

socialist

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future

Magazine of the Movement for a Socialist Future

DOT.COM BUBBLE BURSTING

THE MELT-DOWN of the car industry and the crisis in Internet shares, confirms that the British economy is heading for slump and financial turmoil.

New Labour is hypnotised by its own fantasies. First it was "shocked" by BMW's sell-off of Rover. And then Tony Blair urged Europe to switch to the "new economy", just as shares in so-called e-commerce plunged through the floor.

While the Blair government is paralysed, tens of thousands of people are losing their jobs as BMW, Ford and Nissan shut down or cut production to the bone.

And the pensions of many people which are tied to the fortunes of Internet shares on the stock market will be destroyed when the bubble bursts, as it will surely will.

Meanwhile, Labour is silent while Barclays shuts hundreds of rural branches and gives the chief executive £30 million in reward.

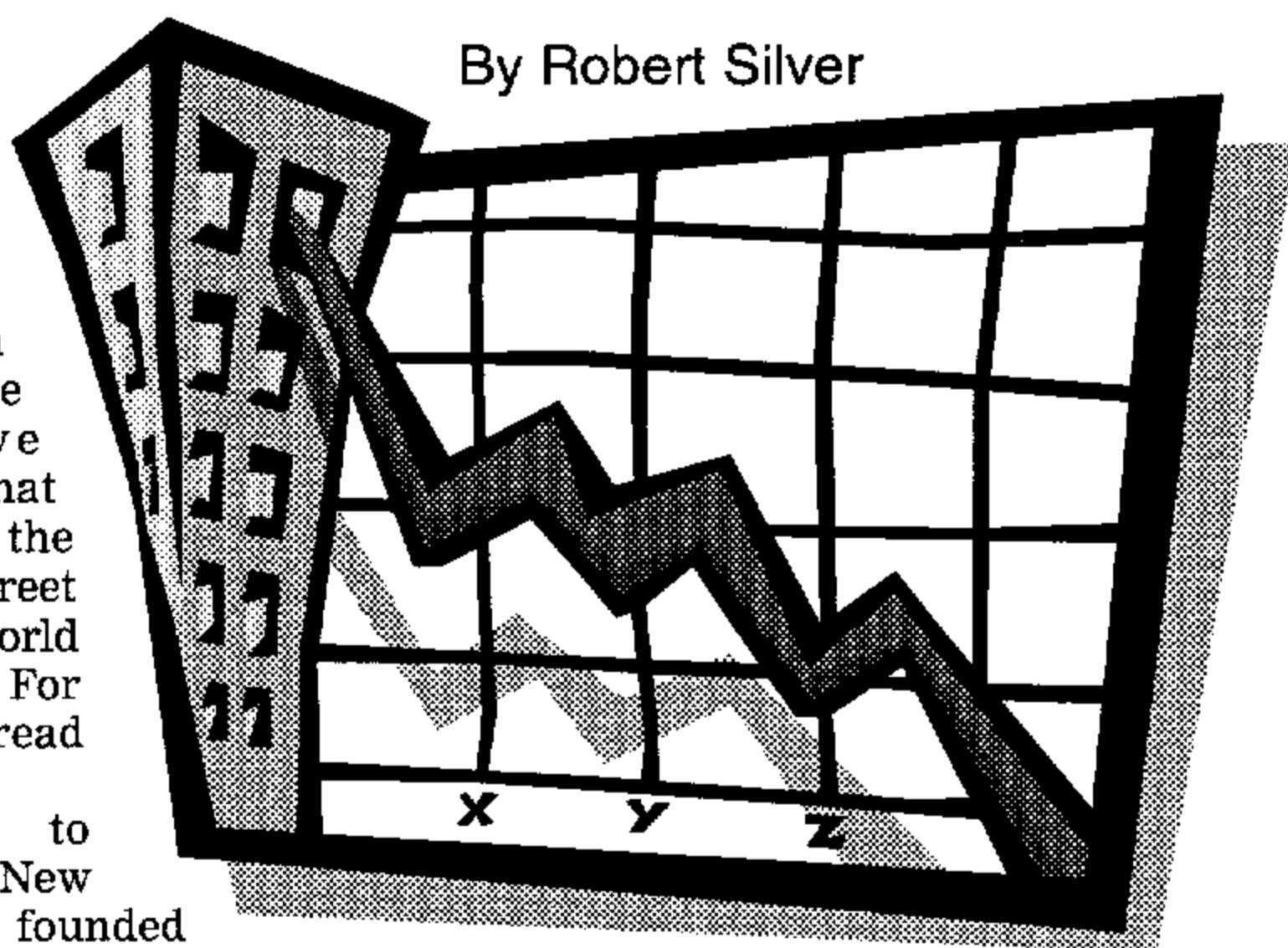
Companies like lastminute.com are "valued" at hundreds of millions - even though turnover is just £500,000 a year and there are few prospects of actually making a profit.

This story is being repeated countless times in Britain and America, in an echo of the speculative madness that preceded the 1929 Wall Street crash and world slump. For dot.com read dodgy.com.

The rise to power of New Labour was founded on its role as the UK agent of global capital. The original deal was brokered through an agreement with Rupert Murdoch who switched his *Sun* and *Times* newspapers to support Blair during the election.

Having failed to deliver a sufficiently compliant workforce and unable to overcome decades of under-investment in manufacturing industry, New Labour is being abandoned by its former friends.

By Robert Silver



Patience with Blair's high pound strategy has evaporated. In his period of office, agriculture has been all but killed off, and manufacturing industry bull-dozed.

The globalisation of manufacture provides trans-national companies with the ability to shift production from country to country taking advantage of the most profitable conditions.

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Privatisation threat to PO



THE POSTAL workers' union has attacked plans to reorganise the Post Office as "privatisation by the back door".

Communication Workers Union leader, Derek Hodgson, has accused Graham Corbett, the government-appointed chair of the new Post Office watchdog, of "irresponsible and ill-informed media manipulation".

Hodgson was commenting about remarks which Corbett made even before taking up his new post. He gave strong indications that the Post Office monopoly on letters and parcels might be abolished and that the 160,000-strong work force should be cut.

Corbett has said: "The Post Office will be incentivised to cut costs... the most effective way it could do this is through the labour force. That is its highest cost."

This sets the government in direct opposition to CWU members who at a special conference held in March voted to ballot for industrial action if any section of the Post Office was threatened with privatisation.

The postal market is rapidly becoming globalised. The British, Dutch and Singapore postal administrations joined in a global alliance in April. There will only be four or five major companies in the world postal market within the next five years, in the view of the CWU.

Hodgson said he was "fed up to the back teeth" with ministers ignoring Labour Party policy and the government going back on its own assurances. *Visit the Union's website at: www.cwu.org*

PFI pressure on Pimlico

THE GOVERNMENT is determined to push through the controversial Pimlico School deal against the wishes of the schools governors.

