

# POVERTY AND HUNGER FOR BILLIONS

ONE in five of the world's population is living in dire poverty, according to grim figures issued by the United Nations last week.

Of the world's 5.6 billion people:

■ 1.5 billion lack access to clean drinking water and sanitation

■ Over half a billion go to bed hungry each night.

■ On present trends a further 200 million people will be plunged into poverty by the end of the century in the colonial countries alone.

■ Of the planet's nearly 3 billion labour force there are 120 million people actively looking for work — but without result or hope.

■ Although poverty is concentrated in the colonial and semi-colonial countries it is growing rapidly in North America and western Europe, where one in six live below the poverty line.

■ Technical change and the re-distribution of factories to low-wage areas is wiping out jobs in western Europe and north America. Poverty is spreading rapidly in these 'rich' countries.

■ London has 400,000 registered homeless.

■ There are 10,000 with no home in Paris, out of a total of 500,000 in France as a whole.

■ Nearly a quarter of a million New Yorkers have stayed in shelters over the last five years. This is more than 3 per cent of the city's population and more than one in 12 of its black children.

## Exist

By poverty the UN means those trying to exist on incomes of \$370 a year. The very poor are those with incomes of about \$275 a year.

Women represent 70 per cent of the poverty-stricken people of the world. They are closely followed by the elderly and children.

■ For many of these people education is non-existent. A billion adults in the world are illiterate. Over 500 million children have nowhere to go to school.

■ Infant mortality rates are about 175 per 1,000 live births in Africa and close to 100 in India. In the big capitalist countries the figure is 15.

The greatest concentration of poverty-stricken people is in

Africa, where half the people are impoverished.

The UN figures are part of the preparations for a World Summit for Social Development to be held in March next year.

But all talk of 'development' is a cruel and sick joke. As the 20th century ends capitalism forces countless millions to live in sub-human conditions. And as the United Nations admits: the situation is getting worse.

No doubt the well-paid Labour Party leaders will shed crocodile tears at this scene of human misery and degradation that has reached almost unbelievable proportions. These leaders will undoubtedly call for a 'greater aid effort' from the Tory government.

Yet, as Blair and company know only too well, it is the capitalist governments of Europe and North America that bleed Africa, Asia and Latin America dry. Almost 80 per cent of the money flowing into Europe and North America from these areas is in the form of debt repayments.

The UN figures — which embody human suffering, misery and degradation on a scale hardly possible to imagine — indicate that capitalism is now a completely immoral and historically bankrupt system.

It does not threaten the world with barbarism. It forces millions and millions to live in barbaric conditions — today and every day of their lives.

This is the rotting system that the official labour leaders in Britain and throughout the world are tied to hand and foot.

More than ever humanity's crisis demands socialism — the working class taking its future into its own hands and the development of the planet's riches for the benefit of everybody, not for the enjoyment of a minority of capitalist parasites.

BY GEOFF PILLING

## McLibel protesters march

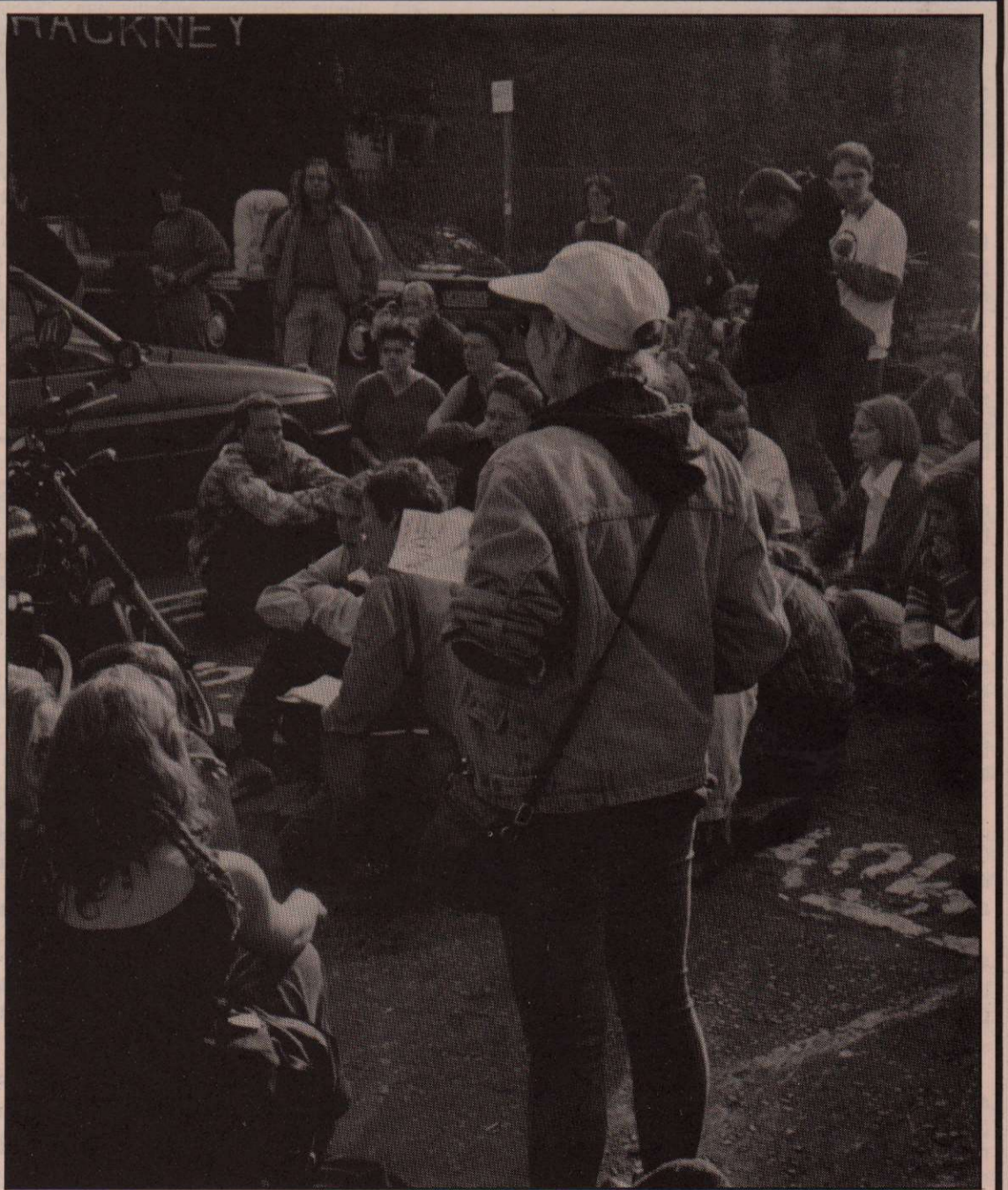
HUNDREDS of supporters of the two accused in the McLibel case marched through central London last Saturday.

There were scuffles and some arrests when marchers sat down in busy shopping streets.

The march ended with an impromptu kerbside rally in Red Lion Square (see picture).

Hackney Trades Union Support Unit activists joined the march and handed out leaflets urging McDonald's workers to use their right to unionise to combat low pay and improve safety and working conditions.

■ Contact the McDonald's Workers Support Group on 071-249 8086 or c/o Hackney Trade Union Support Unit, Colin Roach Centre, 10a Bradbury Street, London N16.



## On other pages:

Clause Four, p.2;

ARA conference, p.3

Tory conference, p.4&5;

Guatemala, p.6;

Construction safety, p.7;

South Africa, p.8.

## SOUTH AFRICA £5,000 FUND

WE HAVE received £2,437. Thanks to all those who have contributed to this fund of international working-class solidarity, helping the work of our comrades in South Africa.

Last year a successful fund-raising event, and a very enjoyable evening, was Peter Fryer's lecture on black music. Knowing that our fund is for the fight in South Africa, Peter has readily agreed to give us the

benefit of his knowledge again.

Clara Buckley will introduce Peter Fryer at The Assembly Hall, Lambeth Town Hall, Acre Lane, Brixton  
Wednesday 16  
November, 7.30pm

'A European Looks at Black Music' — a lecture, with music £4 (£2 concessions)  
Caribbean and African food

You can have a good night out, and help us to complete the solidarity fund.

If you live too far away, join us 'in spirit' by sending in your donation — small or large — to this important fund, and take out a postal subscription to our South African comrades' paper, 'Workers International News'. £10 for ten issues, £5.60 for five.

Send money to the Workers International, South Africa Appeal, PO Box 735, London, SW8 1YB. Cheques etc. payable to 'South Africa Appeal'

## Workers Press

# Why Labour wants to ditch Clause Four

**WHY did Labour leader Tony Blair attack Clause Four at the recent Labour Party conference? This is the clause that commits Labour to the nationalisation of the means of production, distribution and exchange.**

For sure it was not because there is currently any powerful movement in the Labour Party in favour of Clause Four. No, Blair has set about ditching the clause because he wants to underline even more his complete subservience to the capitalist order.

He, his deputy Prescott, and the rest of the leadership know full well that, if the party wins the next election, a Labour government would have the job of attacking the working class on all fronts. Blair was, in effect, telling the bankers and money-dealers that they can sleep soundly in their beds.

It was the arch-reformist Sydney Webb, later Lord Passfield, who introduced Clause Four into the party's constitution. He did so in the aftermath of the 1917 Russian Revolution, and his move was largely aimed at preventing a large exodus from the party to the newly-formed Communist Party.

When the clause was partly implemented by a Labour government in the period after 1945, this was designed to strengthen capitalism. The backward, rundown industries — coal, rail, steel, etc. — were nationalised, and lavish compensation was paid to their capitalist owners. There was not a semblance of workers' control in any of this.

Leaving Webb's motives aside, and the experience of nationalisation after 1945, it is this clause in the party's constitution that speaks of common ownership, that is the abolition of private property. That is why Blair feels driven to eradicate it from the 'new' Labour Party.

\* \* \* \* \*

## HOW has Labour's 'official' left, congregated around the paper 'Tribune', reacted to this attack on Clause Four?

'Labour's conference week was a success,' they said. 'No one who was at Blackpool last week or who was watching the proceedings on television can have failed to notice that Labour is in an upbeat mood and is on the point of putting the Tories to flight' ('Tribune' 14 October).

