



# IT'S TIME TO HIT BACK!

**IT'S TIME to hit back! No more proof is needed to convince us that there will be no future for our children and grandchildren if we don't make a stand now.**

Top Tories today threatened to defy Parliament by ignoring last night's devastating Commons vote forcing MPs to disclose their outside earnings,' reported the London Evening Standard on 7 November.

Surprise surprise! Shed some light on these sleazy toffs and they scream their heads off.

Does anybody doubt that we live in a class society?

But what about 'our' side? Compare the 'defiance' of Top Tories with the cringing acceptance of the anti-union laws by TOP TRADE UNIONISTS.

'In the last 16 years we have seen the biggest transformation in history of the law at work,' said John Hendy QC at the Liverpool dockers' rally on 21 October.

**This was only possible because trade union leaders refused to fight.**

With the honourable exception of Arthur Scargill, the trade union leaders didn't even pay lip-service to principles, so scared were they of sequestration of trade union funds.

The result: closures, privatisation, cuts in social and public

services, millions unemployed and millions on casual, part-time work, low wages, rotten conditions and no trade union representation.

**There are now signs that in defence of jobs, wages, conditions and trade unions workers are going on the offensive.**

In an interview in the 'Dockers Charter', published by the Liverpool Dock Shop Stewards Committee representing 500 sacked dockers, Frankie Shilling — sacked Tilbury docker — says:

'I think the working class needs to rally round the situation in Liverpool. It should be the beginning of a fight back against agency labour and the rotten conditions that privatisation means.'

In the same issue Vic Turner — ex-London docker and one of the seven imprisoned in Pentonville jail by the Tory government in 1972, and now a Labour councillor in East Ham, London — says about the sacking of the 500 Liverpool dockers:

'We are paying the penalty now for the refusal to challenge the situation in the early

Thatcher years. This is an extension of what the Ridleys and Tebbits set out to do....

'It needs someone to pick up the cudgels and fight back. No one industry can stand on its own. There has to be a united struggle. ... You certainly cannot fight in isolation now. ... Enough is enough. A stand must be made.'

## Legacy

On page 3 of this issue of Workers Press, John Bulhana, convener of shop stewards at Fords Halewood, says of the dockers' sacking:

'It is a legacy of our failure as a movement to stop the Tory and class attack. It is the legacy of the trade union leadership's failure to fight the anti-trade-union laws. It is a lesson to everyone of us of what can happen when we don't fight.'

Fords workers are voting for industrial action in support of their 10 per cent wage claim.

The sentiments of these trade unionists are being expressed in action as thousands begin to take up the fight.

Liverpool dockers, Merseyside firefighters, London underground workers, Camden council workers, Hillingdon hospital cleaners, Fords and Vauxhall car workers — these are just some.

And it is not a 'British' question.

In France the strike wave has taken the authorities completely by surprise. The newspapers say that they have seen nothing like it for over 20 years.

Similar workers' actions are taking place in Spain and other parts of Europe. Angry striking shipyard workers in Cadiz set fire to the Socialist Party headquarters.

South African workers continue to take action against the Government of National Unity and its anti-trade union laws. Seven thousand striking nurses in former Transkei have recently been sacked.

Earlier this year it was shop workers and truck drivers who were out in front there.

In Bangladesh the National Garment Workers Federation is leading the struggle of over a mil-

lion workers for the right to a day off each week.

In Nigeria the oil workers continue to do battle with the multi-nationals despite the threat of imprisonment or worse.

United Steelworkers in Warren Ohio, USA have just won a new contract in a total victory against a 55-day lock-out.

Shortly, the Liverpool dockers have an international conference of dockworkers to discuss and

organise support for their fight.

In calling this conference they express the need of the whole working class to fight for trade unions independent of the state, democracy in the trade unions and working class internationalism.

Photo by Greg Dropkin: March in support of the 500 sacked Liverpool dockers

## Tube strike anger

**LONDON Underground management is desperate to bring in casual part-time workers, and undermine trade union organisation.**

Workers who are entrusted with the safety of thousands of people day in and day out are treated with contempt. Hours and hours of talks, three ballots and two court judgements have produced 'agreements':

■ To pay 126 Northern Line workers £10,000, instead of the government's figure of around £4,000, in the event of redundancy following privatisation.

■ To accumulate the one-and-a-quarter hour reduction in the working week over an eight-week period to give workers a 10-hour break.

**But both will be withdrawn by management if the workers do not accept casualisation — part-time work.**

No wonder workers are confused and their shop stewards angry at the RMT negotiating team's decision to suspend their

48-hour strike action. London Underground Limited uses blackmailing, splitting and delaying tactics.

■ In October the company gave a six-month notice to terminate the current negotiating machinery. They now say if the workers do not accept their casualisation proposals by 15 November, they will withdraw from agreements reached so far.

■ Management aims to split the workforce by sidelining RMT, the largest rail union, and giving privileged relations to the other rail unions, ASLEF and the clerical workers' union, TSSA.

■ They have delayed negotiations by twice challenging the union ballot in the courts. They are quite well aware that it is now nearing the period when the underground workers' families have expectations of extra spending for Christmas.

Following more talks and a report-back meeting, London's underground workers will decide their next steps.

## THE FUTURE OF MARXISM

**A Series of 10 Lectures**

Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London (Holborn Tube)

Thursdays, 7.30 pm, 5 October — 7 December, 1995

Next lecture, 16 November: 'The Crisis of Bourgeois Economics' (Keith Gibbard)

Admission: £1.50 (£1.00 concs.) Tickets for the series: £10.00 (£5.00 concs.)

Advance notice:

## 10th Anniversary Workers Press Rally

Saturday 9 December, 10.30am — 4.30pm

University of Westminster, 35 Marylebone

Road, London

Baker Street tube



## 'Rules' can't end graft

ANYBODY who thought that the defeat of the Tories over MPs earnings would end the sleaze, if not outright corruption that increasingly dominates the House of Commons was quickly disillusioned as several Tory MPs made clear that they had no intention of obeying the vote.

Sir Michael Neubert and Michael Stern were among leading Tory MPs who declared that they were ready to boycott the new rules on sleaze. There was talk that such a large number of Tory MPs would refuse to comply that the rule would be inoperable. What price the much-vaunted 'sovereignty of parliament'?

This alone indicates that no amount of 'rules' can eliminate the graft that characterises the activities of the so-called Mother of Parliaments. Indeed, rules have existed since 1947 designed to prevent an MP entering into a contract to represent a business interest. But they have clearly been consistently flouted.

Even if the rules agreed last Monday were obeyed, this could in no way stop 'honourable members' seeing ministers and top civil servants informally for 'off the record' discussions about financial and business interests.

Some 50 Tory MPs either abstained or voted with Labour on a motion demanding that MPs must declare the size of their earnings from outside the House. These MPs were often from marginal seats and under intense pressure from middle-class voters who have seen their 'representatives' pocketing large sums of money while they themselves face growing job insecurity, severe reductions in health and other state-funded services, as well as seeing the value of their property plunge.

\* \* \* \* \*

THE inquiry under Lord Nolan was only set up because of the fear of this growing disillusionment among traditional Tory supporters.

Edwina Currie expressed the feelings of many of her fellow Tory MPs when she said: 'It has been made very clear to me in my constituency by committed Conservatives that they're not happy about concealment.'

In calling on all Liberal MPs to vote for the resolution requiring declaration of earnings, party leader Paddy Ashdown was nearer the truth than most when he said Europe was fast approaching a 'crisis of governability'.