Under the private finance initiative (PFI) plan, large parts of the school grounds would be sold to private developers to build luxury homes.

Governors, parents and teachers have resisted the scheme, which was driven through by Home Secretary Jack Straw when he was chair of the governing body.

The PFI credit was due to expire on 31 March, but education minister Jacqui Smith has been granted an extension from the Treasury.

Education Department officials had given the governors an ultimatum to come to some agreement or the deal would collapse. Tory-controlled Westminster City Council is also determined to press ahead.

Continued from page 1...

Leading analysts now acknowledge that Marx was right in his theory that capitalist competitive investment produces over-capacity, a reduction in the rate of profit and a crisis of production involving massive destruction of value.

There are now just 10 major global car firms, and the number is dwindling fast. Only the manufacturing plants offering the highest productivity with the lowest wages will survive.

This is what is underway in the car industry on a global scale and determines the strategy adopted not just by BMW, but by Honda and Ford.

New Labour has no answers because it is tied hand and foot to the global corporations. Only independent action by working people to challenge the rule of the multinationals offers a way forward.

Joining the MSF

The Movement for a Socialist Future goes to the heart of the system. We believe the source of injustice lies in the power of the global corporations and that the way forward is for the vast majority to take power into their own hands.

Anyone who supports the MSF's draft policies can join. These are aimed at securing the mass democratic ownership and control of economic, social, cultural and political life.

Organisations like trade unions and campaign groups are also welcome to affiliate and send a delegate to the MSF. Members meet locally and organise the building up of support for the Movement. Each area sends a representative to a national steering committee.

Everyone has equal rights to influence the programme and policies of the MSF and decide what kind of organisation we need to build in order to challenge capitalist power.

There is a monthly subscription based on what members/ organisations can afford, with a minimum of £2.50. This helps pay for a full-time worker, running costs and the production of Socialist Future, which every member is sent.

I would like to join/find out more about the MSF

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone _____

E-mail _____

Occupation _____

Please send to: MSF, PO Box 942, London SW1V 2AR
 OR VISIT OUR WEB SITE AND FILL IN THE RESPONSE FORM
www.sfuture.demon.co.uk

Attacks on refugees whip up racism

NEW LABOUR Home Secretary Jack Straw has set out to make Britain the most unwelcoming place in Europe for people fleeing persecution and poverty, and the hardest to get into.

These are the main features of the asylum laws now in force:

- no benefits, just vouchers worth £35 a week per adult, only 70% of welfare benefits – with no change given.
- accommodation provided on a no-choice basis, anywhere in the UK the asylum seeker is sent, with more sent to closed camps.
- fines of £2,000 per illegal passenger on lorry drivers coming into Britain.
- immigration advisers to be regulated by the government.

Privately-run holding centres – little better than prisons – are being set up and people ordered to live in some of Britain's most run-down areas with no right to move even if they have relatives elsewhere.

Oxfam has pulled out of the voucher scheme because the French company running it has told shops not to give change, as a way of maximising profits for retailers.

The Home Office has also told retailers not to allow the

purchase of “inessentials” including toys.

Straw is colluding with tabloid papers and Tory councils to stigmatise poor people arriving in Britain, treating every asylum seeker as “bogus” while a few people begging on streets are described as “vile” by Home



Office minister Barbara Roche.

The effect of New Labour's targeting is to stir up racism against asylum seekers in particular and minority ethnic groups in general. This is reinforced by the government's refusal to provide adequate resources for councils to help refugees with housing and other services.

Airlines or ferry operators can be prosecuted for bringing people in on false documents, and lorry drivers or ship captains prosecuted for having stowaways. But how are people to flee persecution by brutal regimes, other than illegally?

Indeed Article 31 of the United Nations Convention on Refugees specifically states that they should not be punished or discriminated against for travelling on false papers and Britain is a signatory to the Convention.

It is no wonder that the UN refugee commission has attacked both New Labour and the Tories for their hysterical approach.

There has been an increase in the number of asylum seekers over the past two years, but that has to be seen against a backdrop of civil war and upheaval throughout the world. This year, the numbers are expected to fall again.

Ten European countries have had a bigger increase than Britain. In fact the poorest countries in the world take the highest number of refugees, far exceeding the numbers in Europe. Britain accepted just 0.05% of the world's 13 million refugees in 1997.

TUC rejects meaning of May Day

Comment by John Eden

MAY DAY THIS YEAR will be “celebrated” by the Trade Union Congress at the Millennium Dome in Greenwich.

This is the complete antithesis of May Day, its origins and meaning. May Day is known internationally for demonstrations and class actions by workers and as an occasion for reaffirming the struggle for a better world.

It has often been the chosen day for strikes that have led to revolutionary events, such as the General Strike in Britain in 1926 and the May-June uprising in France in 1968.

In 1926 the General Council of the TUC sold out the working class led by the miners, when faced with the prospect of challenging capitalist rule.

So it is no surprise that the TUC is marking May Day at the home of what has become the symbol of Blair's New Labour, pro-capitalist government – the Dome.

The May Day event at the Dome will be picketed by May Day 2000, a collection of organisations responsible for a series of anti-capitalist events in London and Seattle last year.

So the organisers of May Day 2000 embrace the original ideas of May Day, to struggle for a better world against oppression. They deserve our support, even if they don't have a clear idea of what to replace capitalism with.

May Day has its origins in pagan and medieval society, a day when the common people would poke fun at the priest and nobles.

For this reason, May Day was frequently banned during times of rebellion.

The modern celebration as a working class holiday has its origins in the struggle for the eight-hour day amongst the workers of the USA and Canada.

On May 1, 1886 Chicago police shot and killed six strikers. The following day, at a demonstration against the killings, eight police were killed by a bomb. Four workers were tried and executed, although it was never clear who planted the device.

In 1889 the International Working Men's Association declared May 1st a working class holiday in commemoration of the Chicago martyrs.

Endowment time-bomb

special report by Richard Sullivan

MILLIONS OF HOME-OWNERS are faced with the prospect that when their endowment-linked insurance policy matures it will not repay the mortgage to the bank or building society.

They face the prospect of having their homes repossessed if they cannot afford to make up the shortfall.

Under an endowment mortgage borrowers pay just the interest on the loan taken out with the building society or bank. The proceeds of an attached endowment investment policy, taken out with an insurance company, were supposed to repay the mortgage at the end of the loan period, and in some cases provide an additional lump sum.

Problems have arisen because the optimistic rates of investment return which it had been assumed the insurance companies would achieve when these policies were sold, have not been sustained in a period of low inflation and falling interest rates.

The Institute of Actuaries (the number-crunchers of the insurance industry) say that endowment returns have fallen from 13% in the late 1970s to around 5% during the 1990s.

The political backdrop to this problem is that when the Thatcher government came to power in 1979 one of the first actions it took was to stop funds being used for the building of any further council houses. Legislation then forced local authorities to sell off council homes to tenants.

