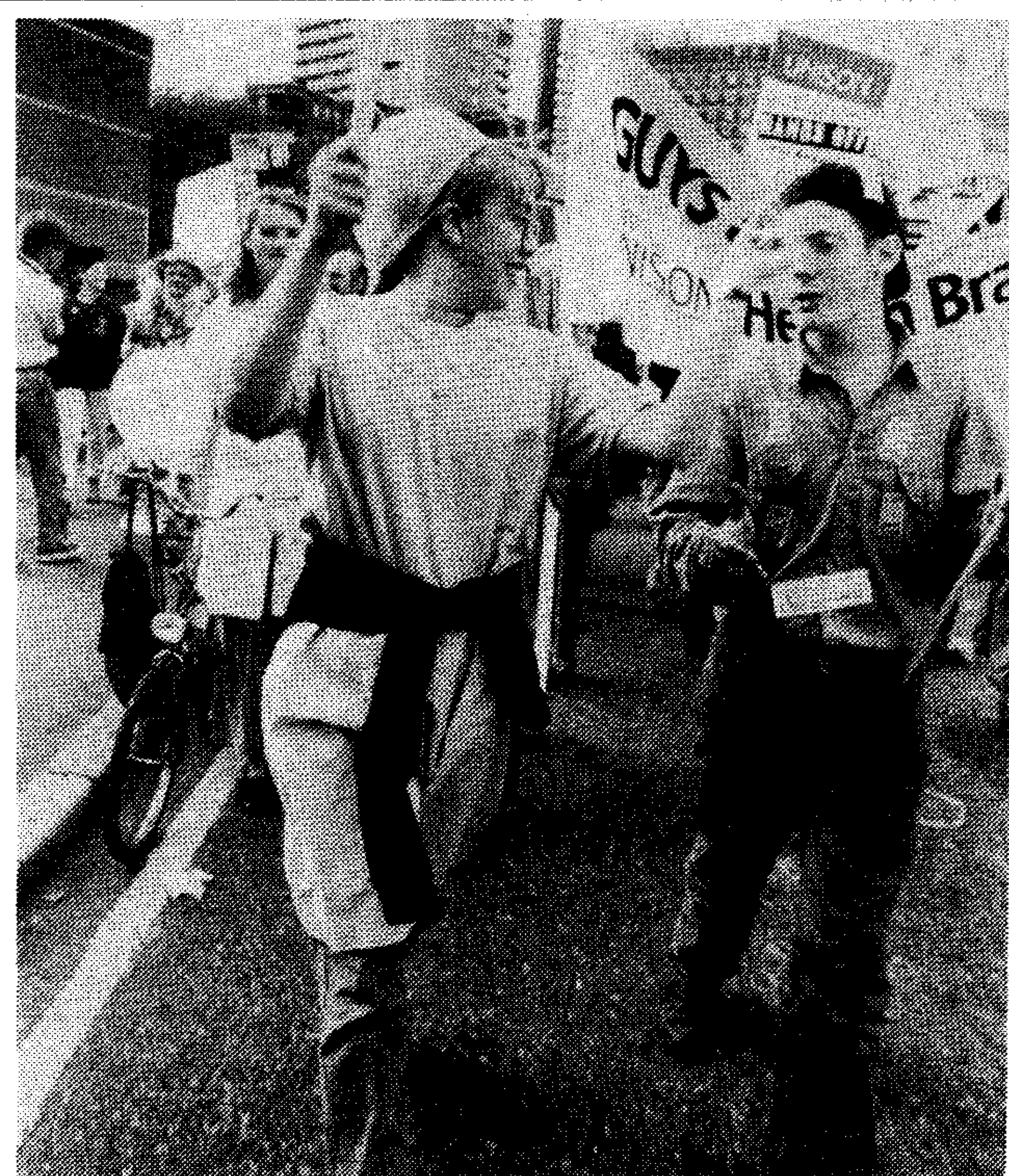
'infinite'. This always leads on to the obvious conclusion: imposing arbitrary limits on health spending, limits which reflect political priorities rather than the need for care.

A third difference is that socialists recognise the need for genuine collective provision of health care, rejecting charges for medicines or treatment.

Health promotion

Fourthly, instead of the Tory attempt to close hospitals by imposing utopian 'health promotion' schemes which have little impact on the most deprived and unhealthy sections of society, socialists recognise the need for broader social policies to improve health.

And fifth, instead of the Tory obsession with control-



ling health services through secretive quangos staffed by servile co-thinkers, socialists press for increased community involvement and control, with the scrapping of the market system with its Trusts, fund-holders and 'purchasing authorities', to be replaced by elected local health boards including health workers.

A completely new approach to health and health care is required.

While Major's Britain leaves millions eking out an existence in poor housing, on low incomes and pitiful benefits, a socialist health policy

would combine with policies for housing, for job creation, a minimum wage, and improved education. It was this combination in the post-war 'boom' years, rather than the establishment of the NHS, which helped increase life expectancy and eliminate the diseases of poverty.

In 1980 the Black Report made a series of recommendations for elementary health promotion, including free school milk and meals. The full package was costed then at no more than £3 billion a year: but the Report was ignored by the Tories. Had it

Self-activity key to fight for education

Don't leave schools policy to the state!

RICHARD HATCHER explains how a radical policy for education is the key to mobilising more active working class support.

WE KNOW – more or less – what we are against in education: against opting out, against cuts, against national tests and league tables.

And we have some idea of what we are *for*. But how do we get from one to the other?

There is a danger of a split between immediate demands in education, however militantly fought for, and more general longer-term goals. We tend to bridge the gap with a reflex implanted by half a century of the welfare state: 'let the state find the solution'.

But Karl Marx insisted that the workers' movement should place no confidence in the state's administration of education or any other social function. He argued for a different *strategic orientation* from the one we tend to adopt, one based on working class

self-activity.

The problem for us in education is that while there is quite a lot of militant activity by teachers, there is little by people outside education.

Even the most significant popular campaigns, such as those against schools opting out are limited to defensive demands, with no alternative programme beyond that for a well-funded comprehensive school system.

Equality

Even the campaign around racial and gender equality, the most important gain in education that the left has registered over the past twenty years failed to resolve the problem of the relationship to the state, and ended being swallowed up in municipal socialism or educational managerialism.

So how can working class and popular activity around education be developed?

The truth is that we have no blueprint for what an education in the interests of the working class would look like. We have some ideas, but they need to be tested and supplemented by teachers working with local communities.

This vision of democratic local experiment puts into ques-

tion a central tenet of the left in education: the principle of common universal provision.

Democratic self-activity means choice and diversity. Once parents, school students and local communities start developing their own ideas around education rather than relying on or deferring to the state, they won't all come up with the same answers, whether it concerns the curriculum or teaching methods or the way schools should be organised.

This is to be welcomed. It is quite utopian to believe that the massive failure and disaffection among working class students in secondary schools can be transformed without radical experiments in new forms of learning and teaching.

The danger that diversity and choice can be utilised for reactionary purposes is a very real one. But we can minimise this danger by a number of conditions.

● Firstly, market relationships must be replaced by new opportunities at school, LEA and national levels to strengthen popular influence (school forums, city-wide forums, rights for school students, and so on);

● Secondly, the state must

be pressured to play a role in setting a policy framework that would promote progressive developments and prohibit reactionary ones. This would include positive action against racial and gender discrimination, against selection, and so forth. These would set a framework of universal entitlements within which local variation would take place.

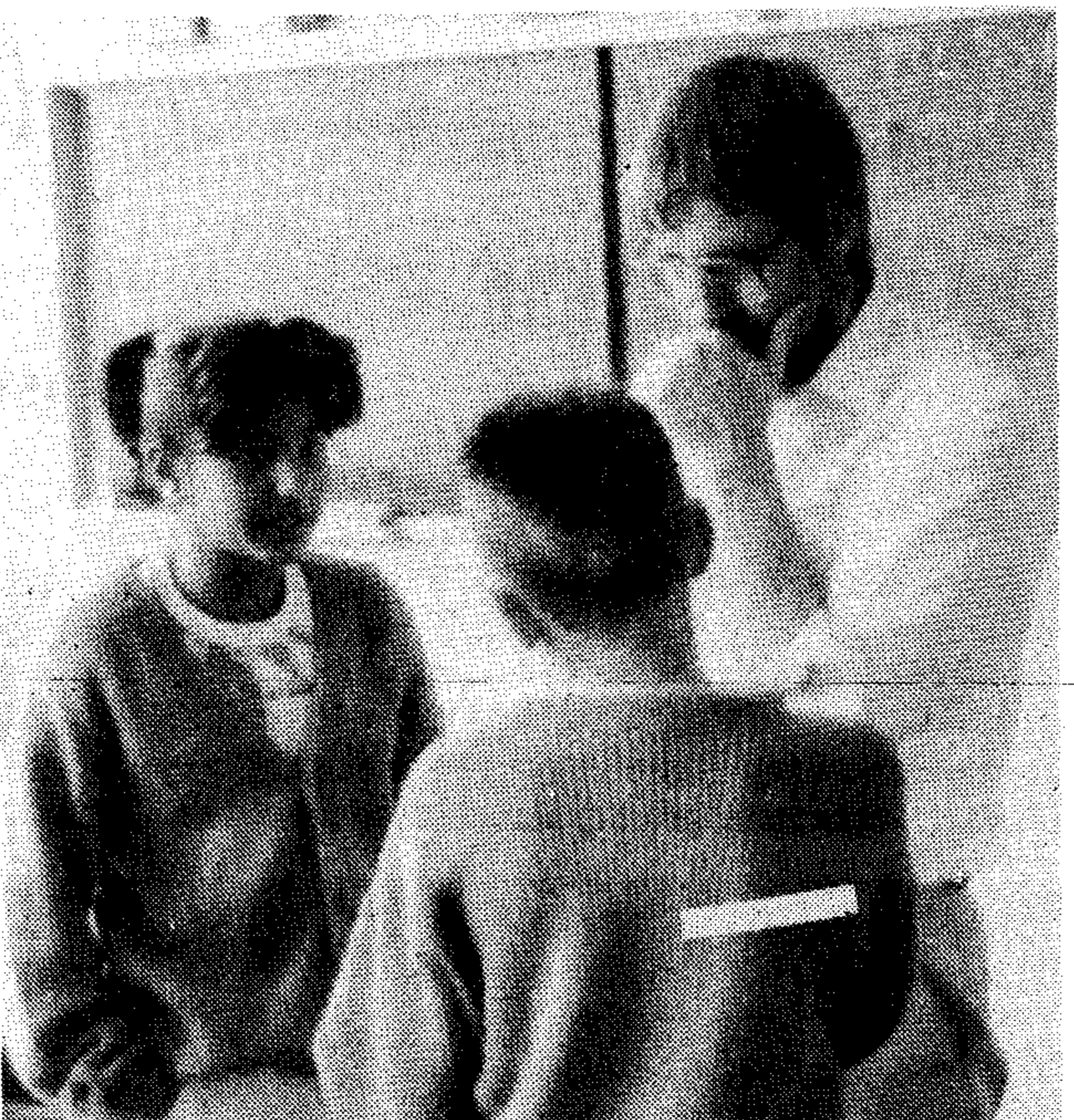
● Finally, and crucially, the bottom line is reliance on class struggle action, rather than the state, as the guarantor of educational progress.