\* \* \* \* \*

INDEED sleaze and corruption are not simply a British question. The same pattern exists throughout the continent. In Italy, three former prime ministers are either on trial or awaiting trial on serious criminal charges, in one case involving conspiracy to murder.

Only last week a magistrate in Rome uncovered the fact that several hundred officers in the armed forces had for years put in inflated expenses claims and regularly taken bribes to keep the sons of their friends out of military service.

In France both the prime minister and the president have recently been under investigation following charges that they lived in luxury apartments improperly subsidised by the city of Paris.

In Greece and Spain — where a supposedly socialist government is in office — a similar pattern of corruption in the state and the government exists.

\* \* \* \* \*

CORRUPTION goes far beyond that of individuals. For in the sleaze, a little of which has been uncovered in the Tory party over the last 12 months, is the face of a decadent, decaying capitalism where the distinction between hiring of the services of MPs and downright crime on the one hand and business on the other becomes ever more blurred.

The Labour Party have claimed the 'moral high ground' on the issue of sleaze. But this hides the fact that the Labour leadership every day moves closer to the City and big business, the real source of corruption.

Leading firms such as Nat West, Sainsburys and Lloyds were present at the last Labour Party conference at Brighton, either sponsoring facilities or laying on receptions for delegates. Among those present at Brighton providing lavish hospitality was none other than Sir Tim Bell, former image-maker to Baroness Thatcher and director of one of the leading PR companies in Britain.

Prominent Labour figures such as former Kinnock aide Patricia Hewitt or former leader of Islington council, and now Labour MP, Margaret Hodge, have been snapped up by firms in the City getting ready for a Labour government. Former senior figures at Labour's Walworth Road headquarters are now well-established and well-heeled figures in the burgeoning 'lobbying industry' which deliberately uses the influence of MPs to gain access to the Cabinet and Whitehall.

So while nobody should be surprised if large numbers of Tory MPs defy last Monday night's vote, they should be equally prepared to see little change under a future Labour government.

# Letters

## Flexible what?

A RECENT documentary of BBC 2 showed the current state of working conditions in Britain today.

The programme was a powerful indictment of the way employers look upon their workforces.

'PUBLIC EYE' documentary programme put forth a revealing programme on the overall decline in the living standards of working people, and the decline in the cultural level of the mass of the population.

One of the interviews on the programme was with a woman member of the Institute of Directors, who called for a more flexible workforce, i.e. a mass market of working people from which unscrupulous employers can pick and choose who they want to work for them, at the cheapest possible price and with little or no protection in the way of union representation or laws on health and safety. In other words what the market for the hiring of labour power deems possible.

Even John Monks, the general secretary of the Trades Union Congress, admitted that his members were under attack from the employers, but, as we all know, he would put forward only an excuse to wait for the return of a Labour government.

The ruling classes are now looking to reformist parties, or to put it more up-to-date ex-reformist parties (who now openly support the capitalist ruling classes), for their patronage in taming the workers and their class organisations.

Another of the interviews given was by an HGV driver, who had to wait by the phone for the company to ring him when there was work available. This sometimes led to the company telling him there was work available for the next day, and then phoning him again, telling him that the lorry had broken down.

Some of the other stories told were even more incredible. The sales people who worked for a store selling cookers, heaters, fridges, etc., for the gas and electricity consumer market, were told that, when trading was slack, they could not talk to each other, but had to disperse themselves about the store, without getting close to each other. At other times

they had to clean the toilets as contractors had only been fixed to clean them on one day a week.

'Flexible what?' would seem to be the case these days. The way things are developing under capitalism work can just about cease to be recognised as such.

Ken Singer  
Dundee

## Peron and Milosevic ride again!

I HAVE detected yet another comparison between Peron and Milosevic. The shabby ultra-nationalist ideologies upon which both relied were based on revisionist theories on certain historical figures.

In Argentina, the theory was based on General Juan Manuel de Rosas. He dominated Argentina from 1829 to 1852, and was a close favourite of Lord Palmerston. In liberal historiography, the overthrow of Rosas ushered in the era of Argentine enlightenment.

The first salvo in the rehabilitation of Rosas was fired by Carlos Ibarguren, the 'maestro' of the 'juventud nacionalista' (nationalist youth).

Ibarguren had been a founder member of the nationalist La Nueva Republica in 1928 and was the first person to try and organise an extreme right-wing party from among conservatives.

In 1938, the new approach was institutionalised by the foundation of the Instituto Historico Juan Manuel de Rosas.

By the 1940s, Rosas was ready for adoption by Peronista ideologues as a counter-hero to those of liberal historiography.

With respect to Serbia, the 'hero' to be rehabilitated was Draza Mihailovic.

In 1985, Veselin Djuretic launched a book — 'Saveznici i Jugoslovenska Ratna Drama' ('The Allies and the Yugoslav War Tragedy') — at a drinks party organised by the Serbian Academy of Sciences.

He argued that Britain's decision to betray Draza Mihailovic and support the Croat Tito was a disaster for Yugoslavia and the Serb nation as it condemned both to decades of tyrannical Communism.

Similar theories were advanced in the same year in Nora

Beloff's 'Tito's Flawed Legacy' (Gollancz, 1985).

Within the year the Serbian Academy of Sciences had produced its infamous 'Memorandum'. Need I say more?

Mihailovic's statue has been dedicated to a hilltop in Ravna Gora (his old stamping ground) and Tony Benn is the biggest fool in England.

Useful further reading can be found in 'Fascism: A Reader's Guide' by Walter Laqueur (1979) and 'How Britain Blundered in the Balkans' by Noel Malcolm (Spectator, 11 July 1992).

Tom Carter  
Somerton, Somerset

## Unfortunate 'Comment'

It was unfortunate that the 'Comment' article by Dot Gibson about the Liverpool dockers (28 October) started off with an Irish joke. Noah Nudnik pointed out (4 November) that the 'real' joke has nothing to do with Ireland, but involves a rustic leaning on a gate in Byelo-Russia.

I would say that the joke in fact pops up in many places. In Minneapolis, the central figures are Poles; in southern Africa, they are blacks; in other places they may be Jews, Walloons, Aborigines, Maoris and the list is almost endless. What the jokes have in common is that they all refer to basically simple people who have a dash of guile, what some writers have referred to as the 'Sambo' stereotype. Another characteristic they share is that the butt of the humour is never a person from the dominant class.

The jokes justify oppression, in the form of paternalistic 'care' for those who clearly are incapable of looking after themselves. It seems to me that such jokes have no place in a revolutionary socialist paper.

Paul Henderson  
Leicester

## Never trust a Stalinist

I READ with great interest the two recent articles in Workers Press on the Fife Socialist League by Dave Chapple (28 October and 4 November).

Apart from a frank disbelief

in the idea of 'socialism in one county', I much doubt if a 'proliferation of successful, local, independent working-class groups' represent the way forward (looks to me like the way back to the 1890s).

However, I also believe that Dave has a very rosy view of the past of British Stalinism. He lists among West Fife's militant traditions that it was the basis of the 'Third Period' regional split union, 'The United (sic) Mine-workers of Scotland'.

Does Dave advocate the splitting up of the trade unions on regional lines as well?