As a result there was a reduction in the stock of available council properties for rent and a narrowing of the gap between the cost of a mortgage and (now unsubsidised) council rent. Millions of people who would previously have been expecting to become council tenants were forced to become part of the Thatcher policy of "home ownership for all".

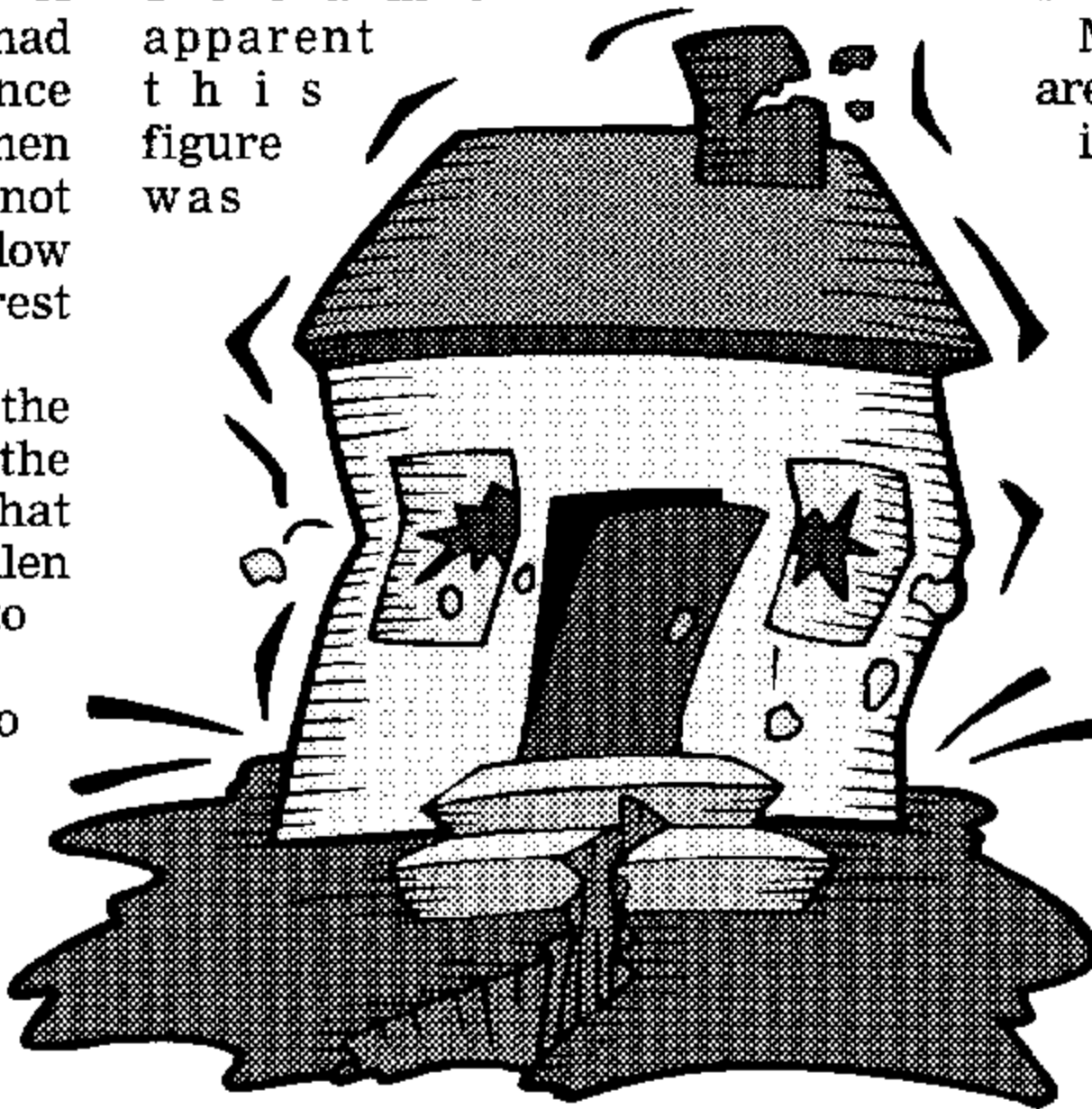
This created a situation in which rich pickings could be had for the commission-seeking salesmen of insurance

companies keen to maximise their income from first-time home buyers who had no previous experience of the property market.

Commission for selling an endowment policy was, typically, paid up-front and based on the total amount of the loan. So salesmen had a strong incentive to push an endowment, rather than a more straightforward repayment mortgage, even when this was not suitable for the borrower.

According to figures released by the Personal Investment Authority endowment mortgages, which were rare before the late seventies, had accounted for 78% of all mortgages by 1991.

As the dangers became apparent this figure was



reduced to about 30%, by 1999.

But it was too late for many borrowers. The scale of the problem is immense. Of the five million endowment policies it is estimated that about three million could fall short of the mortgage debt.

These households are faced with either having to cash in their endowment policies to reduce their mortgage debt, making considerably higher payments to their insurance company or making a lump sum one-off payment to the

endowment company or mortgage lender to ensure that the debt is paid off.

Many such householders are hit with a "double whammy" because as pension annuity rates reduce they are also facing the prospect of much lower retirement pensions than they would have anticipated.

Endowment companies, under the guidance of City regulators, are now writing to all borrowers with an assessment of whether the endowment is on track to pay off the mortgage. For many borrowers the letters will bring very bad news indeed.

For some there is the prospect of losing their homes. For others, even if they are able to avoid losing their homes, the future is bleak and uncertain.

Many of these borrowers are now in their fifties and instead of looking forward to a reasonably comfortable retirement they may now have to dip into savings to bail out their failing mortgages raising the prospect of an impoverished future. The plight of these victims of changes in the housing market demonstrates the ruthless and indiscriminate effect of free market forces within the capitalist system.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, hundreds of thousands of home owners had their homes repossessed by banks and building societies because high interest rates forced mortgage repayments up to unaffordable levels.

In the early 21st century many homeowners face the prospect of losing their homes because interest rates have moved the other way, taking investment returns with them, and making repayment of mortgage-linked endowment policies impossible.

www.fsa.gov.uk

Doors close behind New Labour

by the Editor

THE QUESTION IS often asked as to whether there is anything that Labour Party members can do, even at this late stage, to halt the New Labour 'project' led by Tony Blair.

Some suggest that the powerful vote for Ken Livingstone in the ballot to choose the official party candidate for London Mayor shows that the majority of members do not support Blair.

Others insist that Blair and his supporters are only a minority in the party and will, therefore, be obliged to bow to the wishes of the majority.

They too quickly forget that Blair actually became leader and then changed the party with the support of the majority of members and trade unions.

Still the hope is that pressure from below will either a) force Blair to return to traditional Old Labour policies or b) lead to a change of leadership and a "move to the left".