As an example of local democracy and choice, a local partnership of schools could offer a range of specialisms as centres of expertise in media studies, or modern languages or science or sport, or whatever the community wanted.

Options

These would be available as options, for a proportion of the school week or term, to any students in the area. Each student would attend their 'base' school for part of the time for the common core of the curriculum and the specialist school for the rest.

If demand for one specialism outstripped supply, it would signal the need to ex-



pand a particular area of provision. If selection were necessary, it would be on a basis that did not increase social inequalities.

Three more developments would help radically to transform education through self-activity.

● The first is the explosive potential of information technology for self-managed learning, which allows the student much greater choice and undermines the role of the teacher and the gate-keeper of knowledge.

● The second is the status of the school student to increase self-management by school students, appropriate to their age, covering both their own learning and their rights as 'citizens' of the school.

If this is not achieved, there is a danger of reinforcing a dis-

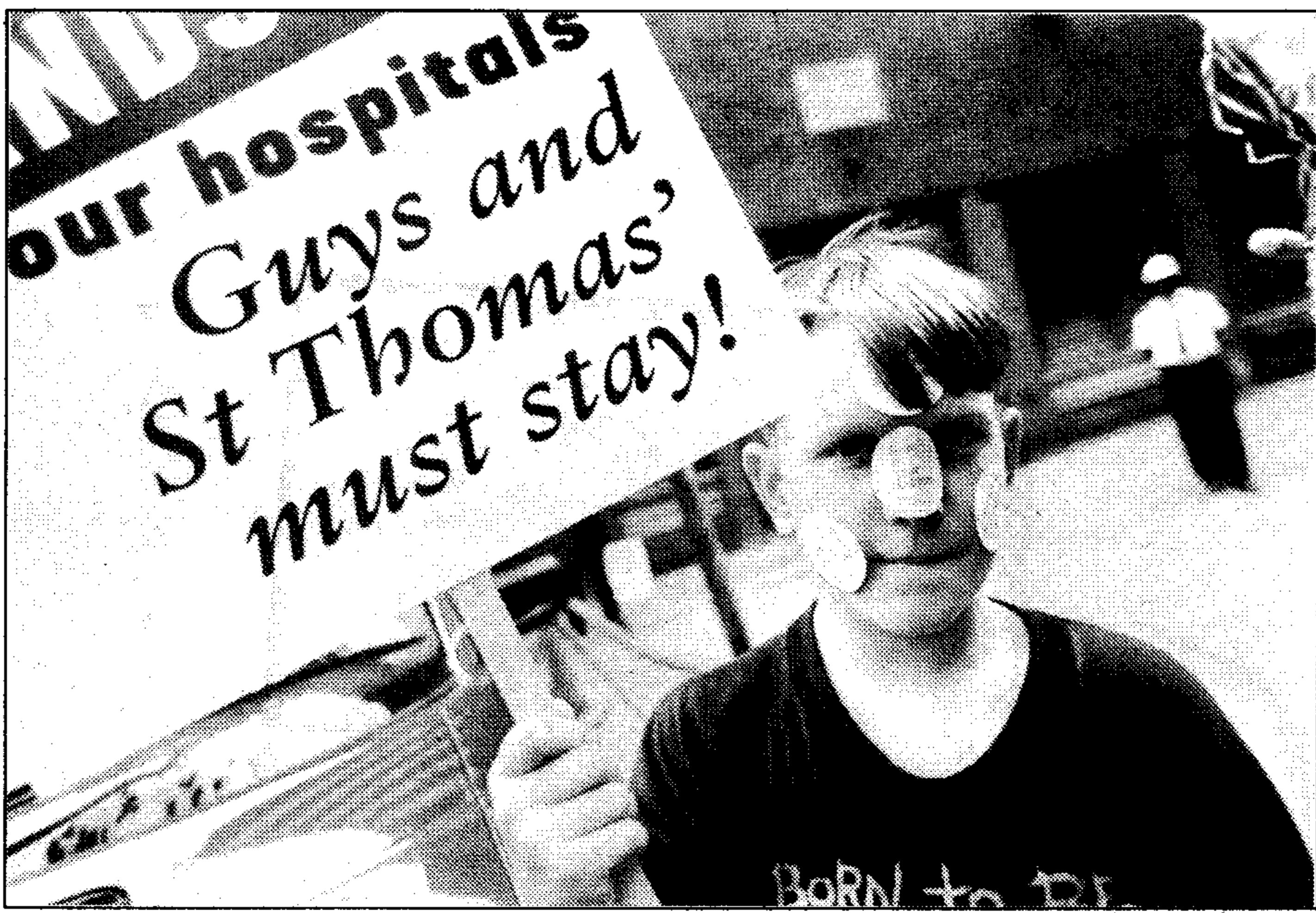
astrously damaging anti-school culture among many students, who feel that at least at work they won't be 'treated like children'.

● The third development is breaking down the isolation of the school from the rest of society. The more a school opens itself up to society, the more it motivates students.

Only a radical vision of this sort can begin to change the relationship of working class school students to their families and communities, to knowledge, which is the core of the problem, and creating a new popular culture about education in the working class, within which more specifically socialist demands can take root.

[This article is adapted from a longer feature in *Socialist Teacher* no 57, published by the Socialist Teachers Alliance]

WELFARE STATE



Sensible, affordable, popular: so why won't Labour argue for a socialist health policy?

squeeze out the costly and inefficient private sector.

Part-time contracts for hospital consultants should be ended, promoting junior doctors to take the place of any who resign in protest. Medical training should be expanded to draw in new layers of younger doctors to work as GPs.

Of course money alone won't solve everything that's wrong with today's NHS. But without extra money no amount of structural reform will put things right.

A swift injection of cash – say £2-3 billion – would get the system rolling and wipe out the waiting list. A smaller annual increase in spending would enable a much higher level of service to be sustained.

These sums of money are not prohibitive. They would leave British health services still receiving a smaller share of national wealth than those in many other advanced countries.

Hundreds of millions could actually be recouped by scrapping the bureaucratic monstrosity of the NHS internal market.

It all makes perfect sense. It's affordable. It's popular.

So why won't Labour's front bench campaign for a socialist health policy?



Blast from the past? Students marching for grants

Scandal of NUS grants retreat

By Rod Marshall

THE NATIONAL Union of Students was brought into line with Blairism by its right-wing leadership last week.

Labour, which has the leadership of NUS for over a decade, won the NUS conference to a policy of supporting 'alternative methods' of funding access to Higher Education. They reject any re-

turn to the previous right of students to a living grant and housing benefit.

This is a great leap backwards for the NUS, much applauded by the party leadership and the *Guardian*.

Many Labour Student leaders favour the introduction of a Graduate Tax. This would further limit the access working people have to Higher Education and turn students away from 'non-vocational' courses.

been implemented, Britain's hospitals and GP surgeries would be under less pressure today.

A serious health policy would begin by injecting an extra £1 billion to stabilise the NHS and prevent further decline, while steps were taken to measure the real levels of need for various forms of health care.

This should include treating the 1 million plus people currently on waiting lists, and the countless thousands waiting for outpatient appointments to put them on waiting lists.

It should also include the resourcing of community-based care for the frail elderly and people with mental illness.

A crash programme to treat all those waiting should be prepared. Other health services around the world function without waiting lists: a socialist system should do the same in Britain.

A proper costing of these services and the resources needed to provide them should run alongside an inventory of the hospitals and other building stock currently held by the NHS, to draw up

an action plan for work to bring them up to modern standards.

All of these items can be costed: and of course the work of restoring the fabric and running of our NHS would create thousands of useful jobs across the whole country.

With plans established to meet waiting lists, and hospitals equipped to deal with daily pressures, the way would be opened up to give patients for the first time a right to treatment.

This type of properly-resourced, comprehensive health service would rapidly

Tory pensions rip off: a socialist answer

By Terry Smith

PENSIONERS have been battling against VAT on fuel and defence of their travel concessions: but the abiding problem which must be confronted is the pitiful and declining level of the state pension, which has been slashed to the bone in sixteen years of Tory rule.

Britain spends a smaller proportion of national income on pensions than most member states of the European Union. Pension costs amounted to 9.6 percent of GDP in Britain, about the same as Greece, but well below France (12.7%) Belgium (12%) and Germany (11.7%).

Only Portugal and Ireland (6.9% and 7.1%) spend less on pensions than Britain.

The actual value of the basic state pension has been dwindling as the Tories sought ways of cutting public spending and forcing people of working age to fork out large sums to private 'personal pension' schemes.

In the 1970s the single person's pension was 20 percent of average male industrial earnings. By the early 1990s it had dropped to just 15 percent, and if present policies are unchanged it will reduce to just 9 percent in 2020 and 6 percent in 2040.

A major factor in this decline has been Thatcher's decision in 1980 to break the link between pensions and earnings: the money saved by this is currently running at £10 billion a year, while ever greater numbers of pensioners are falling into dire poverty

and having to apply for income support.