Dave also describes how the local Labour Party 'got the right-wing Willie Hamilton into Westminster in 1950 to replace Gallacher'. The fact is that the general election of 1950 was a very acrimonious one in West Fife, because Hamilton was a pacifist during World War II and Gallacher carried on a campaign of ugly chauvinism against him, boasting of the Communist Party's patriotic and bellicose record during it.

I have every respect for Dave's integrity and record, but he should make much more critical use of the work of such writers as Willie Thompson that appear on his list (see Revolutionary History, vol. v, no.2, pp.148-51 and no.3, pp.275-8).

Never trust a Stalinist writing about Stalinism's past.

Al Richardson  
London SW17

## Correction

Workers Press's research department has questioned the date given last week and the week before of the Wortley Hall conference in the article on Lawrence Daly.

It was twice given as April 1958 although it must have been April 1957.

The first issue of The Newsletter, edited by Peter Fryer, was largely devoted to the proceedings at Wortley Hall.

The conference was held quite soon after the Hungarian Revolution and its suppression by Russian tanks in 1956.

At that time many people were still seething confusedly and had not yet sorted themselves out 'in a new way'.

Many who fraternised at the conference wouldn't have been seen dead in each other's company a year later in 1958!

WE WELCOME LETTERS  
SEND THEM TO: WORKERS PRESS,  
PO BOX 735, LONDON SW8 1YB  
— OR FAX 0171-387 0569

## Bosnia — Solidarity not Charity

An account of the August Tuzla Trade Union convoy  
Produced by Tony Samphier, NUJ delegate on the convoy

Published by Workers Aid for Bosnia

Get your union branch, Labour Party, etc., to buy copies

Available for £1 from Workers Aid for Bosnia, PO Box 9, Eccles SO, Manchester M30 7FX. Tel: 0171-582 5462.

## No Frontiers/The Rain Trust present a Bosnia fund-raiser The Troggs

### The Animals/The Yardbirds

Wednesday 6 December, doors open 6pm, London Astoria, 157 Charing X Road, London WC2. Tickets £9.50 advance/£11.50 (£9.50 concessions) door.

Astoria box office (0171-434 0403, credit cards 0171-434 0404). By post enclosing SAE from The Rain Trust, c/o Janice Findlay, 52 Deptford Broadway, London SE8 4PH. Cheques payable to 'The Rain Trust'. Part of the proceeds to go to AIDS/HIV support and rape counselling.

## Memorial meeting for Maire O'Shea

Irish republican, communist and fighter

Speaker: Bernadette McAlliskey

Saturday 18 November, 2pm-4pm (to be followed by a social)

At Mechanics' Institute, 103 Princess Street, Manchester M1

(opposite Chorlton Street bus station, side entrance)

Maire O'Shea died on 6 March 1995. She represented a tradition of Irish republicanism that was both radical and secular. Her active struggle for a united Ireland made her reject all deals with the British state.

Maire became nationally known in this country when she was arrested under the Prevention of Terrorism Act and charged with conspiracy. After a major campaign, which was supported by her trade union and in which she repeated her politics to the jury in court, Maire was acquitted.

Irish politics, the politics for a free and united Ireland, were central to Maire's life. However she was a fighter against injustice wherever she saw it and she saw it everywhere. In particular her professional life as a psychiatrist was also deeply political.

For many years she fought against a system that defines and drives people mad and then imprisons them for life in top-security mental hospitals. She understood the connections between racism and mental health and established in Birmingham a therapeutic centre for black people. In Manchester she offered her professional help to black people hounded and distressed by immigration laws.

Maire was a supporter of all struggles by working people and was an active member of her own union ASTMS (MSF).

► Come to the memorial meeting. Honour Maire O'Shea and discuss how we can take forward those causes for which she fought.

Organised by the Maire O'Shea Memorial Committee, c/o 1 Newton Street, Department 95, Manchester M1 1HW.



# Buy 'Dockers' Charter'

BY DOT GIBSON

## THE 500 sacked Liverpool dockers continue to win wide support.

The shop stewards have published a four-page tabloid — 'Dockers Charter', which is being sold 'like hot cakes' all over the city.

This newspaper, which helps to raise money for the dispute, gives the background to the lock-out.

It explains why the dockers are calling for a public inquiry into the Mersey Docks and Harbour Company; reveals the dirty work of scab-herding company, Drake International Limited; sets out some examples from history of the 'age-old curse of casual labour'.

It also has supporting state-

ments from: Frankie Shilling, sacked Tilbury docker; Vic Turner, docker imprisoned by the Tory government in 1972; and, John Hendy QC, who represented sacked dockers in the Industrial Tribunal after the 1989 strike.

Carrying a huge banner sporting a 'liverbird' and proclaiming: 'Support the dockers — say no to casualisation', the shop stewards led their fourth march, 10,000-strong, through the city on 4 November.

Speakers at the rally included: John Bulhana, convener of shop stewards at Fords Halewood; Micky Whitley, convener of shop stewards at Vauxhall Motors Ellesmere Port; Colin Coughlin; sacked Tilbury docker; a Hillingdon hospital striker; and, Eddie Loyden MP.

Delegations of the 500 dockers are on the road.

One group is in Ireland;

another is speaking to delegates at the Civil and Public Servants' Union conference in Bournemouth; they are speaking to Communications Workers Union members at a regional conference and to dockers in Bristol.

There are plans to send delegations to Europe and the USA.

An international conference of dockworkers is being held in Liverpool today.

■ 'Dockers Charter', 50p (20p for unwaged) can be obtained from Jimmy Davies, Secretary and Treasurer, 19 Scorton Street, Liverpool L6 4AS. CASH WITH ORDER. P&P must be included: 1 copy 20p; 5 copies 50p; 10 copies £1. Orders above this must be arranged — telephone: 0151-207 3388 or 0191-222 0299.

## 'Dockers deserve every possible support'

John Bulhana, TGWU shop steward, Fords Halewood:

This action against the dockers is outrageous and it was completely pre-planned by the Mersey Docks and Harbour company.

It is the legacy of our failure as a movement to stop the Tory and class attack. It is the legacy of the trade union leadership's failure to fight the anti-trade-union laws. It is a lesson to every one of us of what can happen when we don't fight.

The dockers warned us in their 1989 strike that the unions' refusal to fight against the anti-trade-union laws would give license to the employers to change our contracts and get rid of our trade unions.

I am explaining in our factory what can happen if we don't maintain our shop stewards' organisation.

On Merseyside during the miners' strike we created many Miners' Support Groups, but we didn't have a mine.

Now support for the dockers must be built all over the country. I have always been impressed at the way the Liverpool dockers have never denied support to other workers. Many times they have supported us in Fords.

Even if there are people who are capable of dismissing the politics of this fight, they certainly cannot dismiss the magnificent principles of the dockers — their fight for the miners, their fight against the dumping of

toxic waste, their support for the anti-apartheid movement.

The dockers deserve every possible support, not only from Merseyside but throughout the country.

In the awful society in which we live, where profit seems to be the only motive, we Ford workers see ourselves going into various markets. We would certainly expect our products to be shipped through the port of Liverpool.

I am disappointed at the lack of public support for the dockers from the Transport and General Workers' Union. We are certainly doing everything possible to make others aware of their fight.

We have sent every bit of information we have received to our people at Fords in Dagenham.

# Support JJ Fast Food workers

BY JOHN BALLANTYNE  
TGWU member

OVER 200 Turkish and Kurdish workers and other trade unionists demonstrated their support for 45 JJ Fast Food workers who were sacked for daring to join the Transport and General Workers' Union.