Labour was established by the trade unions at the beginning of the last century with the support of small socialist groups. The objective was to use parliamentary pressure to win

reforms from capitalism. Its greatest success was the 1945-50 government, which brought in the NHS and social security.

But the structural weakness of British capitalism meant that even the 1964-70 Labour government was hit hard by economic crisis and the demands of the International Monetary Fund.

The 1974-79 government was unstable from the outset, as a world economic slump took hold. It launched a series of attacks on the trade unions, including the firefighters and council workers, and cut public spending.

This experience showed that the post-war period of winning reforms from capitalism was over, a view confirmed in a negative way by the election of a right-wing and dictatorial Tory government.

What proved impossible in 1974 is now completely out of the question because of the intense globalisation of the world economy. The rule of the multinationals largely bypasses governments and nation states, leaving them with little influence over economic affairs.

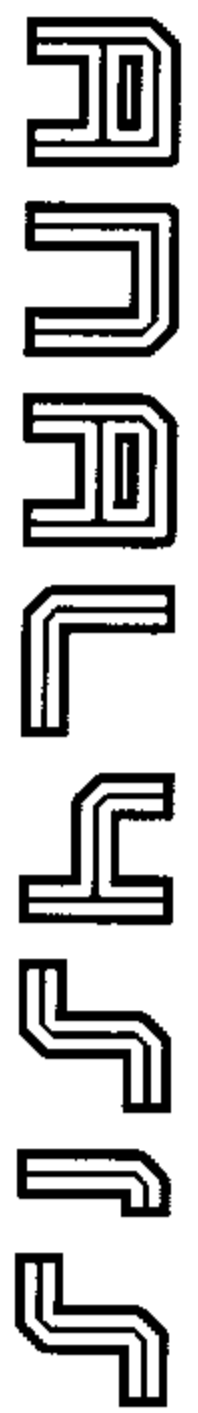
These deep economic changes

are the essential background to the emergence of the Blairites from within the Labour Party itself and their theory of the "Third Way". This process is repeating itself in other countries, notably Germany, Italy and Portugal.

Put simply, it means that parties that were once dedicated to obtaining reforms from capitalism now exist for a different purpose: easing the way for the multinationals to do business.

In other words, they are enthusiastic pro-capitalist parties and this remains true even if the majority of members do not see it that way. In any case, the Blairites have established a stranglehold over the party machinery to enforce their rule.

As we have seen, there is no golden age of Old Labour to return to, even if it were possible to turn back the clock of history. What is posed, therefore, is not the winning back of the Labour Party from the Blairites but the development of a socialist movement to challenge the multinationals.



OLD LABOUR'S AIM	NEW LABOUR'S AIM
securing reforms from capitalism	reforming capitalism to make it function more effectively
restricting the excesses of capitalism	lifting the restrictions on the functioning of corporations
public funding of services and benefits	privatising (council housing) private finance (NHS, Tube); private pensions
using the state to control the economy	giving up state control (eg interest rates)
acknowledgement of class interests	rejection of class interests - the "third way"
reference to socialist ideas	everyone in the party is "on message"
welfare provision as a way of helping people	welfare as a stick to force people into low-paid work
support for local government and democracy	centralising power and undermining local councils
support for educational opportunities	tuition fees and continuous attacks on state education
equal access to the legal system	curbs on legal aid and the rights of defendants
conflict with intelligence agencies	use of agencies against opponents

FBU UNDER FIRE

*Below: Firefighters demonstrate to show support for their Homerton colleagues
Opposite page: Ken Livingstone joins the protest with FBU members outside the Brigade headquarters*

The Fire Brigades Union is bracing itself for a sustained attack by the employers and the New Labour government on a number of fronts, including pensions, jobs and conditions. At the same time, many FBU members are questioning the union's links with Labour and London voted overwhelmingly to back Ken Livingstone as the independent candidate for Mayor. Mick Shergold, acting secretary of the union's London Region, talked to Paul Feldman about the issues facing the FBU.



IN 1978, WHEN LABOUR was last in office, the Fire Brigades Union called its only national strike over pay and conditions. The Home Office called out the army in an unsuccessful bid to break the firefighters' resolve.

When the strike ended, a national pay award machinery based on an agreed formula was hammered out, which survives until this day.

Shortly afterwards, the Tories swept to power and for 18 years the fire service endured cutbacks in cover and staffing levels. Many firefighters hoped the election of New Labour in 1997 would improve things. They were proved wrong.

At last year's FBU annual conference, delegates voiced their anger at the continuing cuts imposed by Labour-controlled fire authorities and at government threats to pensions and other conditions. A motion was carried which allowed individual firefighters to opt out of paying a levy to the Labour Party while contributing to the union's political fund.

"Despite all the attacks of the last few years the FBU has

shown a position of strength," says Mick Shergold. "That is why the Home Office ordered the inquiry into the industrial relations in the fire service."

The inquiry was demanded by the employers, who are organised in the Labour-controlled Local Government Association. It followed the FBU's refusal to accept that the National Joint Council (NJC) procedures for arbitration applied to fundamental issues.

This followed pressure from the employers to exempt new entrants from existing contracts and to break up national conditions of service.

As a result, the employers withdrew from the NJC and called on Home Secretary Jack Straw to set up an inquiry, which is due to report shortly. "The employers are extremely frustrated by the disputes procedure," says Shergold. "They want to make changes in national conditions and want a machinery that allows them to be dismantled.

"We are the last public service union with national conditions and national strength and if

anything detrimental comes out of the inquiry we will resist it."

In London, many firefighters believe the employers are testing the resistance of the union over the Homerton 11. The Hackney firefighters were initially suspended after refusing to work alongside men directed to Homerton over the millennium period. Their action was taken in support of a ban on overtime and demands to make up the shortfall of more than 130 firefighters in London. Since reinstated, the Homerton 11 are now facing disciplinary action, which the London FBU is resisting.

Other "best value" proposals coming from New Labour include plans to amalgamate brigades and scrap the separate control room system that exists for the fire service. "Merging control rooms from different services will affect our members' pay and conditions as well as public safety," says Shergold and this is clearly one of the issues that will dominate the annual conference of the FBU in Bridlington.

From May, control over the fire

TIME TO PUT PEOPLE BEFORE PROFITS

STEVE KENNEDY, FBU BRANCH SECRETARY at Walthamstow, north-east London, told a meeting of the Movement for a Socialist Future: "Since as long as I can remember, certainly since I joined the fire brigade 22 years ago, it has been constantly under attack, as have other vital public services.

"But even following the election of a Labour government, the attacks continue, on jobs, conditions of service and, most important of all, fire cover. We no longer have a public to protect and serve, but 'customers'! But people who have fires or tragedy don't care about 'value for money'. They want fire engines." He said rank and file socialists in London and in the FBU put people's safety before profit.