Yet the irony is that while the pensions budget has been slashed back, Britain is among the least vulnerable of all the European countries to the 'demographic time bomb', in which the population contains a declining proportion of people of working age compared with numbers of pensioners.

There is clearly plenty of cash in the economy: it's just that the Tories have given most of it to the rich, and Labour lacks the courage to grab it from them.

The Tory attack on state pensions served a three-fold purpose: to cut state spending, to boost private pension firms, and to shackle workers to company pension plans.

In fact, while insecurity has grown, with no section of workers apparently immune, there is little evidence that the private sector can compensate for the growing gaps in collective state pension provision.

Savings

The amount of savings required to finance a decent retirement pension through a 'personal pension' is extortionate, meaning that only the best-paid workers could even hope to finance their own retirement.

But company schemes are also in rapid decline, as firms drive towards increasing casualisation of their workforce and shrink from the costs

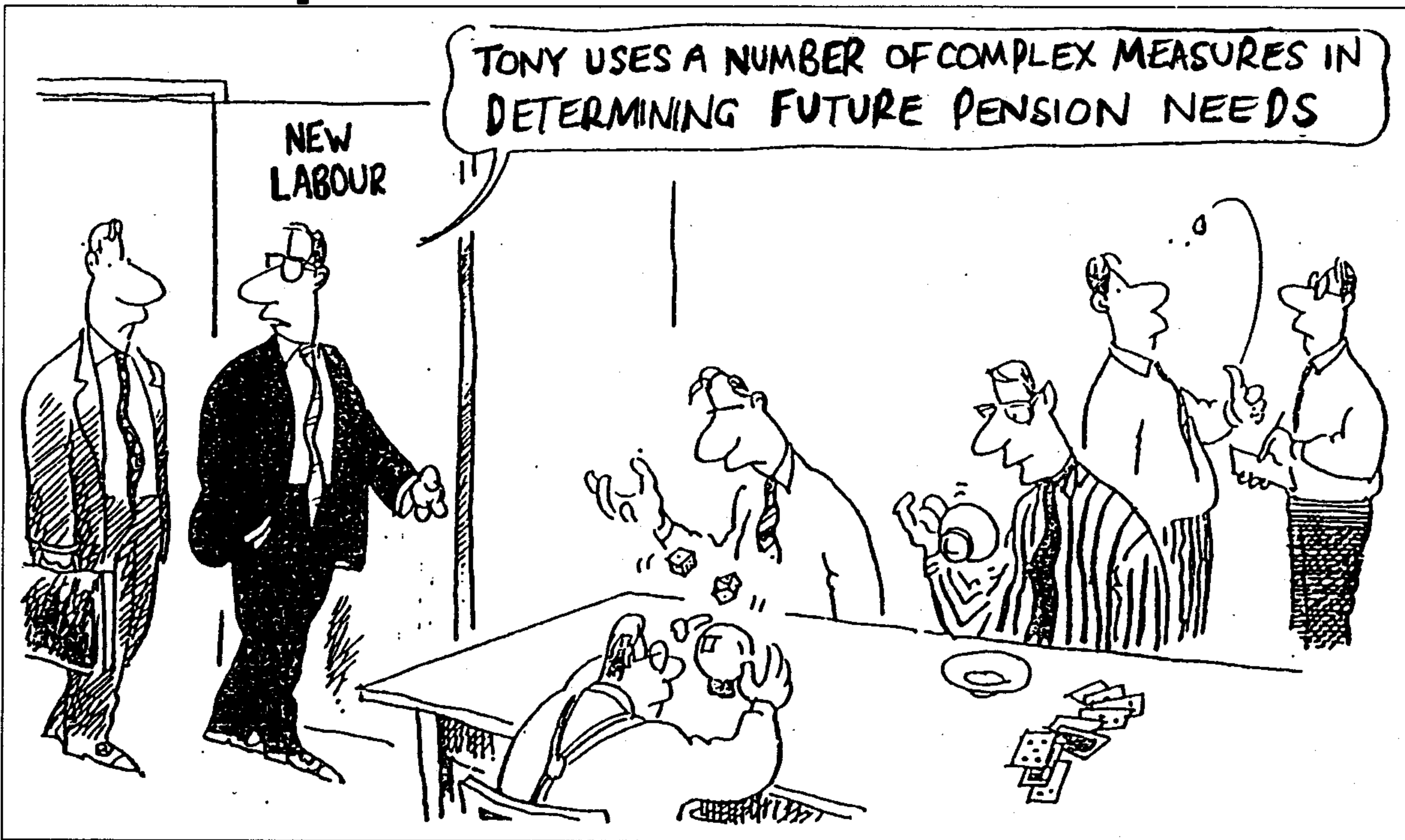
of pension schemes which are no longer seen as needed to attract staff in today's labour market.

In 1981 employers' contributions to pension schemes amounted to 3.2 percent of GDP: in ten years it fell to just 1.2 percent.

To make matters worse, the pension funds to which workers look for security in old age have been among the most aggressive investors pushing for increased profits – where necessary through rationalisation – often triggering redundancies and closures.

As the *Guardian's* Will Hutton, the new guru of the middle classes, points out "The British have been stripped of their state pension for reasons of bogus economy and offered a system in its place which is hazardous, little understood and requires a level of saving that is beyond most of them."

TONY USES A NUMBER OF COMPLEX MEASURES IN DETERMINING FUTURE PENSION NEEDS



£35 billion less, while the poorest would have gained an extra £3000 per household on present figures.

Even government figures show that a single pensioner in the poorest section of society is over £13 a week worse off in 1994 prices than in 1979.

The Tories keep assuring us that the economy is on the mend: but somehow British capitalism can never quite afford to support the elderly.

The wholesale switch of priorities from private greed to social need calls for a radical, socialist policy, steeply progressive taxation on the wealthy and corporate profits, and bold steps to take control of company pension funds to avoid more Maxwell-style plunder and prevent these funds being used in speculation against the interests of the workers paying into them.

Tony Blair's Labour Party is eloquently silent on pensions, and certainly making no effort to echo the 1992 commitment and argue for interim increases of £8 per week for single pensioners and £15 for couples as a first step in repairing the damage that has been done.

No doubt the party that now foolishly chides the Tories for its tax increases is fearful that any serious attack on the problem of poverty-line pensions requires radical steps to reclaim the lavish tax hand-outs to the rich which the Tories financed by ripping off the elderly.

Between 1979 and the 1990s the richest 20 percent increased their share of disposable income from 36 percent to 43 percent, while the share of the poorest 20 percent declined from 10% to just 6%.

Had the percentages stayed the same, the richest would be sharing

WELFARE STATE

Confronting the 'new world order'



Rosario Ibarra with the EZLN's sub-commander Marcos

Chiapas: Zapata rides again

FOR OVER a year the revolt of the indigenous people of the state of Chiapas has defied the repression of the Mexican armed forces, deliberately reviving the revolutionary heritage of Emilio Zapata. A renewed February offensive by 60,000 troops (half the Mexican army) has failed to locate or destroy the rebels or their charismatic masked leader Subcomandante Marcos, whose statements continue to be published by the popular press. The revolt now coincides with a rise of militancy among Mexico's powerful working class against the austerity programme introduced as the consequence of a \$50 billion US loan to prop up the sagging Mexican peso. It has captured the imagination not only of the poor and oppressed in Mexico itself, but other parts of Latin America – and Europe.

Rosario: 'The people will be with us'

"THE DIGNITY of Mexican youth, as they form torrents in the streets, reminds us of another time – 1968. In the open space of the grand Plaza they cry 'Peace yes! War no!'

"They are talking about a popular peace. The peace which has been proposed by the Zapatistas – peace for the peoples of Chiapas." The words are those of Rosario Ibarra.

If today's Zapatistas symbolise the struggles and fortunes of Mexico's ancient indigenous peoples, Rosario

has for more than a decade symbolised the struggles of the country's urban poor and dispossessed.

Founder of the Mexican Committee of Relatives of Prisoners, Hunted, Exiled, and 'Missing Persons' detained for Political Reasons, in 1982 she was the first woman to stand as a presidential candidate, at the head of the list organised by the Fourth Internationalist Revolutionary Workers Party (PRT).

Today, she is setting another precedent. Alongside the Zapatistas' enigmatic Subcomandante Marcos,

Rosario speaks as president for the National Democratic Convention (CND), the most important alliance to have bridged the gulf between the struggles of the city and the countryside for many years.

Rosario explained why in *El Navegante*, the CND journal:

"We are now together in struggle against those who want to make Mexico little more than a 'factory in the service of the Yankees', an impotent 'reservation' ... The people will be with us."

A deputy in the Federal Assembly from 1988-85, Rosario was re-elected in August 1994. In the traditions of revolutionary militancy she has used her position to further the aims of the mass movement.

In January of this year she launched an International Appeal (below), calling on President Ernesto Zedillo's government to respect and meet the legitimate demands of the peoples of Chiapas – rather than turn to repression.

Three months on and the Appeal has met with tremendous support. Indeed, as the social and democratic struggles of the Mexican masses begin to accumulate and unify, the impact of the Appeal has broadened.

Rosario calls for vigilance from internationalists. We must respond.

International Appeal

To: Dr Ernesto Zedillo

President of the United States of Mexico

The Mexican people

"We the undersigned, citizens of different countries, are following with great attention the political crisis which began in Mexico in January 1994.

We are concerned that the legitimate demands of the Indian peoples of the State of Chiapas, which are supported by millions of Mexicans, should not be stifled.

Up until now these demands have been raised without obtaining a positive response from the government.

We think that the only way of avoiding war breaking out in Mexico would be to meet the economic, cultural, political, and social demands expressed by these communities.

We will remain vigilant in our different countries, in order to ensure that the demands for democracy, justice, and freedom raised by these communities be answered positively."



CHECHNYA SLAUGHTER

Yeltsin makes Russia safe for capitalism

AS THIS issue of *Socialist Outlook* goes to press, the Russian military are again claiming victory in the war against the Chechen people; but in fact the bombardment of Chechen towns is continuing relentlessly.

There is no sign of any attempt at a political settlement.