'Tony Blair's speech aimed some hard punches at the establishment and the fossilised nature of British society,' it was added. What these punches were is not specified. This is hardly a shock after a conference at which the Labour leaders took a further sharp shift to the right — to such a degree that the Tories were able to claim, with some justification, that Labour has stolen so many of their clothes that Major and company are now almost naked.

Naturally the Tribuniters are disturbed at the 'barb' at the end of 'the leader's' speech: the call for the scrapping of Clause Four. They are disturbed on two grounds:

■ Because, according to the paper, 'Clause Four... [is] of no great consequence on the doorsteps of Croydon or Accrington. People are far more interested in what [Labour has] to say about the health service and the minimum wage'.

■ Because the discussion on Clause Four will lead to 'introspection', whereas everybody should be 'concentrating everything on attacking the Tories and going for power.'

Such 'reasons' are a complete evasion of the issues.

In the first place, how can there be an adequate health service and decent wages and working conditions while capitalism remains? It is only on the basis of the nationalisation of the basic industries and the instruments of finance that these things can be achieved.

Second, Blair has no intention of attacking the Tories or the class that stands behind them.

Tribune announces that it will soon be calling a conference to 'formulate a response' to Blair's move. What is needed is a positive challenge to the move of the Labour leadership.

The WRP proposes that such a challenge starts with one issue: the fight in the labour movement for the re-nationalisation of all those industries privatised by the Tories.

■ Such re-nationalisation must be made without compensation to the speculators, who have already made millions out of privatisation.

■ The industries must be nationalised under workers' control, so that they can be run for the benefit of those who work within them and those who use their services and products.

# Letters

## Advantages of flexitime

I CANNOT agree with everything that Bernard Franks writes about flexitime (Workers Press, 1 October). I feel that Bernard has adopted the simplistic argument that anything advantageous to the employer must be detrimental to the workers.

While, of course, the interests of workers and capitalists are fundamentally opposed, it is possible that if an employer introduces, for example, air-conditioning into the workplace, the improved health of the workers will boost productivity and hence profits.

With capitalism now in recession and crisis, employers will be reluctant to spend money on such improvements, and instead try to squeeze more out of a less-healthy workforce.

Similarly, senior management in my local authority — I am a shop steward in the public-sector union, UNISON, representing office workers in a London council — is now proposing to reduce flexitime working by changing the start of 'core time' from 10am to 9.30am, and limiting lunch-breaks to a maximum of one hour.

Despite Bernard's comments, flexitime working can enable mothers with young children to work full time. Recently when I was representing a woman colleague at a disciplinary hearing, she made it clear that she could not start work before 9.30am because of childcare arrangements. Her manager, a nasty, sexist character, barked: 'Your flexitime facility is withdrawn forthwith!'

The threat was never carried out, but it is clear that trades unionists today have to defend the right to work flexitime.

Bernard lists as 'disadvantages' of flexitime a number of attacks on workers' rights, such as the rewriting of contracts

and job descriptions, the ending of regular meal-breaks, greater intensity of working, and individual negotiations. Such attacks are now widespread, but employers use these tactics whether flexitime is worked or not.

The use of short-term contracts is also mentioned briefly by Bernard. To me this development, which again has no connection with flexitime, represents a much more serious threat.

The growing use of 'temporary' contracts is illustrated by Ed Barbor's letter to Workers Press (8 October). Labour-controlled local authorities are among the worst culprits in using this ploy to undermine the rights of workers, which supposedly exist in law.

Jim Smith  
London SE6

## Tell them in Tuzla

RECENT events in Bosnia suggest important changes in the situation.

In September Serbia's President Milosevic agreed, under the Washington agreement, to United Nations observers overseeing his 'split' from Bosnian Serb leader Karadzic. This 'agreement' would mean dividing Bosnia — 51 per cent for the 'Muslim-Croatian federation', and 49 per cent for the 'Serbs'. The UN decided to partly lift the embargo on Serbia. Milosevic was called a 'democrat'.

We have fought throughout for the lifting of the embargo on Bosnia and also on 'new' Yugoslavia (Serbia and Macedonia). The Serbian nationalist leadership is unaffected; working people suffer. Milosevic used it to build 'national unity' and present his regime as a 'besieged fortress'.

After Bosnia's President Izetbegovic's trip to Washing-

ton, his government withdrew demands for the immediate lifting of the arms embargo. It also accepted the Washington agreement. The French daily 'Le Monde's' headline (28 September) called it 'The end of the Bosnian dream'.

It reported the escalation of Islamic-fundamentalist efforts towards a 'pure' Muslim state; censorship in the media; attacks on 'foreign' — Serb and Croat — culture and common schooling; and attempts to ban mixed marriages.

One fundamentalist, Mustafa Spahic, said about Serb fascists raping Bosnian women: 'These rapes are horrible... but they are less painful and easier to admit than mixed marriages, than children born from these marriages'.

The leaderships of all states of the former Yugoslavia now agree, [through their acceptance of the Washington agreement], on the basis of ethnic cleansing, with this plan to dismember Bosnia. This was the objective of previous imperialist plans.

But it is one thing to formulate plans, it is another for governments to accept them. The situation across the whole region must intensify.

Bosnia is no exception. The reaction of the Bosnian army, refugees, and victims — who gain nothing from this 'agreement' — is uncertain. Izetbegovic's Democratic Action Party (SDA), under cover of the Bosnian government, wants to smash multi-cultural resistance everywhere, not only in Sarajevo.

There is bitterness at the SDA's attacks, and how they undermine the fight against fascism and nationalism.

Many people hope the 'Washington agreement' means the end of the war and the guarantee, even over 51 per cent of Bosnia, of the rebuilding of a democratic, multi-cultural nation. These expectations are understandable.

WE WELCOME LETTERS  
SEND THEM TO: WORKERS PRESS,  
PO BOX 735, LONDON SW8 1YB  
— OR PHONE 071-582 8882

But travellers to Tuzla must tell the people there of their experiences of the imperialist governments behind this 'agreement'.

Tell them how imperialism oppresses the Irish, the Basques, millions of immigrant workers in western Europe; how it initiates massacres in Africa, nourishes nationalism and fascism; how workers suffer to 'defend democracy'.

The SDA's offensive is not because it does not respect the 'Washington agreement'. It is because it does.

Tuzla represents a stand against nationalism and ethnic cleansing. The people of Tuzla, defending their multi-cultural life, need help urgently.

They need material aid but also political help to prevent their isolation from their brothers and sisters in the East and West.

Janos Borovi  
Paris

## Wholly consistent

WHETHER or not one agrees with his views on Scottish nationalism, Terry Brotherstone deserves full marks for consistency in this matter.

Where 'the island of Ireland' is concerned he favours 'self-determination of the Irish people as a whole' (Workers Press, 8 October). And for the island of Great Britain, similarly, he favours self-determination by the British people as a whole ('Letters', 8 October).

In both cases the peculiar people who happen to live at the northern end of the island will have, according to him, to put up with whatever the more numerous inhabitants of its southern part decide is good for them.

Brian Pearce  
New Barnet

# Workers Press £3,000 Monthly Fighting Fund

IT MUST be admitted that some of us at the Workers Press office have the occasional 'get-rich-quick' fantasy, which, of course, would be immediately put into the fund!

Apart from winning the pools, or one of the many varieties of newspaper bingo, this involves looking at how the rich and infamous get on.

When the post of the governor of the Bank of England came up, it did cross my mind to apply. However, I didn't see the advert and so there was yet another missed opportunity to solve the problems of our paper.

Most recently, Charlie Pottins and I

were looking at the possibility of 'serving' on a series of quangos. It seems that, for a minimal amount of work, a figure of about £20,000 a year can be reaped from such an 'activity'.

And you aren't restricted to 'serving' on just one. So the jobs can be combined to make a fairly reasonable salary. However, membership of the Conservative Party — the Tories — does seem to be an advantage in being appointed to such bodies.

Back in the real life of Workers Press, the struggle to make ends meet goes on. Like with the South Africa Appeal, which last week had a sudden burst of activity

allowing that work to go on to the next stage, Workers Press has been able to keep going. But the question always arises: For how long?

I hope most of our readers will understand that it's important that Workers Press continues to exist without me having to spell it out. Please consider increasing your weekly or monthly contributions to this paper. Please don't leave such a decision until it's too late.

Mike Cook

Send money payable to 'Workers Press' to PO Box 735, London SW8 1YB. Ask for a standing order when you write.

## Tower Hamlets trades council celebrates the retirement of Tommy Finn

21 years the president of the trades council  
Docker's Club, Boulcott St, London E1  
Friday 28 October, 7.30pm 'til late  
Live music from the Rhythm and Blues Band plus Lee Finn and Friends  
Tickets £3. Please buy in advance from:  
Martin Westwood on 071-515 9682 (h) or 071-242 2877 (w); or Phil Edwards on 081-555 7045; or Tommy Finn on 071-790 0735  
All profits to Tower Hamlets trades council



55 Deptford High St, London SE8

## A Musical Evening in Brazil

With Peter Fryer,  
author of 'Staying Power'  
Wed. 26 October 7.30pm

Who spent some months researching the history of traditional and popular Brazilian music, with special attention to the influence of African music.

## Advertise in Workers Press

Make sure everyone knows about the events you and your organisation have planned, or your publications, your meetings, or something you wanted to sell.

Send money with two typed copies of what you want to say, by first post on Monday.

- £2 per column inch
- £5 per 3 column inches
- £25 for one-eighth page display
- £60 for half page display
- £120 for full page display

Send to Advertising Dept, Workers Press, PO Box 735, London SW8 1YB.

APOLOGIES for last week's mistake over the pictures on pages 3 and 6; unfortunately they were transposed.



Secondhand basement bookstore

POLITICS FICTION ARTS MEDIA  
WOMEN'S STUDIES FILM  
ARCHITECTURE EDUCATION



OPEN 11AM - 6PM MON. TO SAT.  
BELOW HOUSMANS BOOKSHOP

5 CALEDONIAN ROAD KINGS CROSS  
LONDON N1 9DX

• TEL: 071 837 4473 •

# Anti-racist activists adopt campaigning policy ARA survives in-fighting

BY BOB ARCHER

MANY rank-and-file activists in the Anti-Racist Alliance feel last weekend's annual general meeting ended a period of in-fighting caused by bureaucratic attempts to control and limit the organisation.

Ken Livingstone MP and Marc Wadsworth were both removed from office in elections that also put a large group of black militants onto the executive committee.