In his work, he saw as the victims of fires, those had fallen through NHS and social services 'safety nets'. He added: "Poverty and deprivation are part of the politics of fire. The infirm, the old, the poor, refugees and asylum seekers, or people with alternative lifestyles such as the homeless or travellers, are worst affected by cuts in public services. And in the case of the fire service, this means those are the people whose very lives are most at risk."



Visit
www.fbu-ho.org

service in London will come under the Greater London Assembly and the Mayor.

For the London FBU there is only one choice for Mayor – Ken Livingstone. In the ballot to choose New Labour's candidate, firefighters voted 96% for Livingstone.

When they were thwarted by the electoral college stitch-up, the London FBU regional committee decided overwhelmingly to back Livingstone as an independent candidate and to make a substantial donation to his campaign. "Many members feel let down by the government," Shergold explains. "There are very strong calls for the FBU to divorce from the Labour Party because they are no longer delivering what the trade unions expect of them. After 80 years of affiliation, this is quite a painful page in the history of the labour and trade union movement."

After the vote to back Livingstone, the national FBU

summonsed the two London executive members to instruct them to abandon the decision because the union was affiliated to the Labour Party and could not support any other candidate, despite the members' wishes.

"We are extremely disappointed that the FBU nationally did not take the same attitude as when Scotland and Wales supported non-Labour candidates. Ken Livingstone pledged that there would be no more cuts in the fire service if he became Mayor and that's very important.

"So we will support him in an individual capacity. Many FBU members are collecting money on the streets and helping his campaign."

As to the future, Shergold says: "We are in a very privileged position because the public is so supportive of firefighters. We know that other trade unions are watching what happens to us and that we are in the front line in defending what we have won."

RAID THREAT TO FIREFIGHTERS' PENSIONS

NEW LABOUR IS reviewing the fire service pension scheme, which unlike other funds is not invested in order to meet future requirements. It is often raided to

pay for new equipment and make up financial shortfalls. Increasingly large amounts of fire service budgets are now being used to meet present pension commitments.

The FBU says of the review: "This shifts responsibility for the payment of present and future pensions firmly onto the backs of firefighters themselves, who have already been paying a high contribution for their pension, 11% of their wages.

"It proposes a diminution of some of the benefits due to existing firefighters as well as the introduction of a less favourable scheme for new entrants and does nothing to solve the current financial problems of the service and the pension scheme."

The union adds: "It is, in our view, unfair that firefighters should have to carry the can for the mismanagement of pension provisions. They are being asked to pay for a problem which is not of their making. The document implies that the pension provisions and the ill-health and injury payments to firefighters are over generous. Frankly, this is insulting."

Another review is taking place into the levels of cover required for the fire service. The FBU warns: "We repeat our assertion that those who have first hand experience of firefighting are best placed to know what crewing levels NEED to be. We are also concerned about the dangers to the public and to firefighters when minimum standards become the norm as indeed they are at present."



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STRAW'S BIG BROTHER STATE

BY PHILIP WADE

New laws aimed at turning protesters into "terrorists" and allowing the state to check out people's e-mails are sailing through parliament with scarcely a voice raised in opposition.

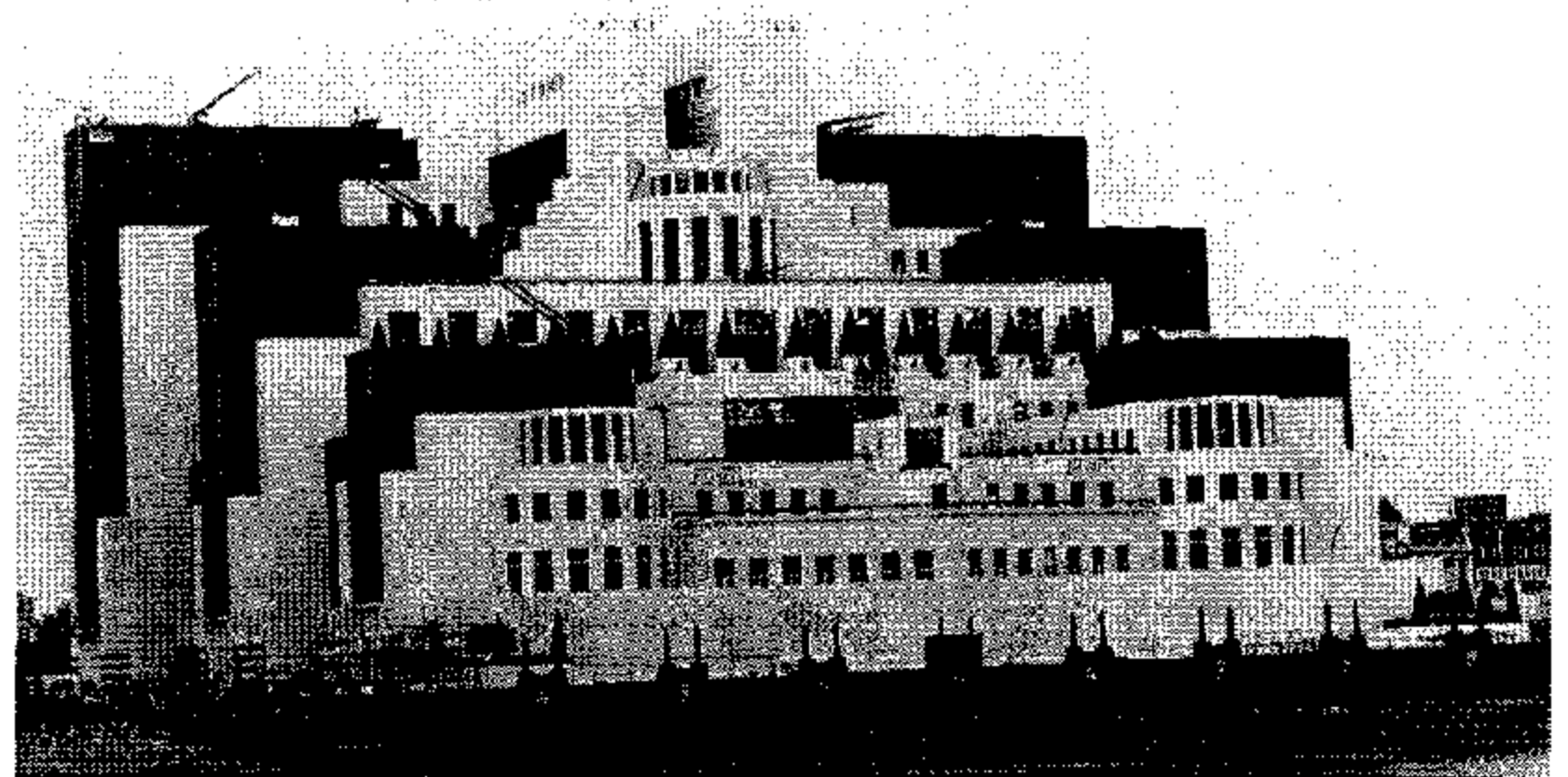
Taken alongside the curb on jury trials, the destruction of the legal aid system and the decision to keep sensitive information secret, the new Bills are planks in New Labour's Big Brother state.