Having reduced the capital, Grozny (above) to ruins, Russian artillery has smashed its way into the town of Gudermes and captured the rebel headquarters village of Shali. The Chechen fighters, who have inflicted thou-

sands of casualties as they battled against all the odds, are now retreating to the high Caucasus mountains. It is not clear how willing the army chiefs will be to pursue them into such perilous terrain.

60-70% of the Russian people reportedly oppose the war, but active campaigning against it has been limited to a minority of socialists.

Far from opposing President Yeltsin's brutal onslaught on Chechnya, the European Union and US imperialists have only queried the length of time it has taken to quell the separatist revolt. Capital-

ist investors shared Yeltsin's fears that a defiant Chechnya might have formed a focus for other splits from Russia's crumbling prison-house of nations.

A gigantic IMF loan has helped fuel the Russian war machine, which is seen as a guarantee of the security of capitalist investment and future profits.

Sections of the Fourth International have joined and organised demonstrations, pickets and lobbies of Russian embassies demanding an immediate and unconditional withdrawal of the Russian troops from Chechnya.

CENTRE STAGE

No peace, no democracy, and no security is on offer to working people a world now terrorised by the forces of the capitalist market, backed up by the threat or reality of brute force. *Socialist Outlook* explores five flashpoints which underline the need for internationalism and solidarity.

Cuban revolution under threat

By John Lister

A BRITISH tobacco combine, BAT, is the first foreign cigarette manufacturer to resume business in Cuba since the industry was nationalised by Fidel Castro.

The company will take over the run-down Criollos factory in Havana, where the most modern equipment dates back to the 1940s.

Other sectors of Cuban industry and infrastructure are also being opened up to investment from multinational capital as the embattled Cuban economy struggles for survival against ruthless US economic blockade.

Although there are restrictions on external investment, and most joint ventures are restricted to a 50-50 share with the state, the Cuban share is represented by top armed forces officers or top functionaries, opening up the prospect of personal enrichment in what has been one of the most egalitarian societies.

One advantage in the eyes of external investors is that (as in China and Vietnam) free trade unions are still banned in Cuba, leaving workers vulnerable to high levels of exploitation.

The potential difficulties being stored up by this economic policy are worsened by the fact that as imperialist capital injects new technology and

investment into selected enterprises, as many as 60 percent of the state-run factories are currently unprofitable, raising the spectre of massive redundancies – and much greater external influence in a restructured economy.

Castro's government has also been forced into other economic retreats which are creating serious tensions in Cuba, the most serious of which was legalising use of the dollar two years ago.

Now Cuban society is divided between those in economic sectors which give them access to dollars and the goods and services they can buy – including petrol – and those having only the increasingly worthless Cuban currency.

Reforms to permit free markets for small farmers have effectively demolished the state system of agriculture, and are also leading to sharp social divisions as farmers coin in handsome profits, some of it for dollars.

It is estimated that just 15 percent of the Cuban population stands to benefit from the current economic reforms, while the vast majority face a worsening of living standards.

Unfortunately Fidel Castro is still standing firm against any relaxation of the rigid prohibition on opposition political parties, any freedom of the press or any independent trade union organisation.

He is hoping to manoeuvre with sections of capital to gain more time, though for what is not clear.

Most socialists would argue that Castro's repression is simply bottling up problems and denying the Cuban people a voice on the crisis they face. The real danger is that the banner of democracy can be stolen by the US and other reactionaries seeking a restoration of capitalism in Cuba.

The fight to defend the Cuban revolution demands a renewed campaign against the US economic blockade, which was condemned last October by the UN General Assembly. 101 countries voted against, with just the USA and Israel supporting the policy which has denied vital supplies of medicines and other goods to the Cuban people.

Castro's recent visit to France is connected with Cuban pressure on the European Union to take the lead in reopening economic links in defiance of the USA. The signs so far are not promising. The French oil giant Total recently withdrew from a major investment plan in Cuba, buckling under US threats. A statement of EU policy is due soon.

Fringe meetings at many union conferences this year will again promote solidarity with the Cuban revolution. Despite our political criticisms of the Castro regime, socialists should support this effort.



Solidarity with Bosnia

By Duncan Chapple

THE EUROPEAN sections of International Workers' Aid are responding to the new military situation in Bosnia.

For the first time in the war, Bosnian troops have the initiative. Serb troops have been pushed off Mount Vlasic, which overlooks the Bosnian town of Travnik.

The offensive reflects a new mood of hopefulness in the Bosnian population around Travnik, and a new policy from the Bosnian government of greater aloofness from the UN and foreign press.

Cease-fire

Elsewhere in Bosnia there is renewed despair at the breakdown in the erratic cease-fire which had filled the winter months.

Bosnian forces have been retrained and rearmed over the winter and now on almost equal terms with the Serb forces that have partitioned the country.

The UN, which wants to contain the war in the Balkans, aims to force a partition settlement which would be massively to the advantage of Serbia in order to stop the war.

International solidarity with the fight of Bosnia for self-determination is more pressing, and more difficult, than ever.

Last week marked the 1,000th day of the Sarajevo airlift, making it by far the biggest airlift in history. Ninety-five per cent of humanitarian aid to the besieged city comes by air.

Roads

But solidarity supplies of aid for other centres of multi-ethnic resistance such as Tuzla have to be transported by road.

Since November 1994 the major supplier of medicines and medical treatment to the three Bosnian enclaves has been refused permission to continue. Serb forces have prevented all but one *Medecins San Frontiers* convoy to the enclaves of Gorazde, Srebrenica and Zepa from passing.

International Workers' Aid, an international labour movement campaign supported by *Socialist Outlook* and by sec-

tions of the Fourth International, is stepping up its solidarity work in the Bosnian industrial centre around Tuzla. People in the mining town are very aware that it is war-time again.

Ship

The IWA's ambitious 'Ship to Bosnia' project is getting substantial support. Ten tonnes of flour and other goods were collected in at Malmo, Sweden, and another 20 tonnes have been gathered by the growing Norwegian campaign.

Twelve tonnes of flour and eight tonnes of clothes have been sent to IWA's Croatia office by Dutch campaigners. A new car and Mercedes truck are on the way.

A resolution of last month's meeting of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International has called for greater solidarity with the fight of the Bosnian people for the self-determination of their multi-ethnic state.

■ For further details of the Ship to Bosnia, write to **Arbetarkonvojen, Box 6507, S-11383 Stockholm, Sweden.**

Growing international movement backs East Timor

THE STRUGGLE between the Suharto regime and the East Timorese people deepens by the day.

Faced with a 20-year refusal to submit, the Indonesians have stepped up the terror. At the same time, the clandestine resistance gets stronger and has opened up a second front in Jakarta – expressed by some Indonesians support for the occupation of the US embassy in November 1994.

Alongside the development of solidarity with East Timor in Indonesia, and international solidarity movement has been gathering strength. Movements in Sri Lanka, South Korea, Denmark and the North of Ireland have been created in the last year.

In Britain the campaign has won a recent success at the National Union of Students conference when Fernando de Arango, imprisoned leader of the Timorese stu-

dent movement, was elected unanimously by the conference to be NUS Honorary Vice-President for a four year term.

It is urgent that the success must now be followed up by a solidarity campaign in the labour movement. Both the resistance of the East Timorese and the rapid development of the Indonesian trade union movement have gone unnoticed in the labour movement.

Labour

Perhaps the reason for this is that the arms embargo, which is a central demand of both the CNRN and the Indonesian democracy movement has short-term employment implications at home. The Labour Party policy is no different in substance from that of the government. Yet the reason for this is that following the Pergau Dam affair the Labour Party does not want to cut the UK economy off from the domestic market of

6190 million that Indonesia represents. This is nothing more than a continuation of old policy – capitulation to the requirements of capital.

There is a space for the development of a solidarity movement with both East Timor and the Indonesian workers' movement. 1995 is the fiftieth anniversary of Indonesian independence, the thirtieth anniversary of the military coup led by Suharto which resulted in the slaughter of half a million, and the twentieth anniversary on December 7 of the Indonesian occupation of East Timor.

Workers and peasants in East Timor will be taking full advantage of this. Is it not time that the British labour Movement supported them?

• National day of action: 10 June. International day of action: 12 November. Parliamentary lobby 7 December. Details: phone Will on 0171 281 0297.

CENTRE STAGE

A short history of counter-revolution in Turkey

Fascists behind the democratic facade

By Cem Yildirim

TURKEY has been hitting the headlines in the international media. First we were given the "good news" about the admission of Turkey in the European Customs Union.

Then the bad news began.

On March 12 mass murderers raided Gaziosmanpasa, a poor district of Istanbul, killing three. The fact that such violence could not have taken place without police's collaboration - there is a police station only a few yards away from the incident - provoked a local community demonstration.

This gave the police an opportunity to start a massacre: demonstrators were fired upon from helicopters and police tanks. Nineteen were killed, hundreds injured.

The protests spread around other poor districts of Istanbul and other big cities. The police violence continued and the death toll rose.

Committees

The state authority in Gaziosmanpasa and other neighbourhoods in action collapsed and was taken over by local anti-fascist committees.

The "liberated zones" were suppressed only after army intervention. The ordeal concluded with the funerals of over 30 people killed by police fire. There remain about 50 people in police custody.

The international media reported these events as "sectarian violence" because the victims of the violence were predominantly Alawis. The whole incident has been falsely retold in terms of the rebellion of an Islamic sect or, even worse, as violence between different sects of Islam.

The truth is quite different.

Traditionally Umraniye Gaziosmanpasa and other Alawi districts have always been leftwing strongholds: no rightwing party could ever win any support among this sector of the urban-poor. The Gaziosmanpasa and Umraniye massacres have nothing to do with religion-motivated sectarian violence - they are fascist attacks on progressive communities.

Fascism is the best organized



Turkish special forces aim to seek and destroy Kurdish resistance

force within the Turkish state: the two major center-right parties, DYP and ANAP, have strong far-right factions which call themselves "Ulkucu" - a name associated with the youth wing of the fascist National Movement Party, MHP.

Many key positions within the state are held by fascists, so much that even 70 per cent of all the MPs in Turkey's parliament are of Ulkucu origin; two thirds of the overpopulated Turkish police force consist of

the militants, members and supporters of the MHP; the rest are Islamic fanatics and the members of centre-right parties.