These are in the main people who have developed politically in the struggle for black sections in the Labour Party.

Supporters of the Socialist Action group lost heavily in the elections. In the view of many ARA activists, this group collaborated with Ken Livingstone to control the alliance on behalf of the leadership of the Trades Union Congress.

## Employed

Joint chairs of the organisation are now Diane Abbott MP and Narendra Makanji.

Kumar Murshid, from Tower Hamlets in east London, is now national secretary in place of Marc Wadsworth, although Wadsworth is still actually employed by the ARA.

The AGM's morning session was taken up with bitter confrontations over delegates'

credentials, and constitutional amendments.

In the run-up to the conference, the Electoral Reform Society had been brought in to administer preparations for the AGM elections. Many bona-fide delegates were eliminated by a deadline for submitting applications, and by the refusal to accept substitutes for named delegates unable to attend.

A hotly contested emergency resolution at the start of the meeting reinstated the rights of debarred delegates from a number of union branches and trades councils.

## Debated

One closely debated constitutional amendment concerned the role of secretary. The outgoing executive committee proposed that no elected member of the committee should receive a salary.

Ford trades unionist Steve Riley, of the Transport and General Workers' Union, moved instead that the secretary should be paid but should not have a vote on the executive committee.

As chair, Ken Livingstone insisted that such an amendment needed a two-thirds majority.

The amendment fell and, in the confusion that followed, many delegates claim they lost the opportunity to vote against the substantive motion.



Against bureaucracy: ARA delegates voted down attempts to control and limit the organisation at last weekend's AGM

# AGM supports call for refugees to organise

KOFI KLU, acting general secretary of the National Union of Refugee Organisations (NURO), won overwhelming support at the Anti-Racist Alliance annual conference last weekend for a motion supporting the Amnesty Campaign for Refugees and Unregistered Migrants, which was launched on 21 April this year.

Part of the successful resolution said that the ARA:

'Condemns the patronising conceit of all those false supporters and hypocritical allies who seek to exploit the disadvantageous position of refugees, asylum-seekers and unregistered migrants before the state by contriving to usurp the inalienable right of the victims of the racist 1993 Asylum and Immigration Act to represent

themselves, to think, speak, organise, mobilise and act self-determinedly in their own interests; and fervently

'Supports the NURO challenge to all those seeking to take advantage of and/or exploit the difficulties of refugees, asylum-seekers and unregistered migrants by conniving with the racist Establishment to deceive, bribe or coerce them into speaking and acting detrimentally against their own best interests;

'Condemns, within this context, the manipulation of charity and other regulations to impose restrictions upon refugee and migrant organisations;

'Demands the repeal of the utterly racist 1993 Asylum and Immigration Act as well as all other obnoxious laws and reg-

ulations that deny fundamental human rights, civil liberties and democratic freedoms to all refugees, asylum-seekers and migrants throughout Europe'.

The Jewish Socialist Group moved to delete this paragraph, believing it would be devious, but they misjudged the deep echo it found among black activists.

Moving the resolution, Kofi Klu called on the ARA to help the empowerment of refugee communities.

He referred to the unemployment and illegal status suffered by refugees, and to the state-sponsored bodies that claimed to 'represent' them.

'The challenge is for our communities to organise themselves', he said.

Kofi Klu rejected the Jewish Socialist Group's move to delete the paragraph from the NURO motion. And he pointed out: 'It is very, very important for us to understand why black refugees don't have more representation within ARA.'

## Organise

'They are not in the best position to organise and defend themselves and speak for themselves.'

'Often the most important thing you feel inside does not come out in the discussion.'

'Racism is a global phenomenon. We have to shake the entire order.'

Speaking for the resolution, Julie Southey said: 'If people cannot speak for themselves they have no power.'

'They say you cannot confront and challenge the system. But we are fighting for politics and against charity.'

'There are very low numbers of refugees on marches. Be-

tions, refugees just live like rats in their holes.'

A delegation from Manchester ARA included representatives of Asians in Gorton who have been denied membership of the Labour Party.

Brian McAuley moved an emergency resolution, expressing 'deep concern' to the Labour Party NEC and the TUC over the question and unconditionally supporting the demands of the black members of the Labour Party in Gorton.

The successful resolution instructed the incoming ARA executive committee to pursue the issue vigorously.

## Recruit

'When [Labour leaders] Blair and Prescott recruit thousands of new members no one questions it,' said another Manchester speaker.

'But when Asians try to join the Labour Party in Manchester, Bradford and other cities it is investigated.'

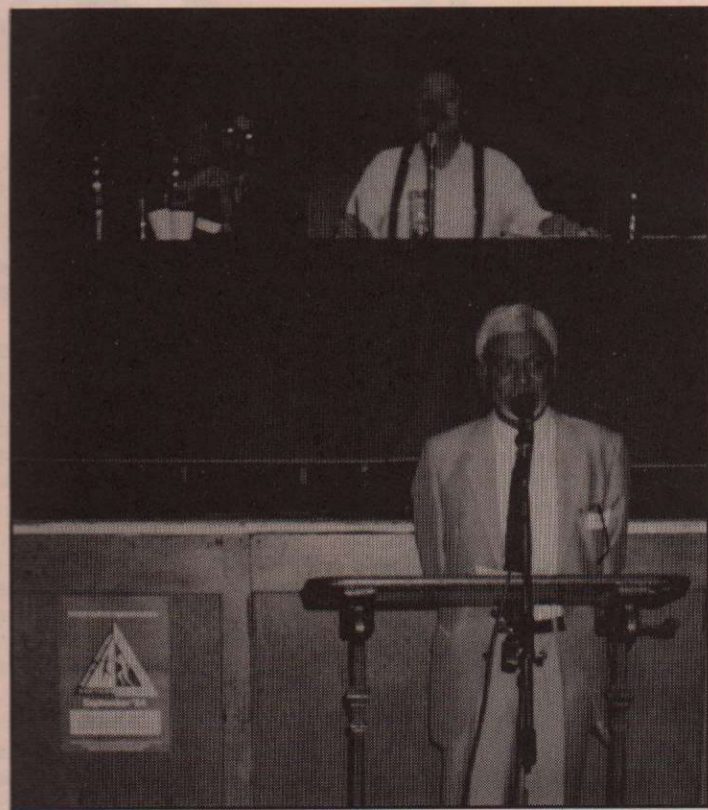
'No irregularities have been found but most new recruits have not been given cards.'

'I want to see a strong Labour Party going from strength to strength.'

'There are 4.5 million Asians and blacks in this country. There should be 50 Asian or black MPs, but there are only six at the moment.'

'People want their own representatives in parliament who understand their culture and language and whom they can trust.'

Mr Choudhury from Gorton supported the resolution, saying: 'Six hundred members applied to join the Labour Party, believing this was supposed to be the people's party



Mr Choudhury supported Asian applicants who had been denied membership of the Labour Party in Gorton

# Self-defence is no offence!

SATPAL RAM is currently serving a life sentence for defending himself against a racist attack in Lozells, Birmingham, in 1986.

Satpal and the man who attacked him, Clarke Pearce, were both injured and taken to hospital. But Pearce refused medical treatment and died some hours later.

Satpal's counsel did not plead self-defence. The jury was made up of white people — and this was happening just after the Handsworth uprising, with the press running riot with their racist headlines. No interpreters were provided for Bengali-speaking witnesses.

against his conviction. A relative of the man who died is a prison officer.

Satpal is often singled out for 'punishment', humiliated and put in 'segregation' — i.e. solitary confinement.

On 8 August Satpal's cell was searched by five screws in Full Sutton prison, after which he was put in a segregation wing. Two days later he was moved to Durham jail, still kept in segregation, with no charges brought against him.

The Free Satpal Campaign organised a mass 'ring up' of Durham jail to complain about Satpal's treatment.

On 9 September, Satpal was moved back to Full Sutton escorted by three of its screws. On his return to the prison, Sat-

pal went on ten days' hunger strike in protest. The Free Satpal Campaign organised a demonstration outside the prison to support Satpal's main demand to be allowed out of segregation, which he won that same evening.

## Free Satpal Ram!

IF SATPAL wins his judicial review, this will put massive pressure on Home Secretary Michael Howard to allow Satpal's case to be heard at the court of appeal — which can set Satpal free.

## Support Satpal!

ies with increased campaigning to force Howard to free Satpal Ram.

■ Demonstrate, Friday 4 November, 10am at the High Court in the Strand, London WC2. Free transport from Birmingham leaves at 6am from Soho Road Library, Handsworth, Birmingham. Moseley Dance Centre, 6.30am.

■ Write to the Free Satpal Campaign, c/o 101 Villa Road, Handsworth, Birmingham B19 1NH, for leaflets, petitions, posters. Affiliations: £1 unwaged, £3 waged, £25 organisations. Donations welcome. Tel: 021-551 4518.

■ Write to the Home Secretary, 50 Queen Anne's Gate, London

## Prison brutalisation

## Inside left

### Whose control?

HERE'S three people talking about police brutality after the huge London demonstration against the Criminal Justice Bill:

Person 1: 'We, along with thousands of others leaving the rally became stuck in Park Lane once the police had closed it. The police, armed with truncheons, shields, helmets . . . hemmed us in and stopped the buses from coming to pick people up . . .'

Person 2: 'I saw nothing thrown, no movement towards or against the police. Then the police charged. People ran and I saw the first sticks fly through the air . . . [It's] hard to believe that even the police could have been that incompetent by accident . . .'

Person 3: 'The police were preventing people from getting to their coaches, the people were just milling around trying to get home . . . blame the police for shutting the station and blocking off the road and keeping people from their coaches . . .'

'[S]ome demonstrators were definitely looking for a fight . . . forcing people to add to their numbers strikes me as a very silly thing for the police to do unless they were looking for a fight too.'

In March 1990, anti-poll-tax demonstrators also had been trapped, Whitehall, as mounted police charged from three sides. Dispersal was clearly not the object. Tube stations were closed.

Keith Flett, writing as secretary of his union branch, complains: 'Officers are unable to control themselves when faced with large protests with which they disagree' letter to 'Morning Star', 14 October. Wise up, Keith! They are controlled, but not by us.

### Right inside

NO mention of Julian Lewis in this column last week ('Manager and mole') ring any bells? Lewis, now deputy director of the Conservative Research Department, has been running a campaign against the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND), focusing on general secretary Gary Lefley's Stalinist views and background.