Last Saturday, 4 November, at 7.30am, the demonstration started off from Tottenham Hale to march the half mile to JJ Fast Food's distribution plant.

As we approached the factory on an industrial estate, police dressed in 'boiler suits' jumped out of their wagons and began to video marchers as they passed. There were about ten wagons in all.

Marchers were diverted to a field about 100 yards from the factory gates where they held a rally.

The JJ Fast Food workers decided to join the union when they were faced with working 60 to 70 hours a week for a wage of £130 to £180 with no sick or holiday pay. At a meeting they elected a shop steward.

When the manager found out they had joined the union he immediately sacked them. He refused to meet or discuss with the union's full-time official.

On Tuesday 31 October, JJ Fast Food workers gathered outside the factory gates and were attacked by thugs wielding sticks and knives. Three workers were taken to hospital.

The following day, police attacked the pickets and four were arrested.

JJ Fast Food workers are demanding the most basic and elementary conditions that every working person should have:

■ All workers to have a contract of work and be in the union.

■ Paid holiday entitlement.  
■ Sick pay.  
■ No money to be paid by drivers out of their own pocket if their lorry is damaged.

■ Warehouse workers should be entitled to tea and lunch breaks.

■ A two-shift system to be introduced in the freezers where people have to work at temperatures of 30 below zero.

The Turkish and Kurdish workers are appealing for support from the labour movement throughout the country.

This dispute is characteristic of a series of struggles which are taking place right now and takes its place alongside the Liverpool dockers and the cleaners in Hillingdon.

It is urgent that these workers are not allowed to become isolated but must become part of the growing working-class struggle that is developing.

hoped to use the premises in Silvertown, for refreshments and toilet facilities on Sunday and Monday. Instead they were told that the company had instructed it should stay closed during the strike.

Gordon said: 'We were appalled. Everything at the social club is paid for by employees — including staff wages. The company only pays the lease.'

Workers were eventually allowed to use facilities at a nearby church.

The GMB/APEX union, which represents mainly office and admin staff, rejected the strike ballot. Gordon claimed these workers were being 'intimidated' by senior management into covering the work normally carried out by striking staff.

## Sugar strike

TATE & LYLE workers in east London have staged a second 48-hour strike over washing-up times. The strikers — 487 GMB general union and 138 AEEU engineers' union members — were to meet and were likely to step up the action.

Management joined agency staff on the production lines. Strikers reported that management had turned down peace talks. Management spokesperson Ray Anderson claimed that production increased on the strike days!

The plants affected were Silvertown, Plaistow and Millwall.

This is the first dispute by production-line staff in the com-

pany's 117 year history. Strikes were called when talks broke down after the company scrapped traditional 'walk and wash' times for shift staff.

The new rules make no allowance for clearing up or staring. Workers have to be on station, wearing appropriate protective clothing, at start of work. Showering and dressing must be done in their own time. There is no time allowed for canteen visits.

GMB regional organiser Alan Gordon described this as 'penny pinching' against 'a loyal and long-serving staff, the majority of whom have worked for them for tens of years'.

In the first of the two-day stoppages, strikers had found the doors of their own social club closed to them. Picketers had

## What minimum wage?

BY PETER GIBSON

THE TWO general unions, GMB and TGWU, are both pushing ahead with their campaign on the minimum wage.

The GMB is distributing posters and leaflets calling for £4 or more and the T&G for £4 now. None of the unions has answered the UCATT delegate's speech at the TUC when he asked: 'Could you live on £166 per week?'

That is what the £4 per hour would produce. After tax and National Insurance deductions workers on that hourly rate would take home around £100 per week.

Yet there are now 45 per cent of men and 81 per cent of

working in restaurants getting less than £4 per hour; 45 per cent of men and 72 per cent of women in cleaning services; and, 27 per cent of men and 45 per cent of women care assistants.

In the food retail industries, 24 per cent of men and 60 per cent of women get less than £4 per hour.

In most of these cases these workers may get state benefits to keep their heads above water as a subsidy to the employers who pay these starvation wages.

In spite of all of this, the political groups have refused to take up and campaign for the £7-per-hour demand adopted by the trades councils in London.

This figure, they say, would produce £250 gross per week for

## Top war office civil servants caught on the make

BY ROY THOMAS

DEFENCE MINISTER Michael Portillo can always be relied on to call for a tough line to be taken on crime.

But he has been quiet this week about the fraud in his own department.

Fraud cases at the Ministry of Defence have trebled over the last four years.

The MOD lost £2.6 million as a result of fraud and theft in 1994. The number of theft cases in the 1991-92 year was 63. By 1994 this had increased to 217. The amount

to £2.6 million. In the field of procurement the MOD identified 85 cases of corruption and collusion between MOD officials and contractors in the last three years.

The Treasury has been forced to admit that in the last three years 1,000 cases of fraud, costing £5.3 million have been uncovered involving civil servants.

The MOD say the increase in the number of cases is the result of an improvement in the 'detection methods'.

Or, in other words, top civil servants and manufacturers have always been on the fiddle to this extent but have not been caught

# Camden Unison moves toward strike action

MORE THAN 500 members of the public service union Unison in a north London borough voted for stike action against a sacking threat on Monday 30 October.

Camden council plans to sack them in order to change their contracts. A packed Unison branch meeting unanimously supported a motion calling for a strike ballot of its 3,000 members.

The ballot would be for a six-day initial strike and then indefinite strike action if negotiations aren't successful.

Branch secretary David Eggmore reminded the meeting that it was coming up to third anniversary of the infamous day, just before Christmas 1992, when Camden announced that it wanted changes to more than 50 terms and conditions.

These included increasing the hours in the working week and a lay-off clause which would have enabled the local authority to lay off workers in times of financial difficulties.

Though many of the more draconian changes have been dropped by the Council, they are still seeking to impose changes which would have a significant impact on terms and conditions.

In addition, the ruling Labour group have taken the extreme step of issuing a '90-day notice' — a threat to sack all those on the old contract at the end of three months of negotiations.

Every staff member on the old contract has also recieved three individually addressed letters attempting to frighten them into

signing the new contract being pushed for by the council.

This attempt to persuade the workers 'voluntarily' to sign the new contract has been an almost total flop — only 98 have signed, barely 1.5 per cent of the workforce.

Moving the motion, branch chair Liz Leicester said that although mandated by a large branch meeting to seek a negotiated settlement, it might be necessary to go on strike.

'If the council takes the decision to terminate our contracts', she said, 'we will have to take strike action.'

'For a Labour Council to take this step would be unprecedented and we would have a responsibility to defend our rights.'

Reminding the meeting that the situation in Camden is part of a larger picture, she welcomed three cleaners from Hillingdon hospital to the meeting who are on strike against enforced

changes in their contracts, including 20 per cent pay cuts.

She also spoke of the three ballot for strike won by the railway workers' union in spite of all attempts to use the anti-union laws to stop trade union action.

Finally, she told the meeting of the principled struggle of the Liverpool dockers, sacked for refusing to cross a picket line.

She quoted the words of John Hendy QC, who defended the Tilbury dockers at an Industrial Tribunal in 1989.

He had told a 10,000-strong march and rally the week before in Liverpool that:

'The only people who will win this dispute are the people I'm looking at in front of me. It is because of the stand taken in the history of our movement that rights have been won.'

It's the same for us,' Leicester said. The motion was passed unanimously.