Fascist influence in the state forces has always been a phenomenon of Turkish politics, but a large scale "fascisation" process of the state began in full steam only after the military coup in 1980. This process was accelerated with the beginning of the Kurdish guerrilla movement in 1984.

MHP militants provided an excellent reservoir of recruitment for the "special forces" - counter-insurgency units operating mainly in Kurdistan alongside the army under the instructions of an autonomous and "unofficial state organisation" known as the "counter-guerrilla".

These special forces are responsible for the most ruthless atrocities in Kurdistan, including the systematic torture of civilians and the assassination of over 2,000 Kurdish and pro-Kurdish intellectuals.

In order to turn Turkish Kurdistan into a large prison through their "dirty war", the Turkish state needed to create an unprecedented machinery of violence dispersed

among the police, army, and the special forces.

This machinery is not merely employed for the suppression of the Kurdish revolt, but against any protest from those sectors of society which have been suffering the most from ever worsening living conditions.

'Democratisation'

In this very specific sense Turkey has lived through a counter-revolution for the last fifteen years. The liberals of both Europe and Turkey have preferred to see instead a process of "democratisation". This view is based on an illusion that there is a "dualism" between the coalition government and the hardline institutions of the state.

However, while it is no secret that the generals have more say on state affairs than the prime minister, the fact that a "liberal" government has done nothing to change this arrangement and has been massively influenced by these same "hardliners", should raise serious questions about their alleged liberalism.

At issue here is not so much a "dualism" as a mutual sharing of

power.

One reason for the liberal illusions is the widespread view that the forces in power in contemporary Turkey are the only alternative to a "fundamentalist" takeover.

The conspiracy theories which have become very popular in Turkish and international media are useless in understanding what happened in Istanbul. There is no mystery to be solved.

What the police tried to do in Istanbul was to repeat what they have been doing in Kurdistan for over a decade. They tried to crush the anti-fascist strongholds.

Fascism depends on its ability to attack progressive forces. In Turkey these are the Kurdish liberation movement, socialists, the working class, university students and the urban poor.

There has been a dramatic increase in violent attacks on all these sectors of society in recent years by both the civilian fascists and the police. The recent incidents in Istanbul are a particularly bloody continuation of this process.

Islam in Turkey

AN ISLAMIC takeover in Turkey is a real possibility. But the problem is that the government and organised fascism within the state do not present a genuine alternative to this threat.

Instead the entry of reactionary Islam into the state structures has reached such dimensions that it is not easy to distinguish one from the other.

Despite the popular fallacy, the Turkish state has never in its history purged Islamic forces from its ranks.

A reactionary form of Sunni Islam has always governed Turkey to varying degrees. Islamic influence in the state has increased in recent years. But imaginary fears and fantasies serve only to make liberals blind to the "clear and present" reaction in front of their eyes.

Sinn Fein draws up a right wing 'Framework'

By David Coon

AN *PHOBLAcht/Republican News* recently carried two centre-spreads on a 'Charter for Justice and Peace'.

The Charter was presented to the 1995 Sinn Fein Ard-Fheis by the Ard Chomhairle (National Committee) and is intended to open a debate, to which readers were invited to put their views.

Under the headings of Self Determination, Covenant with Protestants, Strengthening of Democratic Participation, Law, Protection of Rights, Policing, Civil Society, Cultural Rights, Economic Regeneration, Social Justice and Implementation and Transitional Arrangements, the document, written by AC member Tom Hartley, clearly represents the views of the leadership on these questions.

Calling for a debate in APRN rather than discussion and voting at the Ard Fheis makes the exercise more a consultation exercise than a real debate: Tony Blair has nothing to teach the Republican leadership on party democracy.

The Charter itself is a nondescript collection of good intentions and non-controversial proposals which could easily be embraced by the Alliance Party and the SDLP in the North of Ireland and anyone to the left of the Tory Party in Britain.

It calls, for example, for the incorporation of the UN Covenant on Civil and Political Rights into "domestic law", cultural pluralism, and

equal treatment for the Irish language and declares itself in favour of pre-school nursery provision, all worthy proposals in themselves – but hardly very radical.

The most significant point about the Charter for Peace and Justice in Ireland is that it applies not to Ireland but to the Northern State.

Irish self-determination, it says, "can best take place after a defined period of national reconciliation (the transitional period)".

Twenty five years into the current phase of the struggle, the Sinn Fein leadership defers Irish self determination to the end of an undefined transitional period.

Demands on British

Its Charter for Justice and Peace in Ireland is in reality a series of demands on the British direct rulers for the reform of the Northern State, a set of demands less radical than those put forward by "Official" Sinn Fein before the 1969 split. The Charter might be called Sinn Fein's Framework Document.

The Framework Document agreed between London and Dublin is clearly based on the Unionist veto. Neither the Tories nor Labour will act as persuaders of the Unionists.

In her public statements since becoming Labour's Northern Ireland spokesperson, Marjorie Mowlem has strongly supported the Framework Document and concentrated on reassuring Unionists of Labour's neutrality on the question of a united Ireland.

Labour's policy of unity by con-

sent, insofar as it still exists, places much greater emphasis on the "consent" rather than on "unity".

If the British won't try to persuade the Unionists of the value of a united Ireland, then presumably that task will be left to the "nationalist family" and possibly the US government. Neither has been successful in the past.

If, at the end of this transitional period the Unionists still say "no" as they certainly will, in the separate referenda on both sides of the border, what will Sinn Fein's response be then?

They will have no alternative but to finally accept the Unionist veto and, following that logic, the Northern State itself. Will they take their seats in the new, devolved government at Stormont Castle?

In this situation, there is one sense in which the demands of the Charter might be radical and that is because the Six County State has in the past shown itself to be completely incapable of reform.

Basic democratic rights such as "one person, one vote", the fair allocation of housing and the ending of employment discrimination against Catholics were all impossible in the regime run from Stormont until the British abolished it in 1972.

Even after 23 years of direct rule from Britain, Catholics are 2.5 times more likely to be unemployed than Protestants. The chances of reforming what Charles Haughey once called a "failed political entity" are zero, even if Dublin provides some guarantees for Nationalists as envis-



Sinn Fein's Martin McGuinness has abandoned his former opposition to partition

aged in the Framework Document.

The Orange State was built on the partitionist settlement imposed by the British in 1921, a settlement which denied the Irish people the right to self determination.

Its bigotry, reaction, sectarianism and discrimination came not from the peculiarities of the Unionists but flowed directly from the need to maintain itself and the Union.

The Unionist veto is the denial of the right to self determination, the Northern State its physical expression and the British its guarantor. Any "settlement" within this framework is, by definition, the opposite

of self-determination.

Self determination is not divisible. Holding referenda on both sides of the border to rubber-stamp whatever emerges from future talks is not self determination but the denial of self determination. It is designed to legitimate Britain's rule in Ireland.

The tragedy is that the organisation which for more than 20 years led the struggle against British rule is now retreating to a kind of partitionist thinking which forgets the lessons of Derry 1972, when the demand for Civil Rights was drowned in blood by the British army.

In the new For a Workers' Republic
Journal of the Irish section of the Fourth International
Message of the Framework; they're staying,
Sinn Fein Ard-fheis - not waving, Drowning!, Which way to
workers' unity?, and more. Send 50p cheque payable to
'Outlook International' to Box 1109, London N4 2UU.

Maire O'Shea - The revolutionary rascal

MANY OF *Socialist Outlook's* readers will have worked with, or heard of Maire O'Shea. STEVE COHEN offers this obituary in memory of a friend and comrade.

Maire O'Shea
Psychoterrorist
World communist
Irish republican
Motorwoman from hell

Maire O'Shea
Died aged seventy six
Forever young
Forever in her nicotenes.

Don't have a minutes silence
In honour of Maire O'Shea
Instead have a loud polemic

Don't give up smoking in memory of Maire O'Shea

Instead make it compulsory

Join the Maire O'Shea brigade
And follow her silvery trail of cigarette ash
towards the barricades

The silvery trail of ash that followed our Maire like a
fuse behind a bomb

Participate in the Maire O'Shea grand prix
Drive your car in all directions
Simultaneously
Towards the barricades
Surprise the enemy
Terrify your friends

Pull down borders for Maire O'Shea
Starting with Ireland

To the memory of our Maire
A friend who never stopped arguing
A comrade who never stopped fighting
A smoker who never stopped missing the ashtray
A political autopsy revealed fifty three petition sheets

in her handbag

For fifty three different causes
Along with numerous leaflets for numerous demos
Assorted medical reports to spring insecure patients
from secure hospitals
The entire tobacco stock of the state of Virginia
Bright red lipstick
And a request to mount a picket in case of cardiac
arrest

To the memory of our Maire
A Catholic who became a catalyst
An atheist who followed the teachings of St Audacious
An opponent of all know privilege
It was a privilege to know her.

So remember the Birmingham Six
The Guildford Four
And the Maire O'Shea One.
Probably the only revolutionary who fell asleep
during her own conspiracy trial
And still beat the rap.

IRELAND UNFREE

The fantastic world of the Socialist Workers Party

Harry Sloan examines the symptoms of galloping sectarianism in Britain's biggest far left group.

Q: WHAT GROWS all the time, yet never appears to get any bigger?

A: The Socialist Workers Party.
The SWP now claims 8,000 members, which since the split and rapid decline of Militant makes it by far the biggest organisation on the British left.

We keep being told it is growing and building, yet there is little evidence that many of those allegedly joining the SWP are playing any effective role as revolutionaries.

One explanation of this phenomenon came to light during the March 25 FACE demonstration against education cuts. SWP militants stood on the Victoria Embankment approaching people at random as they walked past to join the march, asking them if they would like to "join the SWP".

Joke

Among those who 'signed up' for a joke, no questions asked, was a leading supporter of *Socialist Outlook*. For all they knew, he could have been a Tory – or a policeman.