In the early 1980s Lewis led the Coalition for Peace through Security, which specialised in anti-CND stunts and propaganda. Brian Croker, who disbursed covert funds to such activities, refers in his book, 'Free Agent', to 'a gifted young man named Julian Lewis, introduced to me by Norris McWhirter

McWhirter himself had gone in for little pranks in his youth, provoking trouble on CND's Aldermaston marches. He later founded the right-wing, anti-union Freedom Association. In December 1990 its paper 'Freedom Today' led with an article 'CND's new Stalinist leader', by Dr Julian Lewis. Attacking Gary Lefley's links to the World Peace Council, Lewis remarked: 'For more than 20 years, until it stopped publishing such lists, the World Peace Council featured on the Labour Party's annually issued list of Proscribed Organisations.'

Some of us remember Lewis in an earlier guise, as one of the right young 'moderates' who moved into Newham North East constituency Labour Party, east London, in the 1970s to save right-wing MP Reginald Prentice from being deselected. Some of the prominent Labourites who defended Prentice as a 'loyal Labour man' later formed the Social Democratic Party. Prentice joined the Tories.

Hearing the Labour Party's famous list of 'proscribed' groups laid out once, a young Labour Party friend of mine observed: 'It doesn't mention Tories.'

Charlie Pottins

# Turkish state forces have been revealed Turkey's military dictatorship in NATO's backyard

POLICE brutality and torture are a normal feature of Turkey, as evidenced by several recent horrifying assaults.

On 2 October, a young man was found slumped and exhausted, in the early hours of the morning, on a bench at a bus station in the south-east Turkish town of Adana. He told people his name was Yalcin Kilic, that he had been interrogated and tortured by police for eight days, and that he felt very ill.

Yalcin, a student, born in Suruc-Urfa province, had been detained by police in Seyhan, near Adana, on 24 September. On 2 October, at 1.30am, they took him to the bus station and left him there. 'The police gave me 300,000 Turkish lira so that I would not die in Adana,' he said.

Yalcin was taken by taxi to hospital. The police then returned and

searched the bus terminal. After taking a statement from the taxi driver who had driven Yalcin to the hospital, they went there and kept him under guard until he died the same day, 2 October.

### Blows

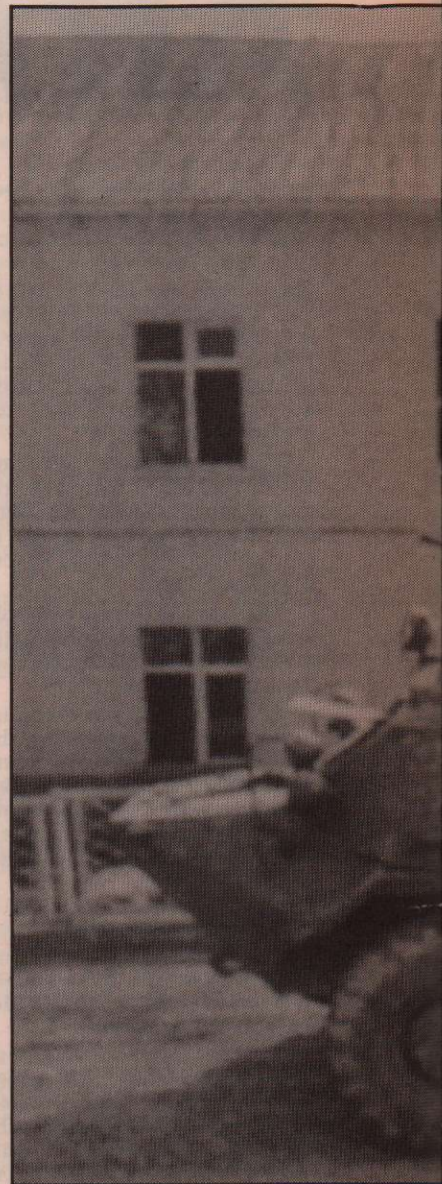
A certificate from the Forensic Institute states he had internal bleeding from various blows, that his arms were dislocated, and that he had drunk poisoned soup.

On 4 October at 9am, Abdulkurim Bagdur was driving into Adana from the Sakirpasa district when he was stopped and detained by police. At midnight the police brought him to his parents' house. His clothes were torn, he was bleeding from the face and throat, appeared totally exhausted and was unable to stand.

The police searched the house and, finding nothing, they left, taking Abdulkurim Bagdur with them. His family fear for his life, especially after what happened to Yalcin.

Two people died in police custody in Adana in 1992, Agit Salman, a 42-year-old taxi driver, and Remzi Basalak, a political activist. Members of the Adana police's anti-terror branch are on trial in connection with the death of Remzi Basalak. The press and public are not allowed access to the trial.

Turkey is the dictatorship in NATO's backyard — the NATO supposedly protecting the Kurdish people. This state is waging all-out war against the Kurds. In a recent offensive against guerrillas in Turkish-occupied north-east Kurdistan, the government's forces destroyed 17 villages in three weeks.



A Turkish tank earlier this year in a Kur

## Police attack political prisoners

A 19-YEAR-OLD political prisoner, Ramazan Ozuak, was killed and at least 80 injured when police and troops went into Diyarbakir E-type prison, a special prison for political prisoners, on 4 October.

At about 10am, plain-clothes police, uniformed police and soldiers armed with sticks, iron bars and firearms entered the prison, apparently with the purpose of removing some of the prisoners, who were on hunger-strike and boycotting trial hearings.

When the prisoners tried to barricade themselves in, the security forces used explosives to blast their way through walls and ceilings. The prisoners were made to submit, brought out into the prison yard and allegedly beaten until daybreak.

At about 5am on 5 October they were put in to prison vans and driven away. Seventy-two wounded prisoners were taken to the state hospital in Diyarbakir, the capital of Kurdistan. Here at least five were put in intensive care; others, with head injuries, were taken to Dicle university's medical faculty. Some are believed to have been taken to a military hospital.

The body of Ramazan Ozuak arrived on 4 October at Diyarbakir state hospital. There were burns on his body, but the cause of death is not known.

More than 1,000 Kurdish political prisoners are held in Diyarbakir prison, mainly either on remand or convicted for activities for the Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK).

In February 1994, the justice minister stated that some 6,500 political prisoners were being held in Turkey and that because of the rate of arrests this number would soon reach 10,000.

# Military has razed 30 K



TURKISH armed forces have burned down more than 30 Kurdish villages in their war against the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) guerrillas. More than 13,000 people have been killed in the past ten years.

Eight Kurdish MPs are standing trial for 'separatism and treason'. Now Turkish Prime Minister Tansu Ciller is putting a new law through to allow them to stand for election in December. This aims to forestall European criticism and to counter Islamic parties, which have gained influence in Kurdish areas in the vacuum created when the Kurdish Democracy Party was banned.

One of six Kurdish MPs who fled abroad, Mahmut Kilinc, now in Brussels, said that 1,800 villages had been cleared, and thousands of people driven from their homes. 'In these circumstances fair elections in the region are not possible,' he said.

Emergency laws are in force in ten provinces, enabling the police to hold people for up to a month without charges, often incommunicado. Sometimes people just 'disappear'.

## Journalist

POLICE picked up 'Ozgur Ulke's' correspondent in Urfa, Vehbiye Tuzun, at the bus terminal in Diyarbakir on 2 October. Eyewitnesses say that as she was being seized she shouted: 'I am a journalist, where are you taking me?'

The police dragged her by the hair and punched her. Police confiscated the identity cards of onlookers, warning them: 'You saw nothing — if you tell anyone what you have seen, remember that we have your identity cards.'

At first the police denied having detained Vehbiye Tuzun, but after



Kurdish victims of murder by the Turkish army (top) and two Kurdish women, who generally have to survive on low wages as occasional workers

## ling their brutality



ish area

## Kurdish villages

After his village, Kevenaz, was destroyed by Turkish forces four years ago, Bisar Kurt moved with his wife and children to Midyat. Shortly after their move, their 15-year-old son went missing. Bisar inquired at the local gendarmerie station, and was told: 'Your son is with the PKK.' He made further enquiries, but could find out nothing more about his son's whereabouts.

The gendarmerie ordered him to report to their station every week, which he did. On 6 August this year, members of the Ozel Tim (Special Team), a Turkish counter-insurgency squad, came to Bisar's home and took him away. He was held for a month, with no charges and no contact with the outside world. The authorities would not even admit they were holding him.

Abdulgani Dag and three villagers, all from Cinardag, were detained by the security forces after an identity check of passengers travelling in a minibus in the province of Mardin.

After their interrogation, the three villagers, Serife Aksoy, Mehdiye and Ahmet, were formally arrested and committed to

prison in Diyarbakir, the capital of Kurdistan. Since then, there has been no news of Abdulgani Dag.

Sakir Oner had been threatened by the security forces not to leave his village of Angule, near Lice, in Diyarbakir province. However, on 24 July he decided to travel to Diyarbakir. At the Angule gendarmerie station an identity check of the bus passengers leaving the village was carried out. Sakir Oner was taken off the bus and detained by the gendarmerie.

After this, no more was heard of him, despite inquiries to the gendarmerie headquarters in Angule and the prosecutor's office at the state security court in Diyarbakir.

On 5 September 1994, Mehmet Balamir, a distributor for the newspaper 'Ozgur Ulke', was detained at a road block between Urfa and Diyarbakir while carrying copies of the newspaper. He was detained by gendarmes from Pirinlik.

Later that day, the newspaper's office in Diyarbakir was raided by gendarmerie and police. They checked the identity of those present, detaining office manager Kadriye Ozcanli. She was taken to the gendarmerie headquarters.

## targeted for detention

a government minister intervened they confirmed she was being held. It is feared she may be being tortured at gendarmerie headquarters.

Kadriye Ozcanli was formally arrested on 30 September and is in Diyarbakir central closed prison. Mehmet Balamir was taken to Diyarbakir E-type prison. Both were charged under anti-terror laws.

Fourteen deaths in custody have been reported this year, several of them in gendarmerie stations. The European Committee for the Prevention of Torture stated that, in a

visit to Dyarbakir police headquarters, members found:

'The equipment necessary for suspension by the arms in place and ready for use (i.e. a three-metre-long wooden beam which was mounted on heavily weighted filing cabinets on opposite sides of the room and fitted with a strap made of strong material securely tied to the middle) . . .