## Increased profits at expense of jobs

THE EMPLOYERS' federation has warned that they expect to cut 8,000 engineering jobs in the next year. This, they claim, is to 'meet competition from overseas rivals'.

However they also say they expect production to rise by 3 per cent next year.

The computer and electronics industries are expected to increase production by 7 per cent, and aerospace equipment production is expected to increase by 4 per cent, mechanical equipment, motor vehicles and electrical equipment is expected to

increase its production by between 2 and 3 per cent.

But the Engineering Employers' Federation say the jobs will go, in spite of increase in productivity, 'because engineering firms will need to increase productivity to maintain competitiveness.'

The main area of job losses will, they say, be on workers making metal products where 8,000 out of the sectors' 409,000 jobs are expected to go. Employment in transport is expected to drop by 5,000 to 163,000. The managers expect to increase their exports by 6 per cent.

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**Tito on  
Merseyside?**

"TITO, where are you when we need you?" asked wry graffiti in ex-Yugoslavia two years ago. But its underlying sentiment was quite opposite to that of the 'residual' (and recidivist) Stalinists in the British Left, who belatedly discovered their affection for 'socialist Yugoslavia' as they embraced its worst enemies, the Serb nationalists (for whom Tito was a half-Croat Communist who made concessions to Muslims).

It was different when I was a lad. There have been four great leaders, Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin, said my school chum Dave, whose parents were Communist Party members. 'What about Trotsky?' I ventured. 'He was a traitor!' came the prompt reply. And Tito? 'He's a traitor too!'

In 1951 the Communist Party published *From Trotsky to Tito*, by James Klugman. The former Special Operations Executive officer claimed 'Trotskyists and agents' had taken over the Yugoslav Communist Party, 'disguising themselves as leading partisans' to remove opponents.

'Yugoslavia today is a semi-colonial country ruled over by a reactionary caste operating a police state of a fascist type.'

In *Tito's Plot Against Europe* (1950), Derek Kartun supported the Stalinist frame-up of Hungarian Communist Party leader and International Brigade veteran Laszlo Rajk, executed as a 'Titoist agent'.

Meanwhile Stalin's British cohorts were closing in on the British end of the conspiracy — a young sleuth in Liverpool reported to superiors in 1951: 'I am now on a personal friendly basis with members of the Labour League of Youth from at least five different branches on Merseyside — you know to the extent that I am going round to the secretary of one of the branches next Tuesday for tea... I have also "extracted" during discussion a certain amount of useful information.'

'Birkenhead and Walton are completely dominated by the Trotsky organisation together with unorganised Titoist elements.'

After running through other branches, the intrepid investigator named names of 'the Trotskyite fraction', identifying four members of the editorial board of *Rally*, then published by Birkenhead Labour youth.

The editor, (name given), is however not I THINK a Trotskyist but is a Titoist who gets most of his line from *Yugoslav Fortnightly* and the *Anglo-Yugoslav Friendship* — he was in Yugoslavia for a month last October.'

Two years, several show trials and executions later, with Stalin in his mausoleum, the Stalinists were still gathering information. An official at Communist Party headquarters collected names of Trotskyists and militant dockers in Merseyside and Hull supporting the 'Blue Union'. I wonder what they did with such information? Maybe some former Communist Party members with memories to spare will get in touch?

**Helen's war**

HELEN Bamber was a 19-year old nurse when she went to help survivors of Belsen concentration camp in 1945. Nowadays she directs the Medical Foundation for Victims of Torture, founded in November 1985, which has worked with survivors of persecution in 65 countries, providing medical expertise and advocacy.

Interviewed in the Autumn *British Socialist* magazine, Helen says government immigration policies mean sending asylum-seekers back to further persecution and torture. Could there be a more damning indictment of those hypocritical politicians parading at the cenotaph and celebrating the 50th anniversary of...

# Macedonia

BY DIMITRIS HILARIS  
ATHENS

THE REPUBLIC of Macedonia is a small country in the central Balkans with 2 million inhabitants. Macedonia is also a geographical area which is divided into three parts: Aegean Macedonia (Greek Macedonia), Vardar Macedonia (Republic of Macedonia) and Pirin Macedonia (Bulgarian Macedonia).

The republic is the only one from former Yugoslavia which has not been involved in the war which broke out four years ago. But the numerous problems — national and economic — that exist in the region, motivate many people to consider this republic, together with Kosovo, as very dangerous.

The recent attack against the president of the republic, Kiro Gligorov, indicates that the nationalists are not only a spectre of the past but also a dangerous threat for our life and it is necessary to smash them through the massive action of the working people.

The following is a brief history of the republic of Macedonia.

**The Ottoman Empire**

OVER the last century Macedonia was known as European Turkey or as the European part of the empire.

That area was inhabited by different national, ethnic, religious and linguistic groups (hence the 'salade Macedonie' in French cuisine).

Therefore, it was very hard for anyone to distinguish and to clarify those populations into some concrete categories.

A very famous Greek writer, Pinelopi Delta, had written in 1937: 'Macedonia was then [during the Ottoman Empire] a mixture of all Balkan nations.

'Greeks, Bulgarians, Aromanians, Serbs, Albanians, Christians and Muslims lived higgledy-piggledy under the heavy yoke of the Turks.

Their language was the same, Macedonian, a combination of Slav and Greek mixed with Turkish words.

'As in the Byzantine era the populations were so mixed that it was difficult to tell apart a Greek from a Bulgarian — the two dominant races. Their only national consciousness was Macedonian.'

The inhabitants didn't seem to be eager to adopt a certain national identity. Living within the framework of the Ottoman Empire and undergoing repression, mostly economic, by the regime of Istanbul, they were interested in guaranteeing their goods and a more comfortable life for themselves and their children.

**National consciousness in the Balkans**

While in the rest of Europe national states were developing in the 18th century, in the Balkan region numerous people lived under the empire without any state recognition.

The mode of production of the Ottoman Empire was neither feudalist nor capitalist. It was what Marx called the 'Asiatic mode of production'. Some economic characteristics were more advanced than feudalism — liberal market, petty owners, etc. — but it remained a system of consumption, not accumulation.

When the first bourgeois classes emerged — Greek, Serbian, etc. — the Ottoman Empire and the Istanbul regime were the obstacles to further development. Thus, the social bourgeois revolutions in the Balkans were national revolutions (Serbian revolution in 1820, Greek revolution in 1821).

That is why the conception of 'nation' in the Balkan region is so strong.

When the empire started to collapse, the local bourgeois classes (mainly Greek, Serbian and Bulgar) began competing to convert the

population of entire areas and to conquer as many territories as possible, particularly in Macedonia and in Thrace. But, as already stated these areas were not 'ethnically' pure.

For example, Salonica in 1910 was inhabited by 60,000 Jews, 40,000 Greeks, 20,000 Muslims, 20,000 Muslim Jews, 5,000 Slavs and 3,000 Europeans.

To 'solve' these problems, these national bourgeois classes used the most forcible means of 'ethnic cleansing' and terrorism which led to the two Balkan wars. In order to cultivate 'national feelings' they used educational and clerical institutions.

A British historian, H.N. Brailsford, wrote in 1906: 'The passion for education is strong and the various propagandas pander eagerly to it. If a father cannot contrive to place all his sons in a secondary school belonging to the race which he himself affects, the prospect of a bursary will often induce him to plant them out in rival establishments.