There has been previous experience of this type of 'mass' recruitment on the British left. In the early 1970s Gerry Healy's Workers Revolutionary Party embarked on a frenetic 'recruitment drive' aimed at rapidly reaching 10,000 members. Young WRP activists were encouraged to sign up new members on doorstep sales, on High Streets and wherever they could find a captive



SWP ignores the broader campaign to defend the health service

audience. Healy's daily paper *Workers Press* carried campaign features delighting in the news that two pensioners had been 'recruited' going up in a lift, and that enterprising WRPs had made recruits in chip shops and by canvassing car drivers stuck at traffic lights.

Of course it was fantasy – a symptom of decline rather than a springboard to growth of the WRP. Experienced members, saddled with long lists of 'recruits' wasted fruitless hours trekking around false addresses or attempting to organise dozens of indifferent or hostile 'members' who had agreed to "join", just to get rid of a troublesome recruiter.

There is little reason to believe that a formula which failed to spectacularly in the 1970s should succeed now.

And it does seem that this symptom of sectarian posturing is an effort to compensate for the SWP's abject

failure to make its mark on the British labour movement.

Of course the SWP appear to be everywhere. They have sophisticated printing presses and plenty of resources for posters, leaflets and stickers, and they have become specialists in maximising their public profile. They can turn out impressive numbers of paper sellers.

But what is the real political impact of the organisation after almost three decades of of public activity?

Marginal

With the exception of anti-racist work, where their Anti Nazi League has managed to capitalise on the political weakness and internal divisions of the Anti Racist Alliance, the SWP are little more than a marginal factor in the political life of the labour movement.

The SWP of course stands outside the political battles now taking place in the Labour Party, as it has done

since the mid 1960s. Their answer to any worker wanting to fight for socialism is to leave the Labour Party and "join the SWP".

But the SWP's isolation from these key struggles is less surprising than its lack of serious impact in the trade unions.

Its ambitions have since the early 1980s been restricted to 'building a rank and file movement within the unions'. This formula has translated into recruiting individuals and avoiding any real nitty gritty fight with the existing unions bureaucracies, which might call for alliances with other left wing forces.

A conscious policy of refusing to stand for national executive or regional positions in the unions, and a persistent failure to join with any independent left forces in the unions means that the SWP has little or no influence at anything more than branch level.

Yet *Socialist Worker* presents itself as a no-nonsense paper for ordinary trade unionists. So it comes as something of a surprise to find that of the SWP's 8,000 members just 1,500 attended their Trade Union Conference on March 18.

If the centre-page coverage in *Socialist Worker* is to be believed, speaker after speaker parroted the messianic zeal of SWP founder Tony Cliff, on the need to sell the paper as the 'key' to 'building resistance inside the workplaces'.

Perhaps the saddest contribution, symptomatic of serious sectarian delusions, was that attributed to a Guy's Hospital student nurse. According to the *Socialist Worker* report, she told the conference:

"When I first started as one of 200 student nurses, the UNISON reps didn't come near us because they were so demoralised. But we did a regular *Socialist Worker* sale around the nurses' home and were able to

mount our own union drive.

"We recruited 50 student nurses to UNISON, and they made up the bulk of the nurses on a recent march to save Guy's.

"Since then the hospital has been relieved."

If the answer is so easy, why doesn't the SWP do the same and save Bart's and the other London hospitals threatened with closure?

Of course recruiting student nurses to unions is a good thing. But to look at the fight for Guy's as purely a trade union struggle, completely ignoring the vast effort and activity carried out (without significant SWP involvement) by the local community-based campaign, ignoring the 1-million strong petition, ignoring the political fight by Labour, Lib-Dem and Tory MPs, and suggesting that the recruitment of 50 UNISON members tipped the balance to save Guy's, is absurd.

No fight

The SWP remains incapable of working seriously within such broad-based campaigns. It has no track record of fighting cuts in the NHS, education or local government.

It is this *political* failure of the SWP which compels its leaders and its journalists to create their own, fantastic world: a world in which there is no need for a united front tactic, because the working class is to be won over one-by-one to join a mass party – through a combination of denunciation and the most basic propaganda.

Given the scale of this mission, 8,000 members is not so large. And many of these appear already to be flagging, even as a new list of bogus and unreliable paper members is signed up.

It's an old trick. And it still won't work.

Obituary: Lou Guohua, Chinese Trotskyist

By Wang Fanxi

Lou Guohua (Lou Kuo-hua) alias Zi Chun, Yi Ding, Shao Yuan, Ze Cheng, died on March 8. He joined the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in 1927, accepted Trotskyism in 1929 and joined China's first Trotskyist organisation (Womende hua, "Our Word") in 1929.

He was a delegate to the 1931 founding conference of the Left Opposition of the CCP. Arrested by Chiang Kai-Shek's political police, together with almost all the newly elected Executive Committee, he was jailed for six years.

After being freed from prison in 1935 he continued his revolutionary work in the Trotskyist movement. He was forced to spend the

rest of his life in Hong Kong after the arrival of the Maoist army in Shanghai in 1949.

In the late 1950s, when Trotskyists were deported from the colony and Trotskyist literature was suppressed, he established Xinda chubanshe ("Sincere Press"), which subsequently published a dozen or so books.

It was mainly through his contacts and influence that those Hong Kong youth who in the 1970s inclined to anarchism (and gathered around Qiling niandai "the Society of Seventies") were won to Trotskyism and launched the Revolutionary Marxist League, of which he was a leading member.

Throughout his adult life Lou was a professional revolutionary, but at the same time he was a revolutionary with a profession. That is not to say that he was an amateur or part-time revolu-

tionary. It simply means that he was always had a job at the same time as working for the revolution.

All genuinely revolutionary organisations in poor countries, and especially the Chinese Trotskyist organisation, have known financial hardship of a sort that comrades in the developed countries, and even young Chinese radicals in present-day Hong Kong, can hardly imagine.

No dues

There were no donations, no dues, and no contributions whatsoever.

Lou Guohua acted as a one-man fund raiser for Chinese Trotskyism. He usually worked as a salaried accountant. He was exceedingly frugal, and saved from his income to help other comrades.

For example, when comrade Li Cailian died in the

winter of 1936, it was Lou who paid for her burial. Almost every member of the earlier generations of our comrades was in one way or another his beneficiary.

Apart from being the publisher of the Chinese Trotskyist movement, Lou Guohua was also a brilliant author in his own right. He was a distinguished authority on Lu Xun's work, about which he wrote numerous articles and an important book.

In these writings he exposed how China's Maoist authorities puffed up Lu Xun in order to obscure Chen Duxiu's founding role in China's New Culture Movement of 1915-1921.

Although Lu Xun was modern China's best-known essayist and writer, he actually played only a supporting role in that seminal movement; while Chen Duxiu was renowned as its "Commander-in-Chief."

Chen, who founded the CCP in 1921, has been a nonperson since 1931, because he fathered Chinese Trotskyism. This is why the myth of Lu Xun's role in the movement had to be invented.

Lou's book exposed the falsification, quoting extensive evidence.

Slander

He also exposed the Maoists' slander of Chen Duxiu in 1938 as an agent of Japan (to match Stalin's slandering of Trotsky as a Hitler agent); and advanced the hypothesis that Lu Xun's supposed "Letter to the Trotskyists" of the 1936, in which the Trotskyist Chen Qichang and his comrades were accused of treacherously taking money from the Japanese, was written by the Stalinist Feng Xuefeng.

Today both Lou's theses have been confirmed by

new materials published in China, such as the posthumous publication of an article by Hu Feng, Lu Xun's main disciple and the first victim after 1949 of the Maoists' policy on literature and art.

Lou Guohua's death agony lasted two years. Before his final stroke he lost the power of hearing. After this he lost the power of speech. Finally he lost the power of sight and lapsed into unconsciousness ten days before his death. He is survived by his wife, a daughter, and three sons.

Lou Guohua was the publisher and "philanthropist" of the Chinese Trotskyist movement.

He remained a Trotskyist and a supporter of the Fourth International until his death. He died loved and respected by the younger generation of Hong Kong radicals.

"The most important strategist for the socialist movement"

K. GOVINDAN
reviews *Trotsky as
alternative* by
Ernest Mandel
(trans. Gus Fagan)
Verso 1995

THIS IS an ambitious work. Mandel's is a bold case for Trotsky as "the most important strategist for the socialist movement" in the twentieth century.

But it is no hero worship. Mandel criticises Trotsky's belief that imperialism had made a further growth in production impossible. The western boom after the Second World war proved him wrong.

So too does he take issue with Trotsky's support for the banning of factions during the Russian civil war. It undermined socialist democracy and resistance to Stalin's bureaucratic terror.

As President of the Petrograd soviet, leader of the Russian revolution and Red Army, Trotsky was undoubtedly one of the twentieth century's key figures. But he also left an important theoretical legacy.

Mandel is at his most passionate in defending this contemporary relevance of Trotsky's ideas. The law of combined and uneven devel-



Red Army founder Leon Trotsky joins in celebrations during the 1924 Red Week

opment; the unity of the world economy; the importance of internationalism; Trotsky's warnings on fascism; his writings on the national question - these are all of immense importance.

As we approach the new millennium Trotsky's theorisation of international political economy is as insightful as when first written. Imperialism continues to block the industrialisation of the dominated countries and opposes any significant democratisation of their political structures.

This is what workers are finding out in the "new" South Africa - and it's a bitter lesson: "In a very practical way the working class, as soon as it has conquered state power, will begin to address the tasks of socialist revolution. Without stages or interruptions, the revolution will combine the achievement of national democratic goals with the beginning of the achievement of socialist goals."

This is what happened in the Russian Revolution and in China and Cuba.

Trotsky also understood that the expression of internationalist sentiment and duty goes beyond statements and acts of international solidarity.

Global movement

Part of the struggle in the national arena to build a party which can reconcile and channel the fragmented consciousness of its members is the simultaneous struggle to build a global movement - one which fights for the exploited majority of all lands without subordination to any one par-

ticular section.

After the rise of Stalinism this is the task Trotsky considered to be his most important. It was affirmed in the birth of the Fourth International.

None of the revolutionary currents to emerge in recent times has been willing to build such a pluralist democratic international. This means, according to Mandel, that "the struggle for the mass international of tomorrow is today, and probably for a long time to come, linked to the struggle to build the Fourth International."

The International remains small. However, its coordination of socialist activities across the world; its unflinching hostility to capitalism in the face of the left's retreat; its consistent opposition to stalinism and support for the self-activity of the working class, are achievements in themselves.