'[T]he delegation's discoveries caused considerable consternation among police officers present; some expressed regret, others defiance.'

# Clear blue ditch-water

**TOM OWEN points to historical precedents for the 'sleaze factor' in the Tory party**

THE 18th-century poet and satirist Alexander Pope saw the 'kingdom of Dulness' as a state in which uncritical idiocy or fervent mediocrity reigned over unbridled greed, vice and moral chaos. His great vituperative poem, 'The Dunciad', is directed against the corruption of 'church and state' during the administration of Robert Walpole, Britain's first prime minister.

The marriage of 'dulness' and vice seems today an appropriate description of the condition of that peculiar historic coalition of factions of the English ruling 'political class', the British Conservative Party.

The TV pictures of the feeble-minded John Major using the resounding sound-bite 'Sport is fun' to whip the ranks of middle England into a flag-waving frenzy, at the party's annual conference in Bournemouth last week, is enough to make anyone change channel.

We are informed by the speech connoisseurs of the 'Guardian' that Major actually wrote most of the words himself. Indeed, he claimed that he was not fond of adjectives but of 'actions'. By this I presume that he is fond of verbs, or, in his

ings and the malicious gossip, Major has had to turn to that other stern discipline of his education, arithmetic. He has to deal with factors.

Firstly there is the 'sleaze factor'. Major has some difficulty here because he did not do algebra at school: he cannot therefore grasp who 'Mr X' is, and 'Ms Y' would not be approved of by his wife, Norma. So the best way for him to deal with this one is to ignore it axiomatically.

The threat from the smoothie Labour leader, the 'Blair factor', cannot be ignored, but again cannot be mentioned by name. Here again algebra could have been of some help, but the ever-inventive Conservative Central Office has brought in the high science of 'col-

colleagues wanted to go much further.

Right-wingers social security secretary Peter Lilley and employment secretary Michael Portillo wanted to create a moat of 'clear blue water' around their bunker. Their love of watercolours was touchingly and quintessentially the kind of 'Englishness' that moved the conference. Many a silent tear was dropped before the glare of lights and cameras.

But back to business; John Major promised at the conference to double 'our' standard of living in the next 25 years. The clear blue waters currently lapping around his midriff may rise and drown him. This is the risk he faces in the modern Dunciad.

There is little consolation for him in Pope's work (currently prescribed reading in the new nationalised curriculum for English studies). Instinctively conservative, ironically, Pope saw the end of

'In measured, standard English, Major accused the Labourites of stealing his clothes. He also denounced them for hijacking his party's colours.'

pre-secondary-school grammar, 'doing words'.

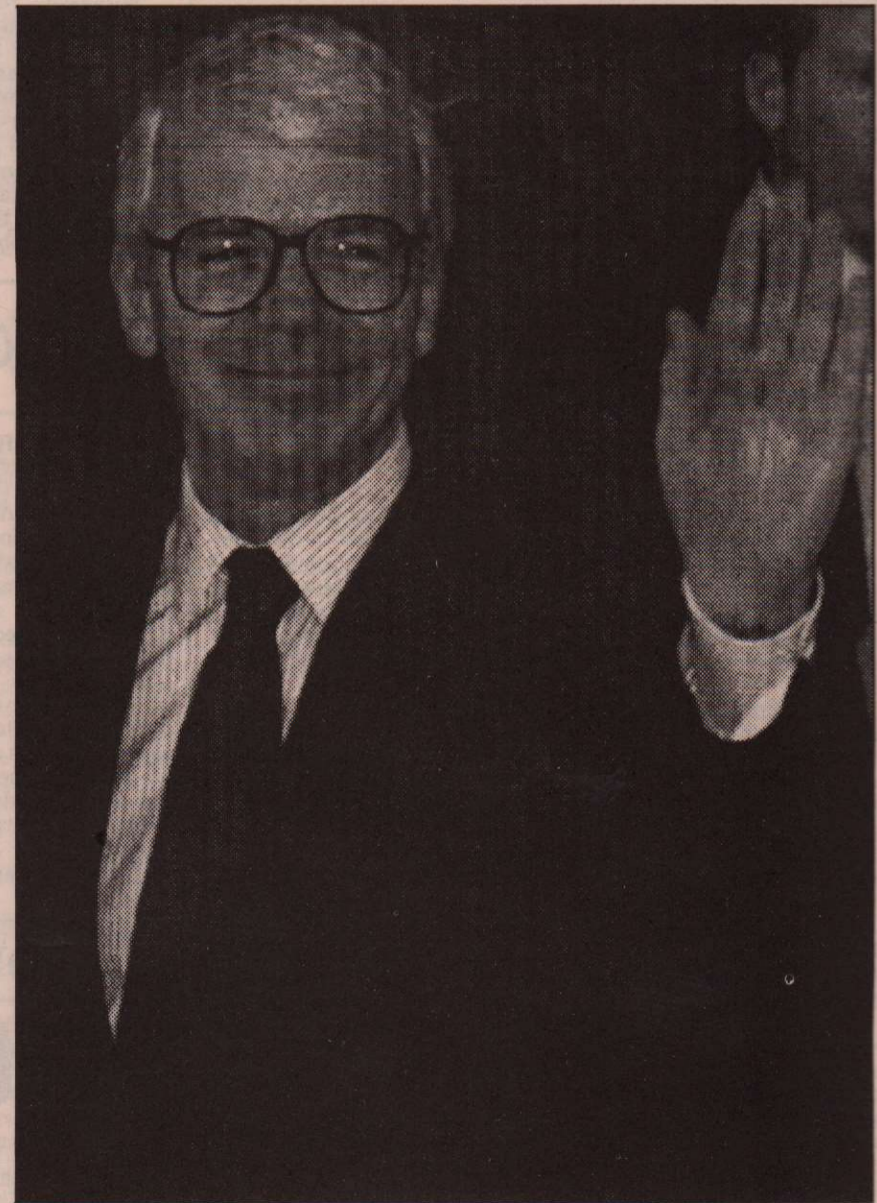
Pope extended his definition of 'Dulness' to literary hack-work, and we may have to be grateful that the plain man's plain man has ditched the more flamboyant literary services of the former vice-chairman of the Tory party, pulp-fiction writer Jeffrey, Lord Archer.

While teachers and students are being reassured that there will be no more dramatic changes in the national curriculum for the next five years, they must brace themselves for compulsory team sports, presumably on the government's 'level playing-fields'.

The few remaining Young Conservatives dropped more than their consonants at their conference bash. They followed a now-established ritual of their cabinet elders before some of them resign or expire. The rugby club bar is their wholesome apprenticeship for the sport of parliament.

Pope's kingdom of the 'Dunces' was presided over by 'The mighty goddess and her son'. Well, the mighty goddess was there at Bournemouth, but some said Thatcher was looking rather peaky, or even rusty. The son, Mark — facing calls for an investigation into a £12 million commission for arms sales — was only there in the furrows of his mother's brow.

All this kind of 'misreading' of the spirit of enterprise has given John Major a headache. In order to deal with all the misunderstand-



Major: the plain man's plain man

our co-ordination'. This is a subtle science that deals not in symbolic representations like, for example, that butcher's apron the Union Jack. Colour co-ordination deals with 'image' and it's quite Freudian; it tells you if you are political-ly sexy.

A colour co-ordinator speaking on BBC Radio Four's 'Today' programme, while reserving final judgement on Blair, thought that Labour deputy leader John Prescott was a political sexpot. That was the size of the challenge, and Major rose to it.

In measured, standard English Major accused the Labourites of stealing his clothes. He also denounced them for hijacking his party's colours. Some of his cabinet

the reign of dunces as the onset of barbarism:

*Lo! thy dread empire, Chaos! is restored;  
Light dies before thy uncreating word;  
Thy hand, great Anarch! lets the curtain fall,  
And universal darkness buries all.*

Eighteenth-century rationalism may have enjoyed the historic luxury of the illusion of gradual improvement. We do not.

The dull Majors of our time are not only the clowns and buffoons of a moribund political and social system, but the savants of a new 'universal darkness'.

## Rose Cohen and 'your Pollitt'

'I EXPECT she opened her big mouth too wide.'

That was the curt and callous answer Marion Ramelson gave in 1956 when she was asked about another prominent woman member of the Communist Party of Great Britain, who had disappeared in Moscow some 20 years before.

'What happened to Rose Cohen?' became a standard question for hecklers to ask at CP meetings. It was calculated to cause party speakers maximum embarrassment.

Especially did it seem to embarrass Harry Pollitt's successor as CP general secretary, John Gollan — who, it was rumoured, was related to Rose Cohen in some way.

Though generally no mean performer on a public platform, Gollan could never answer the question, and clearly wished his tormentors in hell.

Before leaving for Moscow with her husband D. Petrovsky ('A. J. Bennett') when his stint as the Communist International's representative with the CPGB came to an end in 1929, Rose Cohen had been a respected and popular figure in the British labour movement.

She had worked for a time as secretary of the Labour Research Department when it was controlled by the CP. She was a close friend of many of the party's leaders, and closest of all to Pollitt.

How the Comintern's cadres department used their relationship to help construct a case against Pollitt is shown in the document I referred to last week, a secret report on the CPGB dated 14 January 1939: 'The Cadres Department has materials on the connections between the leading comrades in the CPGB with [sic] Petrovsky and his wife Rose Cohen, who turned out to be enemies of the people. . . .

'Petrovsky was working in a leading position in the CPGB for a long time, and in the period immediately preceding his exposure was in charge of higher education at the People's Commissariat of Heavy Industry (under Pyatakov, Bukharin and others).

'It is clear from the materials that some of the leading comrades in the CPGB, particularly Comrade Pollitt, did not just have a business connection with Petrovsky and Cohen, but also a personal friendship with them.

'These connections existed not only during the period before 1929 when Petrovsky was working in [the] E[xecutive] C[ommittee] of the C[ommunist] I[n]ternational, but continued after his departure from the Comintern.

'In his declaration Comrade [R. Page] Arnot, describing his links with Petrovsky when the latter was working for the CI, writes:

'In short, during all this time he was the only comrade in the CI with whom I (and the rest of the British comrades) had the closest links and a personal friendship.