'It is of course, a point of honour that a boy who is educated at the expense of one or other of these peoples must himself adopt its language and nationality. Thus it sometimes happened that a "Greek" father had "Bulgarian", "Serbian" and "Romanian" children. The same process is at work in the villages.

I remember vividly my amazement when I encountered this phenomenon during my first visit to Macedonia.'

**Who are the Macedonians?**

AMONG the residents of Macedonia were Slavs who were not either Serbs or Bulgarians. They were speaking a language which is something between Serbian and Bulgarian with a lot of Turkish, Albanian and Greek words, that is Macedonian and they had a Macedonian national consciousness.

At the beginning there was no Macedonian literature movement but then a group of Macedonian



revolutionaries (mainly socialists) formed IMRO (Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organisation) which advocated an independent and united Macedonia. IMRO was very influenced by the socialists and its programme was very radical.

The first article of its rules and regulations was: 'Everyone who lives in European Turkey, regardless of sex, nationality or personal beliefs, may become a member of IMRO.'

They organised the insurrection of 'Ilinden' in which a lot of Macedonian poor peasants participated against the repression of the Ottoman Empire. The insurrection was suppressed by the Turkish army except the Krusevo aregion.

There, the revolutionaries declared the 'Republic of Krusevo' which lasted about two months. The revolutionaries elected a central

# Sinister attack on G

BY NIKOS LOUKIDES  
ATHENS

A SINISTER attack was carried out by the so-called 'Trotskyist' sect of Savas Michael in Greece against the young journalist Panos Grigoriadis because he openly denounced the crimes of the Serbian nationalists.

Some months ago Grigoriadis visited the besieged Bosnian town of Bihac. When he returned to Greece he published an internationalist article which was entitled 'The rape of Bihac'. It was printed in the *Storm Broadcast* magazine, edited by the 'Network of movements for social and political rights'.

Grigoriadis wrote:

'Recently I was encamped in the hell of Bihac. I lived, together with the residents, through the atrocities of the Chetniks. I saw what only those of us who have been through it can know or imagine. I realised that these crimes had been carried out by the Chetniks.

The town of Bihac and the surrounding area was besieged from the north by the nationalists of Krajina and from the south by the nationalists of Pale. It was shelled permanently by heavy artillery, tanks and even chemical bombs (theoretically

forbidden after the Vietnam War).

'Naturally there were air-raids. The town and dozens of villages are only remnants of what they used to be. Many people have been killed, mainly civilians.

'The target of Mladic's army is the gradual disappearance of the area's population — Muslim, Croats, and Serb opponents [of the Chetniks] — in the framework of genocide and "ethnic cleansing".'

'The thing I saw, above all, was the desperate attempt of the residents to live together, in solidarity, in hunger and in the sharing of bread. It is another Bosnian area with a deep class multi-national consciousness.

'I saw a people, in desperation, lift up their bodies and defend with their blood the values of a multi-national society. And this is something very inspiring. This is the message from their screams. This is the hope and the perspective.

'The residents of Bihac and all Bosnia know who their enemy is and they pay in everyday life with their blood for the brutality of nationalism.

'Bihac might fall because of the military superiority of the Chetniks, but all of us and the next generations will know and will never forget.

'We will always remember the

rape of Bosnia and raise strongly the flag of internationalism and solidarity. We stand against the aggressors until the final victory.

'Now Bosnia needs us more than ever. Now we put forward our solidarity and our condemnation against nationalism to reveal the real causes of this war and its terrible consequences.

'Has the time arrived for us to think seriously that one of our internationalist tasks is armed recruitment in the front against the Greek nationalists and fascists who are fighting on the side of the Chetniks. Has the time come?'

This brave position of Grigoriadis was attacked by the petty-bourgeois clique of the so-called 'Trotskyist' Savas Michael.

On 30 September, their paper *New Perspective* published a comment from Panayiotis Vihos, under the heading 'On the side of the Americans?'

'The imperialist war, which is turning into genocide against the Bosnian Serbs, has exposed a number of foreign and Greek so-called lefts and revolutionaries, who, after the collapse of 1989-91 and the ideological confusion caused by it, moved towards right-wing positions into the arms of imperialism....

'In our country, an extreme example of political and moral bankruptcy is the notorious "Network", where the "anti-nationalist" Grigoriadis writes in the magazine *Storm Broadcast*:

"Has the time arrived for us to think seriously that one of our internationalist tasks is armed recruitment in the front against the Greek nationalists and fascists who are fighting on the side of the Chetniks. Has the time come?'

'In other words, the political incompetence of Grigoriadis and the "Antinationalist Antiwar Campaign", as well as their pessimism on the perspectives of revolution and socialism, lead them to ask us to fight together with the Americans and Clinton.'

On the same page as this, they publish an article supporting Marcus Wolf, former leader of the east German Stasi secret police.

No comment is needed to see the role of Savas Michael, his newspaper and supporters who denounce everyone who is against the Greek and Serbian fascists and say they are on the side of imperialism.

Many times have internationalists have heard dirty accusations by Stalinists, bourgeois nationalists and so-called revolutionaries against them.



# and the Balkans



council in which were represented all the nationalities who lived in the region (Macedonians, Albanians and Tzintzars).

They also organised the internal life of the republic (popular courts and several workshops). The declaration of the Krusevo Republic was an example of internationalism: 'Muslim brothers, come on and fight with us. We understand that you too are slaves of the empire. We call on you to come and fight together for freedom, justice and human life.'

But after a period a right-wing group of pro-Bulgarians formed within IMRO who desired more links with Bulgaria and even annexation of Macedonia to Bulgaria. The right-wing section managed to predominate within the organisation and IMRO from 1908 onwards became a nationalist, terrorist group.

The Macedonians didn't achieve independence. The territory of Macedonia was shared by Serbia, Bulgaria and Greece.

The Macedonians were considered by the local bourgeois classes to be either Bulgarians, or Southern Serbs, or Slavophone Greeks. Since World War II, the Macedonians have undergone repression by the ruling nationalisms.

They couldn't speak their own language and were badly exploited.

When World War II started, Hitler had promised the biggest part of Macedonia to Bulgaria which was then an ally.

The vast majority of Macedonians supported and joined the Yugoslav partisans or the Democratic Army which was led by the Communist Party of Greece. They had formed a special column which was called

SNOF (Slav National Liberation Front).

In November 1942, the first session of the Yugoslav Anti-Fascist Council announced that Macedonians would be one of the constituent nations of Yugoslavia and in August 1944 the Macedonian People's Republic was proclaimed.

It was the first time that the Macedonian people had enjoyed statehood. But there were (and there are) a lot of Macedonians who have been living in Bulgaria and in Greece.

## Inside Yugoslavia

MACEDONIA in the 1940s was a poor and rural province. Before the war, there were only two high schools in Skopje, one theatre, one faculty of philosophy with 172 students, one hospital and only 10 miles of asphalt road.

Macedonian industry consisted of small plants producing mainly tobacco and medical products. There were altogether 8,000 workers. This situation was the result of the lack of a strong Macedonian ruling class and of the continuous national repression of the Macedonian people.

Within Yugoslavia there was an attempt to industrialise Macedonia. The main industries were the chromium mines, chemicals and tobacco. In the 1960s, one third of the population was involved in producing tobacco.

But Macedonia remained the poorest republic of the federation which contributed only 5.3 per cent to the Yugoslav social product. The rate of unemployment, in 1971, stood at 20 per cent while in Yugoslavia as a whole it was 7 per cent.

