

working class towards socialism. We will stay in the Labour Party.

The Labour Party remains the bourgeois workers' party it always was, but now with a radical shift towards the bourgeois pole of the dialectical, contradictory, formation. General formulas demand concretisation. Concretely, now, a Blair-Labour government will be anti-working-class according to even the most minimal criteria.

The reason for nevertheless wanting a Labour government is calculation that the roadblock can be broken and the working class begin to raise itself. The Labour leaders, whose party is still based on the working class, may not have things entirely their own way in power. The act of taking office will break, or begin to break, their hold on the labour movement. Much will depend on the socialists organising the labour movement to fight for its own needs against a Labour government pursuing Tory policies. For example, tremendous scope exists for self-renovating trade-union and working-class action in defence of the welfare state, and especially the National Health Service.

THE Blairites imagine themselves becoming the natural party of government, replacing the Tories. Little Mr Blair has his paid publicists present him as a strong leader, "in the Thatcher mould". The difference is that Thatcher, most of the time, satisfied most of her party and its bedrock supporters. Blair

can only disappoint and outrage his. For the Blairites to replace the Tories as the chosen party of the bourgeoisie they would have to cut their roots. They plan to cut their roots. They forget that there is another precondition: that the Tories, who have been the main party of the bourgeoisie since the 1870s, fall apart and disappear. Despite the Tories' faction-fighting over Europe, they are a long way from doing that.

The Blairites would do well to remember what John Major said when he succeeded Thatcher as leader of a Tory party facing seemingly certain defeat in the 1992 election: the Tory party is one of the great political fighting machines. The Tories went on to win the 1992 General Election.

The most likely consequence of the Blairite project is for the Labour Party, with its roots in the trade unions cut, to be reduced to the untenable position of the Liberal Party before 1914. One of the reasons why the Labour Party was able to supplant the Liberals was that it had the solid trade-union base to parallel the ruling-class base of the Tory Party. If the labour movement continues to roll over and play dead for the Blairites in the hope that they will win for us, it may lose everything. Today we can only beat the Tory enemy without if, in the Labour Party and trade unions alike, we simultaneously fight the Tory enemy within. Help us organise that fight!

Crisis in Israel

OBSCENITY does not normally lend itself to expression in numbers and statistics. In Hebron now it does; and Hebron says a great deal about the essential relationship of the Palestinian Arabs and the colonising Israelis, a relationship that, in late September, erupted into a brief civil war between Israeli occupation troops and Palestinian police and civilians.

So that a couple of hundred Israeli Jews can go about their business and live their lives as they choose in Hebron, over a hundred thousand Palestinian Arabs are forced to live under Israeli military rule, facing routine curfews and frequent brutality. In a democratic world, the Jews in Hebron would not need protection; but since they do need it, the idea that the right of this little group of religious zealots to live and pray in Hebron can override the rights and freedoms of the entire Arab population of the city — that is a palpable obscenity. It is predatory chauvinism, reinforced by religious paranoia and served by a state power run by people who are chauvinists of the worst sort.

These chauvinists narrowly won the recent Israeli election and have since been busy derailing the peace process, which gave some Palestinian Arabs an all-too-limited autonomy. The benefit to the Palestinians of even that limited autonomy was seen during the fighting. It was not stone-throwing youth against a savagely ruthless army, as the intifada had been; the state personnel of the Palestinian state-in-process-of-formation joined them and defended them. It was an intifada with guns. That is progress!

This crisis may yet force even the chauvinists of the Israeli government to reconsider; or force the US to force them to. But it will not be easy. The Israeli right can point to the role of the Palestinian police as an argument against a Palestinian state, and for their policy of "revising" — that

is, essentially scrapping — the PLO-Israeli agreement under which limited autonomy devolved on some Palestinian areas.

Behind this Israeli government is an electorate that is genuinely frightened of Palestinian terrorism such as the devastating car bombs that exploded in Israel six months ago and, together with the assassination of Rabin, probably gave Likud its election victory.

Workers' Liberty took the attitude to the PLO-Israeli agreement that it was miserably inadequate, but nevertheless the best step forward in 50 years, and possibly the basis for an evolution towards Palestinian self-determination in the areas where they are the majority. This provoked disloyal critics to accuse us of supporting the limitations of the agreement (and Zionism and "racism" etc, etc,) and more loyal ones to argue that no good could come of such a limited and circumscribed Palestinian self-rule. We responded that this, in the circumstances, was the only way forward for the Palestinian Arabs, and thus that this first step was tremendously positive. The present danger of the destruction of the progress the Palestinians have made in the last three years throws all those arguments into sharp relief. If Likud's election victory leads to the destruction of the agreement, then the Palestinians will be pushed backwards; the deal will be replaced not by something better but by something a great deal worse.

The Israeli right fear the agreement, because even weak Palestinian self-rule has the possibility of evolving towards effective self-determination and self-rule. Not to want that is to be an enemy of the Palestinian people. It remains true that the only right, equitable and achievable resolution of the Arab-Jewish conflict is two independent and possibly federated states for two peoples. That means: Israel out of the West Bank! Self-determination for the Palestinian Arabs!