'The personal friendship also existed because Rose Cohen, his wife and a member of the CPGB since 1920, was a close personal friend of most of the leading comrades.

'When Petrovsky ceased to work for the Comintern in 1929, when I was in Moscow, this personal friendship continued (i.e. during 1930-1931, and also from 1936 to the middle of 1937), and from time to time I saw him or his wife, especially when there were other leading comrades here.'

'Comrade [Bob] Stewart — the Chairman of the Central Control Commission — shows in his declaration that Petrovsky "had great influence not only on us, the leading comrades, including me personally, but also on such people as A. J. Cook and other left leaders of the Miners' Federation of Great Britain.

'When he was in England,

## PERSONAL COLUMN

and also in Paris, I often met with him in the presence of Rose Cohen, who was his secretary, and later became his wife.

'From time to time, I recall, these gatherings were also attended by Comrades Rothstein, Clemens Dutt, Inkpin, Gallacher, Pollitt, Arnot and Campbell. These were our leading comrades of the time, including comrades from the N[ational] M[inority] M[ovement] like Pollitt, [George] Hardy and [Nat] Watkins.

'I recall meeting Petrovsky twice after 1929, once in his dacha outside Moscow, together with Comrade Pollitt, probably in 1930. I know that all our leading comrades visited him whenever they were in Moscow.'

'Pollitt's letter to Rose Cohen of 10 April 1937 also bears witness to his personal friendship with her.

'Amongst other things, in his letter Pollitt informs Rose Cohen about various party matters. For example, concerning his visit to Spain he writes the following:

'My visit to Spain gave me great satisfaction. There is quite a story about how I got there, which will make you laugh. Seeing the war on the ground made a great impression on me, and I think that my visit had a good effect on the lads. Gallacher will be going out to see them next week.'

'It is clear from this that Pollitt was not only prepared to tell Rose Cohen how he got into Spain, but also informed her of Gallacher's impending visit to Spain.

'From this one may conclude, amongst other things, that the position of conspiratorial work in the CPGB is far from satisfactory, if the General Secretary shows such an irresponsible attitude to conspiracy.

'The letter ends with these words addressed to Rose Cohen: "We all send our love. Don't lose heart. Your Pollitt."

SOMEONE, or some group, in the highest echelon of the Comintern — and also no doubt at the very top of the Soviet Communist Party — seems to have had the gravest doubts about the reliability of the whole of the British party's leadership.

This is shown also by the report's darkly suspicious reference to Bill Rust and his Russian-born wife:

'The Political Bureau member W. Rust is married to the former Soviet citizen Tamara Kravets. She is a former Kom-somol member, now a member of the CPGB engaged in work among women in Lancashire.

'Her father is an architect, a former Soviet citizen, who left in 1927 on a business trip to Germany and refused to return to the USSR.

'Tamara Kravets put herself forward at the 15th CPGB congress [in 1938] for the C[entral] C[ommittee], but was dissuaded. Along with Palme Dutt, Rust had sectarian tendencies, but he overcame them in his work in Lancashire (according to Comrade Pollitt).'

Not a single prominent British Stalinist of the period escaped fingering in this report. What's more, it called attention to 'an unacceptable situation in the editorial office of the Daily Worker', which was making 'the most serious political mistakes' that showed the need 'urgently to check and purge the Daily Worker staff'.

How fortunate for the 'Daily Worker' staff that 'purge' meant for them something much less drastic than the fate of Rose Cohen.

Peter Fryer

# Guatemala: they shoot children, don't they?

BY CHARLIE POTTINS

TEN-YEAR-OLD Daniel Rosales was sleeping on a street corner in Guatemala City when he was killed. He and his 13-year-old friend, Ruben Garcia Gonzalez, were shot dead by private police, licensed by the government. Victor Manuel Garcia, 12, was wounded.

Victor received two shots to his abdomen and right arm. He was taken to San Juande Dios hospital, where he is recovering after an emergency operation. A private police officer has reportedly been assigned to guard him, allegedly to prevent him from escaping from the hospital, even though no charges have been brought against the boy.

## Rescue

The two private police officers accused of the murder were reportedly arrested in possession of a 45mm pistol and a 12-gauge shotgun, both of which had been fired. They claimed that the street children were raping a mentally handicapped indigenous woman and that they came to her rescue.

Witnesses refute this, and say the two police officers had threatened the street children on several occasions.

Two days earlier, on 22 September, 12-year-old Fidel Solorzano was killed in an explosion when two unidentified men gave him a bag containing an explosive device and then hurried off. His cousin Rigoberto Solorzano,

who was with him, survived.

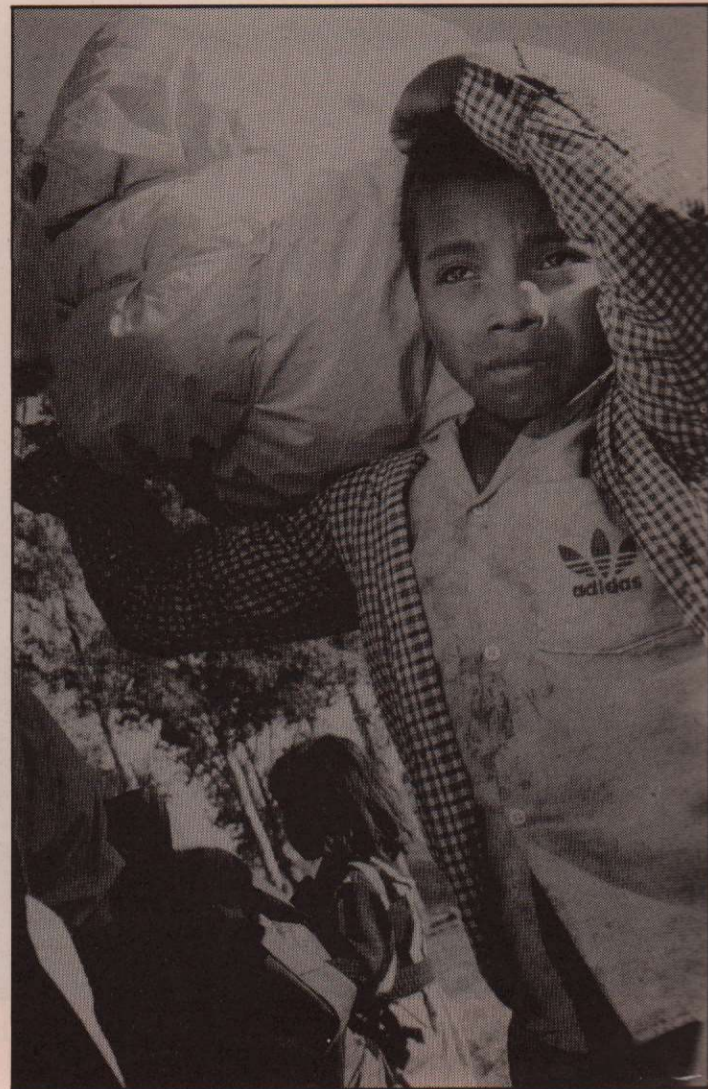
Street youths Juan Humberto Ramos Cifuentes, Cecilio Jax, and Julio Cesar Chavez Orozco ('Pepito') were trying to break into a car when they were seen by two men who started firing at them with pistols. Julio Chavez managed to escape but saw the men detain the other two youths, both of whom had apparently been wounded. Their bodies were later found in a rubbish dump with signs of torture and several bullets in the head.

## Chased

In another incident, Sergio Chavez was shot in the head at point-blank range by a police officer who had chased him and his friend from a market where they had allegedly been seen stealing a pair of sunglasses.

Charities working in Guatemala estimate there are 5,000 street children in Guatemala City. In recent years, there have been several periods when they have been the target of abuses carried out by the Guatemalan police as well as by private security firms licensed by the national police and the interior ministry.

The abuses included harassment, cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment, torture, 'disappearances' and extra-judicial executions. International pressure appeared to have given the children some protection, with abuses against them decreasing. However, the killing of Daniel and Ruben is part of a new wave of attacks being reported.



Childhood means something different for Guatemalan children

## Council concern over safety of deregulated buses

BY PETER GIBSON

REPRESENTATIVES of the metropolitan local authorities last week called for an urgent meeting with transport minister Steven Norris to discuss the problems caused by the deregulation of bus services outside London.

The changes proposed as part of deregulation were, the representatives said, not adequate to tackle the problems that the policy would cause in the major urban areas outside the capital.

Improved enforcement of

safety rules, including restrictions on driving hours, had become a matter of urgency, they said.

In south Wales, when 56 school buses were stopped and safety checks carried out, faults such as defective tyres and jammed emergency exits were found on many of them.

## Ordered

Seven of the buses were ordered off the road at once, and a further 22 were issued with defect notices.

Four owners may find themselves in court facing prosecution on charges of running de-

fective buses for school services.

Local police said: 'Everything was not well with school transport in the area.'

In Hampshire, teachers are being invited to go on training courses on how to drive minibuses for schools. The county council said the voluntary scheme is designed to enhance driver awareness.

This move by the council reflects concern in the community at the number of accidents involving school buses during the last year.

In the past bus companies would run special school services as well as their normal

buses. Now, as a result of government policy forcing these to be put out to the lowest tender, old buses not fit or suitable for public service, and untrained drivers on low wages, are often being used for school services. In some cases schools have bought their own minibuses, to be driven by teachers.

Whatever option is chosen to reduce the costs of transporting schoolchildren, safety is bound to suffer.

No wonder there is so much congestion around school gates caused by parents taking youngsters to school by car because they do not feel school-bus services are safe!

## Television

# Victim of political crack-down

Review by Roger Horrocks

OCCASIONALLY we get to peek behind the impassive facade of TV production, and see some of the political struggles that go on about programme making. A recent case in point concerns BBC1's blockbuster Saturday night hospital drama 'Casualty', just returned for a new season.

Apparently it has been partly revamped, following complaints during the last series that it had become too left wing and too violent.

## Bias

The complaints about left-wing bias followed a number of programmes which showed the effects of the NHS 'reforms' as disastrous. NHS managers were shown as unfeeling bureaucrats, less interested in patients than in the balance sheets, and there were fierce conflicts with hospital staff.

However, 'Casualty' has a

new producer, who has stated in the 'Radio Times' that this 'left-wing' bias is out, and we're back to no-nonsense hospital drama and less politics. Last week's episode was a melodramatic piece about the dangers of teenage prostitution, and was heavily over-written and over-acted.