The Stalinist repression of civil rights carried out by the Macedonian bureaucracy was the worst in the former Yugoslavia. Remarkably, young people under 18 were not allowed to walk in the streets after midnight.

## National minorities and the break-up

Macedonia is a multi-national republic: 65 per cent are Macedonians and 25 per cent are Albanians who inhabit the western part of the country. There are also Turks and Serbs.

Before the break-up of Yugoslavia the constitution of the republic stated that Macedonia was the sovereign state of the Macedonian, Albanian and Turkish citizens but now it recognises Albanians and Turks as minorities.

There are also problems with the education and the language of the Albanian people. Recently the community of the Albanians in Tetovo tried to launch a university of Albanian literature and the Macedonian authorities forcibly prevented it.

It is evident that the Albanian question in Macedonia is connected with the 'Kosovo question'.

When the break-up of Yugoslavia started the president of the republic, Kiro Gligorov, together with the president of Bosnia proposed that the federation be maintained because they estimated that the future of their republics outside Yugoslavia were at stake due to economic and national problems.

In September 1991, the people of Macedonia voted for independence mainly because they realised that the so-called 'New Yugoslavia' was controlled by the regime of Milosevic to serve his sinister aims. During the war in Croatia a lot of Macedonians were obliged to join the 'Yugoslav Army' and kill their brothers in Vukovar, etc.

## The current situation

TODAY Macedonia faces many economic problems. The rate of unemployment has risen to 25 per cent officially, but it is estimated that the real figure is about 40 per cent.

Since independence, the party office (the Socialist Party) has implemented a policy of privatisation and cuts. It has invited foreign capital to invest in Macedonia but without serious results. Only 20 per cent of total production derives from private enterprises.

It is not strange that all this situation has provoked reactions from workers, although very limited ones. Last year the railway workers and miners went on strike.

But unfortunately, in this framework, and because of the absence of left and internationalist forces, nationalism and racism have a fertile ground on which to develop. The nationalistic right-wing VMRO, with its anti-Albanian rhetoric, won 25 per cent of the votes in the elections of 1990.

The Macedonian people also cope with the problem of the various nationalisms that exist in the region. Its neighbour states (Bulgaria, Serbia, Greece and Albania) don't even recognise the Macedonian people and they don't hesitate in declaring their territorial pursuits.

In 1992, a Greek bourgeois newspaper, *Eleftherotypia*, revealed that Milosevic, in a secret meeting in Athens, proposed to the Greek Prime Minister Mitsotakis to act jointly and to divide Macedonia in the same way the 'Yugoslav' army did in Bosnia.

## Dispute with Greece

Since the independence of Macedonia, the Greek state has refused to recognise the new state or the exist-

ence of the Macedonian nation. The arguments are:

■ Macedonia from ancient times up to now has been a Greek name and part of Greek history.

■ Thus, the use of this name by another country is a threat to Greece.

■ There has never been a Macedonian nation and in reality it was created by Tito.

Although the historians don't know the origins of the ancient Macedonians it is known that from that period on they adopted ancient Greek civilisation.

The whole history of humankind is characterised by the moving of peoples and mixing of humans, symbols, languages, etc. So any discussion about the historical continuity of a nation is meaningless.

Macedonia is not only Greek or Bulgarian, or Slav or Albanian. It is and it was a multi-national region.

The Macedonian people, regardless of their origin, have the right to choose their name. It is one of the main principles of self-determination.

The fact that there are also Greek Macedonians (residents of the Greek part of Macedonia who don't feel any Macedonian national consciousness) is one more argument for the solidarity and the union of the two peoples. The common names must not divide but unite the people.

Naturally, such a fact itself, cannot be a cause of war. The deepest causes of the war are the interests of the capitalists and the ruling classes and they use the national symbols and ideologies only to cover their dirty aims.

Concerning the argument that this nation was created by Tito, the Greek nationalist historians forget, or better hide, the fight of the Macedonian people under the Ottoman Empire, the insurrection of Ilinden, etc.

The reasons that the Greek state has been implementing a political offensive against the republic of Macedonia were, firstly, its willingness to cultivate nationalism within Greek society while Greek workers faced many economic problems.

Secondly, because it wanted to intervene politically into the dangerous situation in the Balkans and to guarantee better conditions for the economic expansion of Greek capital.

Since 1992, the Greek state, the Orthodox church and the media have organised plenty of nationalist demonstrations and finally the government of PASOK has imposed an embargo on the neighbour country.

The main slogan of this campaign has been 'Macedonia is only one and it is only Greek'.

The recent negotiations between Greece and Macedonia resulted in the lifting of Greek sanctions against Macedonia and, on behalf of Macedonia, the change of the flag and some benefits for the Greek capitalists in the case that they invest in this republic.

The path for peace and a more tolerant society passes through the struggle of the Macedonian workers and other exploited people. It is an urgent demand for the Macedonian working-class movement to fight for:

■ Equal rights for all national minorities.

■ Isolation of the nationalists of VMRO.

■ Contact with the trade unions of the other Balkan countries.

The Macedonian workers have to fight for independent trade unions which must be based upon the principle of internationalism and class independence.

# Greek journalist



A group of Greek fascists meet with the Chetnik's leader, Radovan Karadzic in Bosnia



# The man who sent his friend to the gallows

## PERSONAL COLUMN

THE DAY before I sat down to write this piece I had a tooth filled. I looked forward to this trifling repair with an anxiety that has haunted me since my mouth was first ravaged by a dentist 61 years ago.

Yesterday's injection didn't hurt much but wasn't strong enough to put the nerve out of action. And when the drill touched the nerve, as it soon did, I thought the top of my head would come off.

In the event, the pain was less than wholly unbearable and lasted for a mere couple of seconds or so.

The next day — an hour ago — I had a blood test. I looked forward to this further invasive procedure with still greater anxiety. My knees trembled uncontrollably; my palms seemed to melt into sweat; I saw the kind nurse and her unkind syringe through a purple haze of fear.

In the event, I felt almost nothing. In fact I have suffered more from the proboscis of a Brazilian mosquito.

I am, I frankly admit, a physical coward. The prospect of pain, however slight, turns my heart to quivering jelly. But the pain itself, when it arrives, never seems as bad in reality as imagination had painted it.

People have told me how brave I must have been, in October 1956, to press forward into a Hungary in turmoil after Austrian frontier guards had warned me that I was going to my death.

Brave? Not a bit of it. I was an impetuous 29-year-old, stone-blind to danger, stone-deaf to good advice. Today, no doubt, I would be less rash.

From time to time I have wondered how I should acquit myself under torture. Brazilian comrades have told me how they were tortured under their country's military dictatorship, whose devilish arsenal of pain consisted mainly of apparatus for administering electric shocks to anus, genitals, and perineum.

The answer to the question, 'Could I bear it? And, if so, for how long?' is that most people have a breaking-point, though it is widely different for different individuals and cannot be predicted with any accuracy.

A woman of frail appearance may sometimes have far greater powers of endurance than the sturdiest-looking man. Some of the greatest heroes of the French anti-fascist Resistance, and of African anti-colonialist resistance movements, have been heroines.

Serious revolutionary movements, in countries where torture is a daily possibility, have no illusions about human weakness. They take it fully into account.

They take care that no member knows more than they need to know, so as to limit to the absolute minimum the dangers of disclosure and implication caused by an individual arrest.

And they ask of comrades put to this dreadful test that, as soon as possible, they tell the movement honestly what, if anything, has been forced out of them. If an honest account is given, they do not sit in moral judgement.