The Terrorism Bill gives the police an array of sweeping new powers and in effect sets up a parallel criminal justice system. It gives them stop and search powers on the basis of "expediency" and of "suspicion".

The Prevention of Terrorism Act is currently restricted to those suspected of involvement in international terrorism and Northern Ireland. New Labour wants this to apply to a broader definition of "terrorism", which will include violence against property.

Clause 1 of the Bill defines terrorism as "the use or threat for the purpose of advancing a political religious or ideological cause, of action which a) involves serious violence against person or property, b) endangers the life of any person or c) creates a serious risk to the health or safety of the public or a section of the public".

It extends the actions to countries other than Britain as well as actions taken in support of a banned organisation. Under the Bill, those charged will have to prove their innocence rather than the prosecution having to prove guilt. Under the Bill, it will mean that:



- if you intended to destroy GM crops for reasons of conscience you would have fewer rights than a person who was involved in the deliberate assault and robbery of a vulnerable person.
- if you find information about, or become suspicious of someone, whom you suspect may be using money or property to contribute to the causes of terrorism, you must report them. Failure will make you liable to a five year prison sentence.
- had you, for example, been an exiled supporter of Nelson Mandela who publicly supported the armed struggle in South Africa, you would be considered a terrorist.
- if you address a meeting that you know will also be addressed by someone from a proscribed organisation, you will have committed a criminal offence for which you can be sentenced to prison for ten years.

Liberty, the civil rights organisation, warns: "The proposed definition is vague and could cover a whole range of incidents. This is reflected by the Home Secretary's statements that decisions about what is, and is not, classed as terrorism, would be decided on a case by case basis in the courts."



Top: MI6 HQ in London
Above: Protester at J18

The idea of destruction of property being a terrorist offence is clearly aimed at groups who take direct action in the course of their protest.

Straw will have power to ban organisations like animal rights groups or the organisers of anti-capitalist events like J18 in London last year, and Liberty says: "If direct action organisations are being targeted as potential terrorists, then it is only a short step to proscription and membership of such organisations becoming a criminal offence."

SPOOKS RUNNING NEW LABOUR

The government has launched a series of attacks against newspapers and the ex-MI5 spy David Shayler in a bid to cover up an essential fact: the spooks are in charge of New Labour.

Foreign Secretary Robin Cooke is desperate because after describing Shayler's claim that MI6 plotted to

assassinate Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi as "fantasy", a secret report by a British agent published on the Internet verified the story. Shayler has given Home Secretary Jack Straw the names of the two MI6 agents involved in the plot, which appears to have had no authorisation from the previous Tory government.

The reaction from the state was swift. An Old Bailey judge ordered the *Guardian* and *Observer* to hand over any documents and e-mails relating to Shayler. Then government lawyers served Shayler - who is in exile in France - with a writ claiming damages in the civil courts.

This was after Special Branch officers dragged



David Shayler

student Julie Ann Davies out of a lecture at Kingston University and arrested her.

Her "crime"? Being a supporter of Shayler.

Both newspapers immediately announced that they would challenge the judge's order, and would take it to the European court of human rights if necessary.

Alan Rusbridger, the editor of the

Guardian, said: "These police powers should only be used in exceptional circumstances against newspapers as they represent an interference with freedom of expression."

The leaked document on Gaddafi confirms that MI6 had an agent who had prior information about the plans of a group of army plotters who had decided either to arrest or kill him as part of a coup in February/ March 1996. It was sent to the permanent under-secretary's department, which directly advises the Foreign Secretary. The Foreign Office therefore clearly knew that MI6 was aware of advanced plans to stage a coup in which Gaddafi would be arrested or killed.

In a statement, supporters of Shayler said: "Since August 1998 members of the government have been prepared to allow a lie rather than the truth to circulate about an illegal MI6 plot which led to the murder of innocent civilians. The government and MI6 conspired to protect ... the officer who led the operation, from being arrested and charged with murder while David languished in prison."

www.shayler.com



UNDER THE Regulation of Investigatory Powers (RIP) Bill, state agencies will get the power to intercept pagers, mobile and satellite phones, and e-mail, as well as private networks, including office switchboards.

They would also be able to force people to provide the key to encoded e-mails or face a criminal charge.

The Bill covers a wide range of surveillance techniques, including systematic targeting of an individual over a period of time in order, as the Home Office puts it, "to obtain a picture of his life, activities and his associates".

It includes the bugging of private property and cars, and the use of "covert human intelligence sources" - informants or undercover officers.

Ministers will be able to issue orders allowing many other agencies, like the Social Security department, to undertake covert spying.

Kaman Akdeniz, the director of Cyber-Rights & Cyber-Liberties (UK), warned that it would never be possible for someone to prove they had never had an e-mail decryption key, and he added that the Bill breached human rights legislation.