But I am interested in how this kind of political crack-down occurs. Is it an act of BBC self-censorship, responding obediently to complaints in the tabloid press? Or does word come down from on high? What other pressures are being brought to bear on programme makers?

'Cracker' — a new series has begun (ITV, Mondays) — has been criticised for using the Hillsborough football tragedy as a background. But what stood out in the first episode was how working-class responses to

such a tragedy were stereotyped: a white man is deranged by the death of his father, dons skinhead uniform, shaves his head, and kills a Pakistani shop-keeper.

## Skinheads

This gives the producer lots of juicy shots of fascist skinheads and so on, but it's a very pessimistic view of the working class. Or am I prejudging before the story really unfolds?

'Cracker' has been one of the best thrillers on TV in recent years, mainly because of the great performance by Robbie Coltrane, playing the psychologist called in by police to crack their toughest cases.

However, I feel a bit weary of TV detectives with lousy marriages, and problems with drinking and gambling. Still, it

is a treat just to sit and watch Coltrane, with his sharp intelligence, his wit and his intensity. This is an actor!

I also enjoy 'The X-Files' (BBC2, Mondays), a rather barmy American sci-fi series. It looks like a cross between 'Invasion of the Body Snatchers' and 'Twin Peaks'.

It tells stories of children being abducted by aliens. It's always interesting to try and spot the political sub-text in sci-fi films — what alien force is taking away American children? Heavy metal, rap, drugs, black culture?

The paranoid sci-fi of the 1950s is often seen as a reaction to Communism, but this is often incorrect. Some — for example, 'The Beast from 20,000 Fathoms' — were in fact critical of the corruption of science by US capitalism. It is still rather difficult to read between the lines of 'The X-Files', but I shall keep watching.

# Total government cynicism on construction safety

BY MIKE COOKE

BRITISH RAIL and Tilbury Douglas Construction were last Monday, 17 October, fined £25,000 each for killing two workers and injuring five others in a site accident in 1992.

The decision of the Inner London crown court, following a prosecution brought by the Health and Safety Executive, angered construction safety campaigners because of the measly fine.

'No wonder BR senior managers were smiling when they left the court,' said Alan Dalton of the Hazards Campaign.

On top of this, the Construction Safety Campaign believes that the Director of Public Prosecutions should have prosecuted for manslaughter.

But the DPP's office turned down an investigation, saying there was not enough evidence, despite the verdict of unlawful killing from the inquest jury.

The CSC therefore held a protest outside the court last Monday — the start of the HSE's national workplace safety week.

## Accident

The accident happened at St John's station bridge in Lewisham, south-east London. Nicholas Scott (22) and UCATT builders' union member Frank Warren (42) were killed when the railway bridge collapsed during demolition on 13 June 1992.

There is a lot of video/film evidence concerning the tragedy.

The inquest uncovered a trail of incompetence by the employers that led to the two deaths and the case was referred to the DPP for investigation

with a view to manslaughter proceedings.

CSC chair Rose Dunn said: 'The evidence in this case was so serious that the Crown Prosecution Service should have laid manslaughter charges against both companies and any identified individuals. A jury would then have been able to decide their guilt or not.'

## Negligent

Dunn pointed out: 'If the companies are found guilty at this trial, [which they were,] all they will receive is a fine, whereas manslaughter charges could have led to a possible prison sentence.'

'We do not believe things will change in our industry until a negligent employer receives a prison sentence.'

During this week's 'safety' week, on Wednesday and Thursday 19 and 20 October, government health and safety minister Phillip Oppenheim was due to hold a secret meeting with construction companies — employers and architects — to further water down important regulations designed to reduce construction site deaths and injuries, claimed the Hazards Campaign.

And CSC secretary Tony O'Brien condemned the meeting saying: 'This shows the total cynicism of the government, its total disregard for life and limb in our industry, and how industry can buy its way out of social responsibility. Even the HSE



The St John's station bridge, June 1992: Two men — Nicholas Scott and Frank Warren — were killed and five others injured

says the new regulations should be in place now and not weakened further. This failure will result in loss of life.'

The CON DAM regulations (Construction, Design and Management) are meant to place more responsibility on managers and were a result of a European Union directive.

These regulations were due to become law on 1 January, but were delayed until 1 October under pressure from em-

ployers. The delays have particularly angered Maureen Brennan, whose son Michael was killed in April 1990.

*With no training and no driving licence he was driving a dumper truck — which was overloaded and had faulty brakes — up a steep embankment when it overturned and crushed him to death.*

Maureen commented on the latest delay on construction safety by the government: 'The

HSE never cared about Michael's life. Imprisonment of the senior managers of construction companies is the only thing that will change site safety. If you recklessly kill people on the roads you get imprisonment, why not at work?'

'The HSE is supposed to protect employees' health but my son's case shows they prefer to protect employers' profits. These latest delays show that they, and the government, still don't give a damn!'

Despite HSE director general John Rimmington telling Maureen, 'I know of no case on which our people felt more strongly' (August 1992), there has been no prosecution of the main contractor, Alfred McAlpine, or the sub-contractor, J.F. McMahon.

case in February 1991. In December 1993 a judicial review decided an HSE prosecution would not serve the interests of justice after such a long time!

And in July 1994, the parliamentary ombudsman turned down Maureen's complaint against the HSE as being outside his jurisdiction.

## Preventable

On average, every year, 130 construction workers die in what the government says are mostly preventable accidents. Thousands more are disabled, maimed and injured, again, in totally preventable accidents. It is estimated that the number who suffer ill-health because of conditions in the industry, and the materials they have to use, runs into tens of thousands.

The CSC says that this will not change until negligent employers are punished with imprisonment and workers are given the right to refuse dangerous work and join trades unions without the fear of victimisation or the sack.

# 'Mumsy's' arms deals made Mark's millions

BY CHARLIE POTTINS

WHILE the British government was drumming up war hysteria against Iraq, timed for the Tory party conference, United States customs agents investigating arms to Iraq were looking into two companies owned by Mark Thatcher.

They are interested in Thatcher's Texas-based Grantham Company and Ameristar, a jet-refuelling company that was taken over by Grantham's chief executive David Wallace, former treasurer of the Thatcher Foundation. The takeover has become subject of a racketeering case under US trust laws.

'We became aware of Mark Thatcher two years ago when we visited Britain in connection with another case concerning the export of military equipment to Libya and Iraq', said Aida Perez of the US customs enforcement department in Florida ('Sunday Times', 16 October).

In 1991 journalist Roland Moyle was murdered in Chile, while investigating sales of attack helicopters to Iraq by Cardoens, a company with which Mark Thatcher allegedly had connections.

How the ex-prime minister's son, failed accountant and sports-car salesman, became a multi-millionaire with the help of 'Mumsy's' arms sales policy has become news again after a defecting Saudi diplomat released transcripts of phone conversations between Saudi royals and others. Thatcher made £12 million 'commission' on the £20 billion al-Yamamah arms deal which the Tory gov-

ernment pressed on the Saudis.

In one conversation King Fahd's brother-in-law, Abdel Aziz al-Ibrahim, suggests it would be cheaper to deal through someone called 'John' in Britain. An Arab man, possibly international wheeler-dealer and arms trader Adnan Khashoggi, replies: 'I think you are right, but Mark is more in power and he has influence with the military group and the government.'

Later he remarks: 'These people will sell their families for money.'

Subsequently the King's nephew, Prince Turki bin Nasser, says 'John's connections' are better for military equipment. Al-Ibrahim replies: 'Yes, but Mark has excellent connections with the government and he has good information.'

Last week Mohammed Kilewi, the former Saudi UN representative who defected earlier this year, was reported to be in hiding. In London, Treasury Chief Secretary Jonathan Aitken issued a statement denying he was the 'John' mentioned in the Saudi tapes.

## Directorships

Before resigning his directorships to become minister for defence procurement (replacing Alan Clark) in 1992, Aitken, Tory MP for Thanet, was a former director of al-Bilad (UK) Ltd, a company handling business for the Saudis. And he was deputy chairman of Aitken Hume financial services, one-third of whose shares were held by Wafiq Said, friend of the Thatchers and key figure in the Saudi arms deals.

Aitken was also a non-executive director and consultant to BMARC, part of Astra Holdings

which was involved in the Iraqi 'super-gun' affair. In 1988, BMARC was asked to supply 1,500 air-to-ground missiles to the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Since the UAE only had seven planes capable of carrying the missiles, the Scott inquiry on sales to Iraqi may ask where the missiles were really going.

Answering Labour MP Jim Cousins in January, Aitken said that because the al-Yamamah deal was between governments, the Saudis were not obliged to give details of end-users of equipment supplied.

Some members of the Saudi ruling elite were unhappy about the cost of the al-Yamamah deal. American and French military aircraft interests were furious about the way British Aerospace (BAe) gained the contract.

In May 1989, Labour MP Jeff Rooker, a member of the Commons public accounts committee, was sent a copy of a 'classified' document, provenance unknown, part of which read:

'There are constant phone calls between Mrs. T and King Fahd and Sir Peter Levene and Prince Sultan. Levene was in fact the person who made the crude-oil arrangement which was invented to enable HMG/BAe to pay the huge commissions to the Saudis and their middlemen while still enabling HMG and BAe to sanctimoniously declare "there are no commission payments by us".'

It went on to say: 'An executive of BAe explains the price, also about 120 per cent above the RAF price, by the commissions amounting to over 45 per cent and the (successful) attempt by BAe to charge "proper profit margins on unprofitable busi-

ness done in the past". Since the King wanted these huge commissions and BAe and Mrs.T. agreed to them, he could clearly not argue against this extra charge and also had to agree "no commercial negotiation".'

'The same source also states that there is a sizeable payment to the Conservative Party ("a huge sum") which is being administered by Wafiq Said in conjunction with Mark T.' (emphasis added).

## Alleged

This same document alleged that Malaysia was paying 112 per cent over RAF prices for British Aerospace Tornado aircraft, in return for which \$250 million would be paid up-front to the ruling right-wing United Malay National Organisation — 'if the PM, Dr. Mahathir Mohammed, is to be believed and it does not go straight into his pocket...'