The extent to which Trotsky's ideas can be able to change the world are still to be proved in practise. It is for history to decide. *Trotsky as Alternative* is an excellent contribution to this struggle.

Forrest Gump: an ode to idiocy

SIMON DOYLE
reviews the Oscars

THE OSCAR ceremony is like a box of KFC face wipes - wet, sanitised, insubstantial. And very American.

If there is one thing the ritual is not about it is talent. The Oscars are a local rite in which mediocrities are held up as examples; where stardom is an end in itself, celebrity a fetish for the foolhardy.

At no point does the question of acting ability arise as the principal criteria. Tom "ham" Hanks is proof of that. These totems are doled out for other qualities.



It is hard to be precise about the attributes required by a successful Oscar winner. It has something to do with films

that are positive - celebrations, messages and morality tales all go down a treat. So do films which make a mountain of moolah.

The judges - or "academy", to use their favoured affectation - also like a dose of idealism, preferably wrapped in a sugar coating of glossy sentimentality. Forrest Gump fits the bill perfectly.

Those who said that last year's acclaim for Schindler's List was evidence of a new maturity in Hollywood have been proved wrong.

Forrest Gump is a celebration of shallowness; stupidity made fashion.

The academy choose the fatuous Forrest Gump over the brilliant Pulp Fiction because it was safe. A folksy epic of small town America is going to win out every time.

But it is not the conservatism of the academy which is truly striking, but what

the popularity of the film indicates about America.

Since release the movie's simpleton protagonist has become a veritable icon; a dullard role model for American males. You too can succeed - as long as you don't think too hard about the world and your place in it.

Puerile

Zemeckis' puerile ode to idiocy makes intellect a burden, foolishness a virtue. And a big chunk of America is lapping it up. "As Forrest says..." is becoming the catchphrase of the year - everyone is required to memorise their own selection of Gump quotes to get them through the day.

What better summons up

the helpless and powerlessness ordinary Americans face than the "life is a box of chocolates" nonsense?

He is the man for the moment. But Tom Hanks' hick with a flag salute to home and hearth has relevance for us too.

The themes of family, home and Christian ethics are not so far from Tony Blair's own chosen agenda. Tony and Tom are on the same think-small anti-political crusade.

They share a fantasy world without class division, without institutionalised oppression, without the possibility of real change.

It is a hopeless helpless ideology of defeat and despair.

But, then, stupid is, as stupid does...

REVIEWS

What we fight for

FACING MASS unemployment, rampant employers with savage anti-union laws, and a war on hard-won public 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 build a new type of working class leadership, based on class struggle and revolutionary socialism.

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

The Tory strategy has been to shackle the unions, and to fragment and weaken the resistance, allowing them to pick off isolated sections one at a time.

In response, most TUC and Labour leaders have embraced the defeatist politics of 'new realism', effectively total surrender, while ditching any pretence of being a socialist alternative. Every retreat encouraged the offensive against jobs, wages, conditions and union rights.

New realism is the latest form of reformism, seeking only improved conditions within capitalism.

We reject reformism, not because we are against reforms, but because we know that 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 the 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 to topple the corrupt and reactionary rule

of capital and establish its own class rule.

We struggle against fragmentation by building solidarity, to unite the various struggles of workers, the unemployed, of women, of pensioners, of the black communities, of lesbians and gay men, of students, of youth – and of those fighting imperialism in Ireland and worldwide.

Socialist Outlook is above all an internationalist current, in solidarity with the Trotskyist Fourth International, which organises in over 40 countries.

Unlike some other groups on the British left, we do not believe a mass revolutionary party can be built simply by proclaiming ourselves to be one. This degenerates into sectarian posturing and abstention from struggles in the labour movement, playing into right wing hands.

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 revolution. The oppressed must organise themselves and fight now for their 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 racism and fascism – in which various left currents can work together for common objectives while remaining free to debate 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!

Socialist Outlook welcomes readers' letters. Write to Feedback, PO Box 1109, London N4 2UU.

Letters over 300 words may be edited for reasons of space.

FeedBACK

No 'national' programme

IN S.O. 79 Neil Murray claims that "Socialism has to be clarified".

He then proceeds to outline a version of socialism in one country with "...the commanding heights' of the economy being taken out of private hands and run by a system of councils of workers' and consumers' delegates, accountable and recallable, co-ordinated into a national system."

Leaving aside the unusual idea that consumers (i.e. excluding non-consumers?) will be the chief ally of the proletariat in a future revolution, this statement reveals that Neil is simply repeating formulas rather than analysing the world.

The demise of the workers' states has belatedly proven that Trotsky was right in opposing the Stalinist notion that socialism could be built in isolation in economically backward countries.

Socialism has to be a mode of production with a higher productivity of labour than that of capitalism.

All Blairite prattle about 'socialist values' pales into insignificance in the light of this profound historical-materialist criterion.

Socialism cannot be established in isolation in Britain but could conceivably be established on a European scale given the advanced character and scale of the productive forces in Europe and the latter's economic unity.

For instance, it is conceivable that a unification of the aerospace industry of Western Europe with that of Russia and Eastern Europe under the planned economy of a United Socialist States of Europe (and eastwards) could well outstrip today's North American aerospace industry.

A prerequisite of socialism is therefore the seizure of state power, i.e., of political power, in a series of countries and the establishment of a planned economy at the level of a union or federation of these states.

Of course the first step will be the seizure of state power in one country but the next step is not the elimination of private property on a national scale in this one country but an international extension of the revolution, i.e., more seizures of state power. Quite clearly, world imperialism is not going to sit quietly by whilst the proletariat seizes power in one

advanced capitalist country and embarks on wholesale expropriation of the bourgeoisie at a national level.

In addition, a particular problem in Britain is that the bulk of British capital cannot be expropriated by the proletariat of Britain because this capital is not in the form of means of production located in Britain but in the form of South African coal mines, New York real-estate, etc, etc.

Put briefly, our task is not to formulate a national economic programme but a programme for the seizure of state power at a national and continental level.

Roy Rudditt, NW London

'Fluffies' at Shoreham?

THE NORMALLY sedate sea-front of the Sussex town of Hove has been transformed in the last two months.

It is here that protestors against the cruelties of the export trade in live animals congregate day in day out in a bitter struggle recalling the picket lines of the miners' strike or Wapping.

Every day seven to nine lorries carrying sheep and

calves - destined for veal production - bust the picket lines after zig-zagging across town escorted by police outriders and even helicopters.

Hastily erected spike-topped fences line the sea front entrances to the harbour. When demonstrators appear in force, police string rolls of razor wire along the fence tops and bring in the riot squad, complete with full face visors, riot shield and extendable batons.

Bemused by Brewster

SOME rather strange assessments seem to have found their way into the centre pages of your last issue (*Tories have never had it so bad!* SO 80).

Apparently author Toby Brewster believes that Jim Callaghan's Labour government was "eventually brought down by industrial militancy".

Although this fits the mythology of those public sector union leaders who are most terrified of any new strike action today, it is not the case.

The Labour government fell after, not during the 1978-79 Winter of Discontent. The strikes were a symptom of growing working class hostility to the gov-

The cost of this policing – borne by East Sussex council tax payers – is £200,000 a night. The police bill is £8 million so far. Yet East Sussex County Council has a deficit of £12 million pounds, and Brighton Council owes £20 million, bringing threats of vital service cuts and disastrous land sales.

In no way do the pickets conform to some stereotype of well heeled fluffies oblivious to human suffering and only caring for animals.

Here is a cross section of ordinary humanity. Many women, many children, wage earners, pensioners and students, many new to political activity of any kind.

The energy and commitment of the activists is exemplary. The course is set to stop the animal export racket.

Dave Barnham, Hove

ernment, not the direct cause of its defeat.

Callaghan's government had only been propped up by a squalid deal with the Liberals and then the Ulster Unionists. After inflicting three years of wage cuts on the working class it was defeated in a general election.

Perhaps even more curious is Brewster's assertion that the divided Tories are in such a state that "they are too weak to get out of their sick bed to smash the welfare state."

In fact the smashing of welfare rights is one issue that unites the Tories, and they have been having serious success in this mission. If only the labour movement could be as united in fighting back.

Tim Smith, Oxford

SOCIALIST OUTLOOK

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To advertise your event in Socialist Outlook write to 'What's Happening', PO Box 1109, London N4 2UU by Friday April 21.

What's HAPPENING

APRIL

Sat 8
 'FROM the Cradle to the Grave' Welfare State Network Conference on education, pensions and the NHS. 11am University of London Union, Malet St. WC2.
CUBA: end the blockade dayschool 10am - 5pm Conway Hall Red Lion Square, London WC1 registration £6/£3 for dayschool and evening salsa. Fiesta only £3/£1.50 from CSC Dayschool, 129 Seven Sisters Road, London N7 7QG. Tel 0171 263 6542.
 WEEK of action on Child Support Agency opens. details CACSA 0171 837 7509
Sun 9
 LIBERATION! editorial

board London.
Weds 12
 BREAK THE blockade of Cuba! South London Cuba Solidarity campaign meeting 7.30pm Oval House Theatre by Oval Tube 52-54 Kennington Oval with speakers George Galloway MP and Frank Chalmers. Details: 0171 737 2304.
Thurs 13
 THE FAMILY institution in crisis: West London Socialist Outlook Forum 7.30pm Ealing Town Hall W5.
Sat 22
 TRADE UNION anti-fascist day school supported by Leicester and district TUC Secular Hall Humberstone Gate Leicester. 10.30am - 4.00pm details: Leicestershire Anti-fascist Alliance

Tel: 0116 255 0433
Sun 23
 NATIONAL Anti-racist day celebration Manchester Town hall 12.00 - 5.00.
Weds 26
 CLAUSE 4 and the struggle for socialism Birmingham Socialist Outlook Forum with Alan Thornett 7.30pm Queen's Tavern
Fri 28
 WORKERS Memorial Day 'Remember the dead: fight for the living'. Fight for safe working conditions. Leafleting and demonstration in London. Details: 0171-226-5436.
Sat 29
 DEMONSTRATION in Manchester against deportations called by Okolo Family De-

fence campaign 12.00 noon All Saints' Park Oxford Road.
LABOUR Party special conference lobby 10.30am Queen Elizabeth Hall London SW1.
MAY
Thurs 4
 WHAT NEXT after Clause Four? West London Socialist Outlook Forum 7.30pm Ealing W5.
Sat 13
 SOCIALISM, Social Democracy and revolution Socialist Outlook dayschool London. Speakers include