www.liberty-human-rights.org.uk

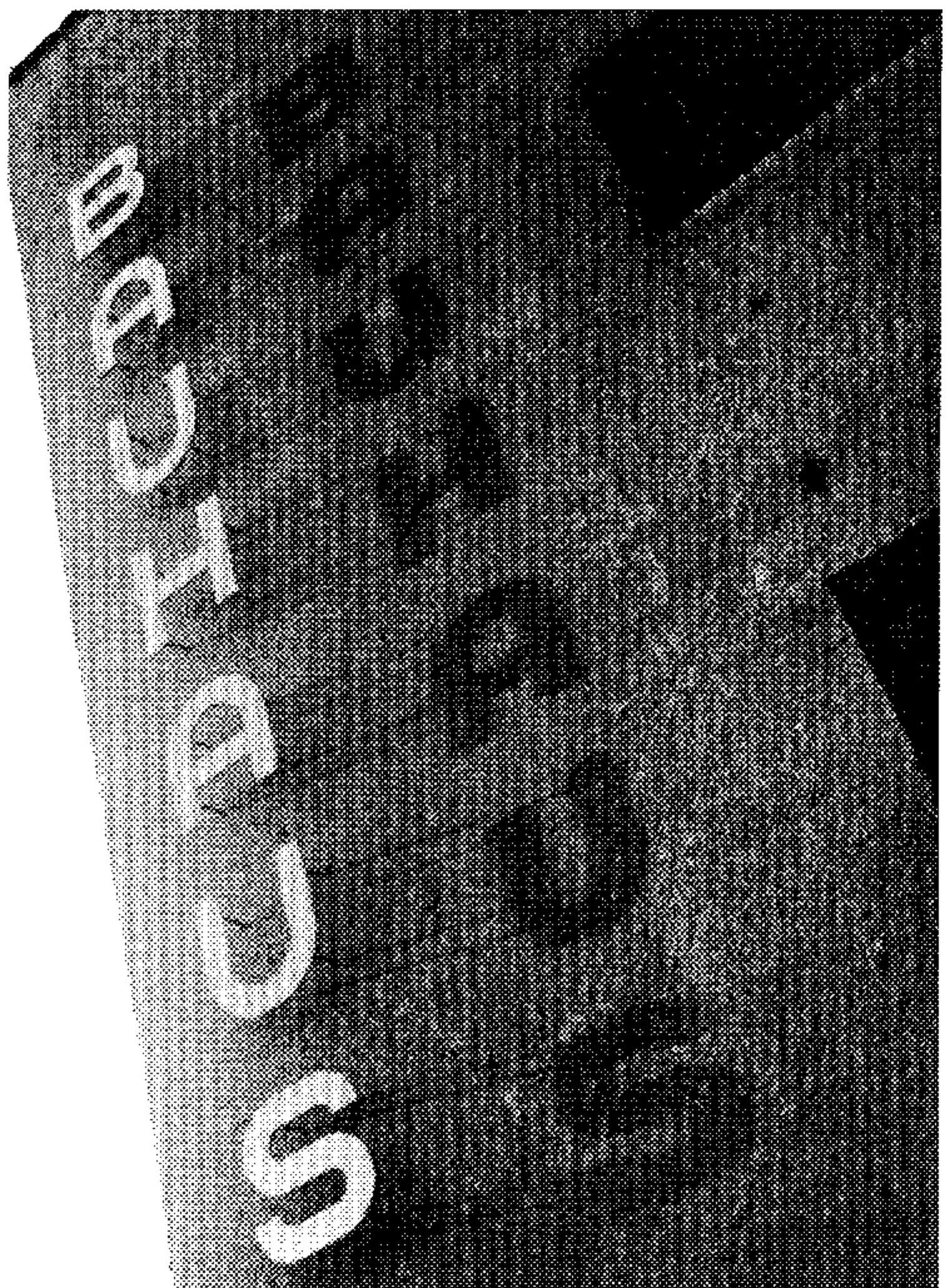
The government intends to retain the arrest powers of existing anti-terror laws, which entitle the police to arrest without warrant.

While Labour MPs sat on their hands, it was left to Simon Hughes, the Liberal Democrat spokesman, to oppose what he described as a measure "threatening the liberties of all our constituents and giving powers to the state that throw the relationship between the state and the individual out of balance".



building the future

BY CORINNA LOTZ



LONDON'S DESIGN MUSEUM stands looking out over the Thames, its white simplicity in sharp contrast to the tacky yuppie flats that clutter up the river's bank further east.

It was built as a deliberate statement of confidence in what is termed "the modern movement" in architecture and design, which can be said to have begun with the Bauhaus.

There could not, therefore, be a better place to give today's Londoners a glimpse of the most revolutionary design school of the last century.

The museum has brought together hundreds of paintings, household utensils, posters, documents, furniture, books, metalwork, photographs, models textiles and sketches to give an idea of what the Bauhaus produced.

Bauhaus means "building house" in German. It was the name given to a unique school for art, architecture and design founded in Germany over 90 years ago.

Through the show you can get an idea of what an exciting adventure took place there, in the fairly short breathing space between the end of World War I and when the Nazis took power.

The artists, architects and designers at the Bauhaus, as well as many of those who created the earlier Art Nouveau movement, were inspired by the idea that everyone, regardless of their income or origin, has the right to live in a pleasing, well-designed environment, surrounded by objects that are both useful and beautiful.

This idea met with enthusiasm from art and design students but got into constant trouble with the authorities as the political climate swung from left to right in post World War I Germany.

The story begins in the town of Weimar, Germany where a pioneering design group was established in 1907. One of its founder members was a Flemish architect Henri van de Velde, and the others were Peter Behrens and Walter Gropius.

In 1919 these three helped to found the first Bauhaus based on the idea that crafts people and artists should work together to "create the new building of the future".

When a right-wing coalition assumed power in Weimar, the local council withdrew support from the school and sacked its staff, forcing them to leave in 1925.

But in the same year the mayor of another town, Fritz Hesse of Dessau, welcomed the staff to his city, and commissioned Gropius to design the school's buildings and campus.

Its opening in 1926 attracted a huge crowd. The preliminary course was taught by a cosmopolitan group of artists and designers such as Johannes Itten, Josef Albers and Laszlo Moholy-Nagy. They emphasised learning through experimentation and an understanding of the nature of the materials and techniques.

The new Bauhaus at Dessau left behind some of the more old-



Opposite page: the Bauhaus Dessau building 1927, Lucia Moholy.
 Above: Masters on the roof of the Bauhaus building, Bauhaus-archiv.
 In the centre holding a cigarette is Walter Gropius, and next but one
 with his shoulder to the camera, Vassily Kandinsky.

fashioned ideas about art and design and sought to integrate its work with new industrial production.

The show at the Design Museum gives an idea of the feeling of liberation produced by the new building, which incorporated a huge glass curtain wall, simplified design and open spaces filled with light.

As the museum's director, Paul Thompson, says: "The Bauhaus wasn't cold: it was a centre of student humour, irreverence and legendary parties... What could be more energetic and eccentric than an art school which placed gymnastics and sport on the curriculum as compulsory?"

"It is a misconception that the Bauhaus was cold, 'teutonic' and dull. It was a melting pot of intellectuals and artists drawn from Hungary, Czechoslovakia, France, Russia, Germany and even Japan – all seeking to define an international style."

The *Bauhaus Dessau* show brings together a fascinating variety of work and documents which show what the founders, teachers and students believed, what they made

and what life was like inside the school.

It lasted until 1932, when the school was forcibly closed down by the Nazis. The beautiful building later had a wide variety of tenants. It was hit by an Allied bombardment in 1945, but the main structure survived.

In the 1970s, a renewed appreciation of the architecture of the Bauhaus began and renovations have been going on to this day. The school is now run as a trust and is designated as a World Heritage Site by Unesco.

Bauhaus Dessau. Until 4 June.
 Design Museum, Shad Thames, SE1,
 (Near Tower Bridge) £5.50/£4.50/£4,
 open 11.30-18.00 weekdays, 10.30-
 18.00 weekends. T: 020 7378 6055.
www.designmuseum.org

Also showing: *Kind of Blue*. The work of Stuart Walker, from Calgary, Canada, features 32 prototypes, including lighting, jewelry, radios, telephones and furniture. Walker uses re-cycled, discarded and waste materials with an amazing artistic flair.

Listings

- The multi-cultural *Kitoto band*, with their cross section of Afro-latin rhythms, are at Bar Lorca on Easter Sunday, 23rd April at 261 Brixton Rd, SW9 from 9pm – midnight. Kitoto's motto is: "If you can talk you can sing, if you can walk you can dance."