Its anonymous BAe executive claimed 'financial benefits to Mark T. and his friends... and to the Conservative Party are absolutely enormous'. The memorandum said government officials who had told the National Audit Office (NAO) they knew nothing about commission payments were lying.

Labour MP Rooker sent a copy of this memorandum to Prime Minister Thatcher, who said she had passed it on to 'the appropriate authorities'. The NAO's 1991 report on the al-Yamamah deal was suppressed after another Labour MP, Robert Sheldon, chair of the Commons public accounts committee, took advice from the Ministry of Defence. Another NAO inquiry is not expected to report until 1997.

## Letters

Maureen has written tens of letters: to the HSE, to her MP, to the attorney-general and to the media. The HSE was forced to reconsider prosecution after they had withdrawn the

## Index Bookcentre

28 Charlotte Street  
London W1P 1HJ  
071-636 3532  
and Brixton  
10-12 Atlantic Road  
London SW9 8HY  
071-274 8342

Trotskyist bookshops — fast ordering service  
Bookstalls for special events or meetings  
Books supplied by post (add 10 per cent for postage). Write for our list

## WORKERS PRESS IS THE PAPER OF THE WORKERS REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

Please send me information about the WRP

Name ..... date .....  
Address .....  
Trade union (if any) ..... Age (if under 21) .....

Send to: PO Box 735, London SW8 1YB

## Serb forces threaten Tuzla route

SERB nationalist forces went on the offensive in three areas of Bosnia last week, threatening the aid route to the northern town of Tuzla, and leading the United Nations to halt relief supplies to the capital, Sarajevo.

Six people were reported killed at Bihac, in the north-west, by shells fired from Serb-held territory in Croatia. A relief convoy came under fire near the beleaguered town of Gorazde, killing a driver.

A food convoy organised by Workers Aid for Bosnia, driven by volunteers from Britain, Spain and Brazil, is heading for Tuzla along the mountain route from the Adriatic coast at Split.

More than 1,200 mortar and artillery rounds were fired by Serb forces north of Sarajevo last weekend, as they began an offensive to take strategic hilltops that would enable them to cut the supply route to Tuzla.

In south-eastern Bosnia, the Serbs shelled a fortified hill overlooking the town of Mostar, and UN officials stopped relief convoys to Sarajevo, after the road to the Bosnian capital came under fire. Serb Chetniks hijacked one convoy and took it to their base.

### Offensive

The Serb nationalist offensive came a day after the UN deadline expired for agreement to its 'peace plan'.

Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic will undoubtedly have taken more notice of the French UN forces attack on Bosnian troops south of Sarajevo, which followed British UN General Michael Rose's talks with Serb leaders.

The Bosnians were forced to abandon hard-won positions on Mount Igmon, which guarded the only aid route into Sarajevo. UN spokesperson Claire Grimes, who had previously accused Bosnian commandos of 'executing' and mutilating Serbs — an accusation later withdrawn — last week also admitted that the area from which the Bosnians were driven was not a 'demilitarised zone', as the UN had claimed.

General Rose is expected to hand over his command to another British officer next January. General Rupert Smith, who commanded British ground forces in the Gulf war, has been tipped to take over.

# ANC fighters balk at merger with apartheid forces

**SOUTH AFRICA** President Nelson Mandela has told 2,000 of his soldier-supporters, formerly liberation fighters, that they have to obey orders, which often come from their former oppressors of the South African Defence Force (SADF), causing dissatisfaction and some fighters to leave their bases.

Mandela has threatened them with unspecified 'other measures' if they did not do this. 'Discipline is totally important,' he said.

This is the same message he is giving to striking workers, after his visit to the US seeking financial aid and investment.

### Strikers

And this message was given rather more directly when police dogs were set on Pick 'n' Pay strikers a few months ago.

The soldiers, former members of the African National Congress's military wing (Umkhonto we Sizwe, MK) and of the Pan Africanist Congress's militia (the Azanian People's Liberation Army), were unhappy about being merged with the SADF into the South African National Defence Force (SANDF).

Many fighters left the bases as a result, but now they have

BY CLIFF SLAUGHTER  
IN SOUTH AFRICA

been promised discussions with political leaders if they first return to camp. Mandela is to speak with former MK members on 20 October in Walmaanstal.

Deputy chief of the army Major General Bertie Botha — white, of course — has told the media that disciplinary action would be taken against those who refuse to adhere to the so-called military code of conduct:

'In the spirit of reconciliation and the fairly uncertain circumstances of the Walmaanstal intake, it was felt unfair to take drastic action in terms of military conduct. Unfortunately,

there are members who are not willing to adhere to the basic principles of discipline. It has come to the point where we cannot accept this anymore.'

The former MK members reply that they are not bound by the SANDF code as they are not part of the establishment. The Western Cape spokesman for the MK rebels, Lieutenant Ndomzi Mkabile, said it was only the ANC leaders who had control over former MK cadres, under their own code:

'[The] SANDF doesn't have the right to discipline us because we don't fall under their command. We have never seen the military code of conduct and we therefore cannot be punished under something we don't know.'

### Nipped

Some believe that 'political commissars' from the former MK units could have nipped the dissatisfaction in the bud. These commissars were politically trained by the Stalinist bureaucracy — betrayers of the working class — in eastern European countries before the collapse of

the Berlin wall in 1989, and they would have had all the usual tricks on hand to defuse action. But these political commissars no longer exist after the MK/APLA/SADF merger.

Another source of dissatisfaction was the stripping of rank of MK commissioned officers who were members of the National Peace Keeping Force at its disbandment in June. They have not been paid since. Only nine of these officers have been appointed to the SANDF. The rest are in De Brug, outside Bloemfontein.

These officers were asked to sit a psychometric test before being considered for placement. They are refusing to do the test. They argue that their letters of appointment do not require the test.

They are also refusing to be taught in Afrikaans, the language of the white oppressors.

At least 23 former MK members at the SANDF Special Services Battalion base in Eastern Transvaal have walked out, because of the language issue.

A spokesperson for the MK members said that before join-

ing the new army it is a requirement to be able to speak and write English, adding that 'most of our cadres do not understand Afrikaans. Our instructors do not know English.'

A group of about 100 former MK soldiers were afraid to return to their bases. They handed in a petition to MK region commander Dan Hatte in Port Elizabeth. They were seeking assurances from Nelson Mandela of their 'security' at their bases.

### Threatened

They said they felt threatened by the former SADF forces, which still controlled security. They reported the tear-gassing of a mess hall at Walmaanstal by SANDF troops in September.

This was confirmed by the SANDF itself. The incident happened after the SANDF maintained that former MK forces had caused 'some problems'.

The MK protesters also called for the resignation of defence minister Joe Modise. Their action was a 'vote of no confidence' in him, they said.

# Triple alliance's control of workers slips

THE South African trade union federation, COSATU, is in serious danger of losing its control of the working class because of its alliance with the South African government. It is part of the so-called 'triple alliance' with the African National Congress/South African Communist Party.

Following the national elections earlier this year, workers had expected support from their unions during a number of actions — and found that COSATU called for 'restraint'.

A blockade of central Johannesburg, demanding a review of pay grades, took place without the federation's knowledge. A strike by security guards in Johannesburg apparently involved hostage-taking and looting.

COSATU has condemned a public sector union's 15 per cent pay demand, on the grounds that it was undermining the government's reconstruction and development programme (RDP) — particularly those demands for a restructuring of the state and the closure of pay differentials.

This all comes on top of actions by truckers, Durban hos-

pital workers, shop workers at the 'Pick 'n' Pay' chain, and car workers. In these actions, control of the movement shifted from COSATU to the workers' and shop stewards' committees.

In the case of the truckers an independent union, the Turning Wheel International Workers' Movement, stepped in to represent the workers.

COSATU assistant general

secretary Zwelinzima Vavi is worried. 'If the strategy is not explained to members, anybody can undermine us on the ground,' he said. 'The danger is that we will appear sweetheart unions, conveyor belts of the government.'

'Unless officials and shop stewards are equal to the complex issues of the 1990s — industrial restructuring, trade com-

petitiveness, wage gaps — another movement could take over through militancy.'

Workers are losing patience with the promises made to them in the elections. They demand improvements on pay, workplace democracy, and racism.

'Under an ANC government they expect better wages and feel that democracy must not end in parliament,' Vavi said.



'Bye, bye Fatty', say these protesters in Potsdam, eastern Germany, during last week's elections. Their hopes were dashed as Chancellor Kohl survived by a couple of votes

## Brazil: exposé of death squad could be next

BRAZILIAN military police officer, Adelmo Peixoto Hora Nunes, is under threat after making public information about 'The Mission' — a police 'extermination squad'.

The Brazilian federal government has so far refused to investigate allegations that the authorities in Sergipe, the state where Nunes is based, are involved in 'The Mission's' murderous activities. The government claims it cannot intervene in a state's affairs, particularly with elections coming.

### Recorded

Nunes claims he was a member of 'The Mission'. Several hours of his testimony, connecting top state officials with the extermination squad, have been recorded and passed to human rights organisations and to the federal authorities.

The minister of justice requested that Nunes be brought to the capital, Brasilia, to give his testimony. However, rather than send a federal police escort

for him, the minister asked the same military police authority accused by the soldier to be responsible for delivering him to Brasilia.

Nunes is in detention at the Military Police Officer Training School in Aracaju, Sergipe, waiting to be transported to Brasilia. Last week he was reportedly sought there by two unidentified men.

Journalists from the newspaper 'Cinfor', who wrote about the death squads, remain the target of death threats. Following pressure from the government, the Sergipe authorities have assigned a few state civil police officers to protect them, and they have been given some bullet-proof vests.

The journalists have hired personal bodyguards. On 5 October one of these was approached by an alleged member of the extermination squad and warned to keep away from one of the journalists, Cesar Gama, he did not want to be killed well, since 'the time is getting very close'.

## Workers Press SUBSCRIBE

to the socialist weekly that tells the truth

Please send me

- 10 issues for £5.60
- 50 issues for £27.60

INTERNATIONAL RATES: Europe and Near East, £7.70 for 10 issues, 50 for £38.50; Americas and India £12.70 for 10 issues, 50 for £63.50; Australia, Japan and E Asia 10 issues for £13.70, 50 for £68.50.

Name .....

Address.....

I enclose £..... for my subscription, and

an extra donation of £.....

Make cheques, POs payable to Workers Press, PO Box 735, London SW8 1YB.