François Vercammen, United Secretariat of the Fourth International. Tickets £6/£3 from Socialist Outlook, PO Box 1109, London N4 2UU.
Sat 27
 DAY of Action by Campaign to Close Campsfield.
AFRICAN Liberation Day march 1.00pm Kennington Park London SE11. Rally at Trafalgar Square Details: 0171 924 9033.
JULY
Sat 9
 CRIMINAL Justice after the

Bill a day conference sponsored by the Haldane Society of Socialist Lawyers. 9.30am - 4pm Camden Town Hall opposite St Pancras BR. £3/£10 from 20-21 Tooks Court EC4.
Fri 22 - Fri 29
 INTERNATIONAL Youth Camp in southern France. Send £35 deposit to 'Liberation Publishing Association', PO Box 1109, N4.
AUGUST
Weds 23 - Mon 28
 SOCIALIST Outlook Summer School Aberystwyth. Send your £35 deposit now.

international VIEWPOINT

The mid-March issue of *International Viewpoint*, out last week, features two major dossiers. SAMINA FELLAH opens a review of women and fundamentalism in Algeria, the US and France to show important global trends. FRANÇOIS VERCAMMEN has edited a selection on the western European Communist parties. A major feature on the last five years in Eastern Europe and Russia by CATHERINE SAMARY reflects parts of a discussion at a recent meeting of the Fourth International. Single copies cost £2. For one year - £22. Send your cheque, payable to 'Outlook International' to PO Box 1109, London N4 2UU.



Porcupine Press, new Marxist publishers, announce ambitious schedule Pricking the left into new ideas

By Bala Kumar
 AT A TIME when Left bookshops are closing and radical publishing houses abandon socialist authors and revolutionary literature, the arrival of a new Marxist publisher is very welcome.
 Porcupine Press was offi-

cially launched at a reception on Thursday March 30 at the Woburn Bookshop, Woburn Walk, London WC1. Its owners and live-wires are Barry Buitekant and Andrew Burgin who in defiance of obituaries for Marxism promise to publish stimulating books in the revolutionary Marxist tradition.
 As comrade Burgin said, this modest initiative is their

contribution to the renewal of Marxism and a resource for the socialist and labour movement. He urged support for the venture and for an engaged relationship between the press and its readership.
 The presence at the reception of members of many revolutionary groups and independent activists is a good sign for the future. True to their word, the very first title

on display has an uncompromising title. "In Defence of the Russian Revolution" is a collection of writings by leading Bolsheviks between 1917 and 1923 like Radek, Lenin, Kamenev, Zinoviev, Bukharin and Trotsky. The book will be reviewed in the next issue of *Socialist Outlook*.
 Most of the articles are unavailable in English and they have been edited and anno-

tated by Al Richardson.
 Future titles include translations of Michael Lowy's "The Theory of Revolution in the Young Marx", which is scheduled to be published weeks before *Outlook For Socialism* in November. Lowy is a longtime leader of the French section of the Fourth International.
 Also planned is Pierre Broue's monumental biogra-

phy of Trotsky as well as original manuscripts in the broad non-stalinist and revolutionary Marxist tradition.
 • For a catalogue and further information contact: Porcupine Press, The Woburn Bookshop 10 Woburn Walk London WC1H 0JL Tel: 0171 388 7278 Fax: 0171 263 5196.

After Clause 4 vote: is the Party over?
Socialism, Social Democracy & REVOLUTION

Tory

Socialist Outlook is holding a special day of discussion and debate for defenders of Clause 4. To be held in North London on Saturday 13 May, the school will examine the historical record of social democracy, the relationship between revolutionaries and the reformist organisations, and the future of the Labour Party. Discussions will cover nationalisations, why marxists call for a Labour vote, and other important issues of concern to those fighting for socialism in the 1990s. Open to Socialist Outlook supporters and those interested in our ideas. For tickets, send a cheque for £6 waged, £3 unwaged to Socialist Outlook Fund, PO Box 1109, London N4 2UU.

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SOCIALIST OUTLOOK

UN backs invasion of Iraq 'safe haven'

Turkey out of Kurdistan!

By Simon Doyle

So much for the 'safe haven' to protect Kurds against Iraq's Saddam Hussein. Bombs are raining

down upon Kurdish villages -- and the west is doing nothing to stop it.

Such is the hypocrisy of the imperialist powers that the French-British-US

United Nations military detachment even suspended its flights over the "safe" area so Turkey could launch its invasion.

As the 35,000 troops push deeper into Iraq, 2,000 refugees have been

forced from their homes. Torture is rife. Many Kurdish villages have been burned. F-16 and F-5 planes make regular bombing raids. Civilians are seized and forcibly brought to Turkey.

Far from being a solution, the UN is part of the problem. It goes along with the US, which calls it legitimate self-defence of its key NATO ally Turkey!

From behind the sham of defending the Kurds from aggression the real motivation of western involvement is becoming clear - to ensure US interests in the region and provide a militarised buffer zone to fortress Europe.

It is the ninth cross border operation since 1992. It has no hope of achieving its declared aim of erasing the PKK. Instead the Turkish regime is using it as a way of shoring up its position at home.

It is clear however that the Turkish state will never permit any form of Kurdish self-government.

They have to smash the semi-autonomy Iraq's Kurds gained in the aftermath of the Gulf War.

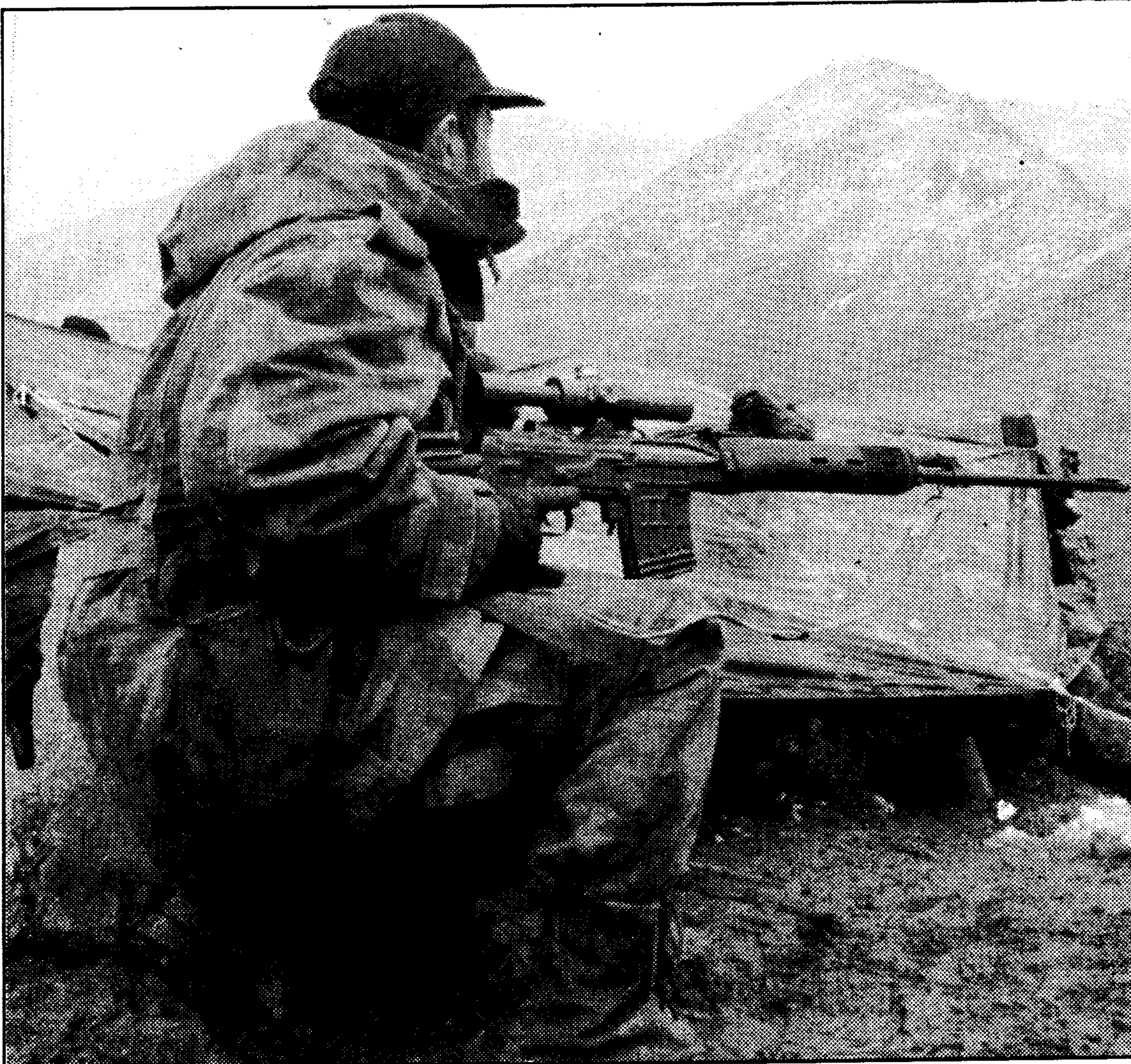
Kirkuk oil has always attracted their attentions.

There are now some indicators to suggest a deal with the US involving a long-term invasion.

Ever since the war ended there has been intensive talk in official Turkish circles about establishing a "Turkish protectorate" in Northern Iraq. Candemir Onhon, the Turkish ambassador in London, gave the game away by refusing to give a time limit on the occupation.

Anti-imperialist forces around the world must mobilise now to demand the immediate withdrawal of the Turkish troops from Northern Iraq.

A defeat for Turkey in this new adventure would mean a defeat for the forces of international reaction and counter-revolution everywhere.



INSIDE: Fascists behind Turkey's democratic facade - special feature page 10