- *A positive view 2*. Millennium photo show, The Chimney, The Old Truman Brewery, 91 Brick Lane, London E1 £5/£2.50 until 27 April. T: 0208 372 5455. www.getty-positiveview.com

- *Because a fire was in my head*. International artists look at the large and the small. Until 21 May. Lectures plus guided tours, 2-3 May, 6.30pm, free. South London Gallery, 65 Peckham Road, London SE5. T: 0207 703 6120. www.southlondonart.com

- *Weegee*. Street photos from Manhattan, Museum of Modern Art, Oxford, until 2 July, £2.50/1.50, 30 Pembroke Street. T: 01865 813830. www.moma.org.uk

Vote Livingstone for Mayor

WE URGE London's five million voters to back Ken Livingstone for Mayor on May 4 in opposition to the New Labour candidate, Frank Dobson.

Livingstone's decision to defy expulsion from his party in order to challenge New Labour deserves support.

A majority of Labour Party members and an overwhelming number of trade unionists backed Livingstone because he opposes Tube privatisation and wants to increase spending on services.

If, as looks certain, Livingstone wins, it will show that the Blair government is far from all-powerful and that it is possible to defeat it.

Millions of people who voted New Labour in 1997 are now

looking for an alternative to a government which has betrayed their hopes and aspirations.

A vote for Livingstone will encourage them to think about political solutions outside of New Labour.

The fact that Livingstone cannot find a home in a party he was a member of for 31 years shows that we are, indeed, at a turning point in British politics.

New Labour will tolerate no opposition and wants to replace the Tories as the party that represents the ruling class.

But it clearly is in crisis. Not only have its traditional supporters deserted it, but many capitalists are also having second thoughts about Blair's economic policies, especially over the pound.

A discredited New Labour government means that the vast majority of working people have no one to represent their interests.

A century of parliamentary politics is drawing to a close. The traditional routes for change are blocked off in the world of globalised capitalism.

That is why the support for Livingstone is so widespread, irrespective of what his policies actually are.

There is an objective need for a new way forward, which will become more apparent after the Mayoral election.

That is why we must redouble our efforts to build an alternative society. The first step in that is to join the Movement for a Socialist Future.

Artists are backing Ken

JUST OFF BOND STREET, in the heart of London's most exclusive art gallery land, an audience of artists, art lovers and patrons applauded loudly as Ken Livingstone called for free admission to art galleries and museums. "Museum charges cut people off," he said, opening an art auction at the Gimpel Fils gallery to raise money for his mayoral campaign.

Gimpel Fils director, Rene Gimpel, said he was delighted the 51 donated art works had raised £110,000 in just an hour and a half's bidding. He told *Socialist Future* how the auction came to be held in his gallery.

"The initial idea came up because Ken Livingstone performed for one of our artists, Peter Kennard, two years ago and also opened a recent exhibition for him, called *Our Financial Times*.

"We got an extraordinary amount of sponsorship, including various businesses putting up the money for the framing and the catalogue - which was quite unexpected and shows the broad range of interests which this campaign reaches.

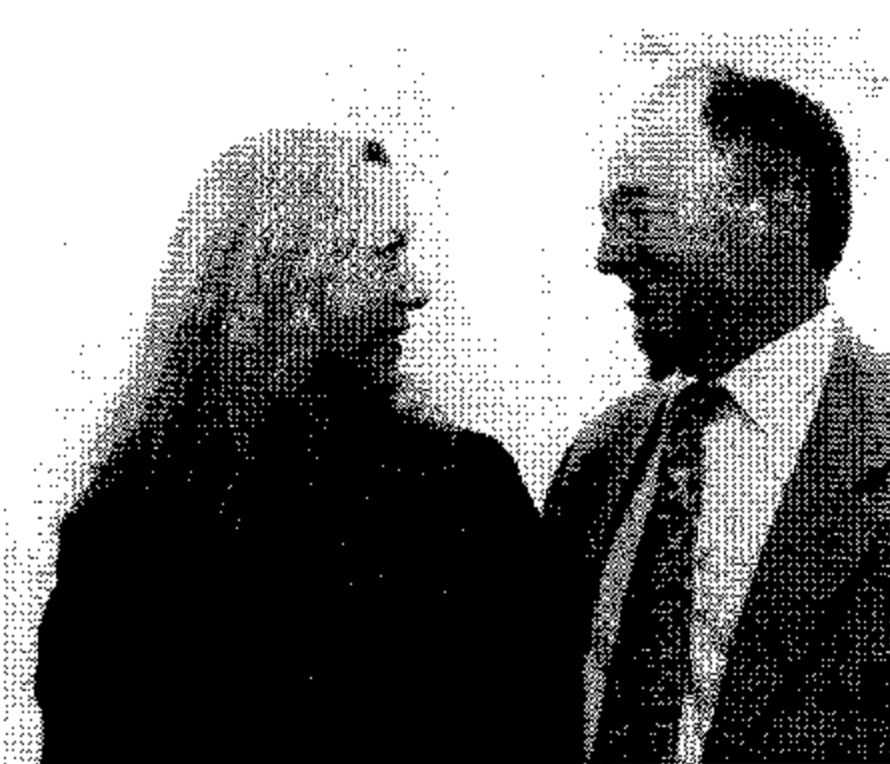
"Artists have political sympathy with Livingstone and also perhaps they like the idea of someone who is

a bit of a maverick. If he had been the official Labour candidate there would have been less interest. But as artists tend to be iconoclasts on the margins of society, many of them, wealthy or not, like the idea of a street fighter like Ken."

Artist Tracey Emin, whose book of photographs and a drawing called *Exploration of the Soul* was donated to the auction by her dealer, Jay Jopling, said she supported Livingstone because he was "charismatic".

Actor Neil Pearson, who is organising Livingstone's fundraising, said: "This is an independent organisation and we need to gather money wherever we can. When you don't have a party machine, you look to your friends. We found a lot of people in the arts world were ready to support us and that Ken is an easy sell.

"When artists of a high stature and profile, like Damien Hirst, Tracey Emin, Antony Gormley and Anthony Caro are all ready to give work, then you are in business. Obviously we were very pleased to have their support because it shows a confidence in Ken's cultural policies."



Livingstone chats to artist Sarah Medway
photo: Jenny Matthews

Bert Irwin, whose colourful canvas *Approach* went for £1,000, said: "I thought I'd like to support Ken Livingstone for Mayor of London because he was brilliant when he was leader of the GLC and we all had cheap travel on the London Underground. He would make a brilliant mayor and I hope my little picture will do something to support him."

The largest single sale in the auction was Damien Hirst's *Beautiful Butterbomb*, which raised £50,000. Richard Wentworth's *Crack, Ball and Bowl* went for £3,500.