SO SHOULD we or anyone sit in moral judgment on John Lloyd, the former member of the African Resistance Movement who in 1964 turned state witness and gave evidence that helped send three of his friends to prison and one, John Harris, to the gallows?

The African Resistance Movement was an amateurish organisation of white middle-class

students dedicated to attacks on the apartheid regime which would not endanger human life.

Lloyd is now prospective Labour Party parliamentary candidate in Exeter, where some have regarded him as a hero of the South African resistance.

According to Lloyd, he was put in solitary confinement for three months, made to stand for 36 hours, and beaten up. He says he refused to turn state witness until he was told that 20 people had been killed in the 1964 bombing of Johannesburg central station (in fact one person was killed).

Lloyd's claims to have been tortured in detention appear to be contradicted by his own words in a letter he wrote in 1966.

As a reward for his evidence Lloyd was given immunity from prosecution, and he came to Britain at the end of 1964. Lloyd says he has been 'cleared' by the African National Congress.

But certain questions remain unanswered. Two of those questions were suggested in a letter from Harris's widow to the *Guardian* (1 November).

Harris, who pleaded guilty to manslaughter (which would have meant a sentence of life imprisonment) denied intending to kill (a necessary ingredient of a murder conviction, which carried the death penalty). Harris's widow says Lloyd gave evidence that Harris had intended to kill.

Why did Lloyd gratuitously amplify his evidence so that the South African state could sustain a charge of murder rather than manslaughter?

After Lloyd came to Britain and was living here in safety, Harris's wife sent him a personal telegram asking him to change his evidence in an attempt to save Harris's life, or to make an appeal for clemency. And a friend visited him to put this request in person.

Lloyd refused to intervene, and Harris was hanged.

Why did Lloyd refuse?

WHATEVER the answers to these questions may be, it is quite plain that Lloyd has never given a full and honest account of his transactions with his 1964 captors, and of his role in the conviction and execution of John Harris and the imprisonment of others.

'I deeply regret what I did', Lloyd now says. 'It churns me up every time I have to think about it.'

However deep his sorrow may be, it won't bring back to life the friend he sent to the gallows, or restore to his jailed friends their pitifully wasted years.

So how often does it 'churn him up'? How often does he 'have to think about it'?

Most of us, with such a dereliction on our conscience, would find it hard to face ourselves in the mirror each morning. And perhaps for John Lloyd

*My conscience hath a thousand several tongues,  
And every tongue brings in a several tale,  
And every tale condemns me for a villain.*

But this man's wrestling with his conscience, if such wrestling there is, matters little to the working-class movement.

What really matters is whether someone who has failed to come clean about his record in this way is fit to seek public office. As a letter-writer in the *Guardian* put it:

'It is not John Lloyd's initial "frailty" that is in question, but the subsequent lack of integrity on this whole matter. Is this the sort of person New Labour chooses to represent in Parliament?'

*Peter Fryer*

# Impressions of Bihac

BY DAVE MCKENZIE  
Wallsend People's Centre and  
Workers Aid convoy to Bihac, Bosnia

THE first thing that struck me on getting out of the wagon in Bihac was that the media coverage was wrong.

Within seconds an air-raid siren went off, there was the sound of a plane and three very loud explosions. All of this happened within 30 seconds. The ground actually shook.

I asked myself: What happened to the ceasefire and the so-called no-fly zone?

We also found that the doctor whose signature was required to clear the aid and remove the seals on the wagons to allow distribution had left at 4.30pm. He was not going to return until Monday.

Being Friday evening, the thought came that in future we should arrive by Thursday at the latest.

Having checked with the Bihac logistic centre, the convoy decided on hearing of the plight of the people in the village of Trzacka in Cazin to take the aid there as it doesn't get there from Bihac. We were the first convoy that the village had received.

Hopefully the next convoy won't have any hold ups. Contact has been made with the president of Cazin, the hospital director, the local TV director and with the local radio, journalists, teachers, etc. All asked for help and support and wanted us to return as soon as possible. A list of needs is being translated.

Up to two months ago, the Cazin area was totally surrounded and no food could reach the people for a period of 50 weeks. The population nearly starved. We heard reports of three-year-old children who weighed only 14 pounds at death.

The Cazin region is mainly agricultural but there are five factories. Two make plastics and three process poultry. The factories are not working because of the war.

Trzacka has been so devastated from being on the front line that the houses have no roof and plastic and wood board up the windows.

When Serb Chetnik forces occupied the area they trashed people's homes before being pushed back by the Bosnia-Herzegovina/Croatia military alliance.

I was taken to the house of Irfat Rekić, which is in a prominent position on a hill. It must have been used as an HQ by the Chetniks because the roof was intact.

Trenches and foxholes had been dug across his back garden and neighbouring properties. From these positions snipers could aim as farmers working in the fields.

We found the village community to be very honest and sharing with each other. When we offered food from drivers' packs to individuals they refused saying they would wait until it was shared out properly by the logistic centre.

The only union contact I could find was a school teacher who did not speak any English. Like in most of western Bosnia, German seems to be the second language.

Our interpreter was only 16 years old and was not trained in the skills of communication but he did his best.

The school teacher taught from his home as the school building was unusable due to mortar damage. A thousand pupils need this school. All the other teachers are on the front line.

The logistic centre where the aid was stored was secure with the Bosnian army 5th Corps and the Croatian border just 50 yards away.

But the village has virtually been destroyed as it was on the former front line.

## Bosnian wartime survival

# Pensioners brought to the parish

BY MIRZA MUKIC  
Independent journalist  
Tuzla, Bosnia

THE government office has now pompously declared that all pensioners will get their pensions — but with a delay of some months.

This delay is not the only reason pensioners did not welcome the news, however. Delays have become an inevitable reality.

The most disappointing thing for Tuzla's 20,000 pensioners is that a maximum pension amounts to only £8 a month and can be as low as £2. About £3 is needed to pay for electricity and telephone bills.

So a group of people who with their own hands provided the pensions is left to the tender mercies of war scarcities.

Pensioners have not only not been regularly receiving their pensions for the last four years,

but they have been degraded by both the government offices and the humanitarian organisations that have given them bits and pieces.

A monthly family packet made up by the UN High Commission for Refugees contains per person about half a pound of sugar, 0.15 litres of cooking oil, 6 pounds of flour, two tins, one bar of soap and some dried green beans. To get that packet the old and sick have to wait in rain, hot weather or in freezing conditions in long queues. It is degrading.

In the first year of the war pensioners were short of basic living requirements — no water, no heating and no electricity.

So the Tuzla authorities' statement that nobody died from hunger in that period is rather strange. True, nobody died directly from hunger since neighbours and friends helped.

But a continuously poor diet

caused malnutrition which made their frail bodies less resistant and dozens of old people died earlier than they should have — a fact confirmed by their spouses.

In Tuzla's old peoples home 29 people died 'naturally'. Although they had medical care, malnutrition must have collected its toll.

Even today, when life is improving in Tuzla, pensioners are on the margins of the authorities' interests. Pensioners' lives have only improved in small ways.

One exception to this has been from the Norwegian humanitarian organisations. They donated a very good family packet to all pensioners which met their needs for a whole month.

On the other hand, UNHCR is under most criticism.

Its task is to bring foodstuffs, clothes and other necessities to needy people. But it makes excuses, saying that due to

obstruction from Karadzic's Chetniks it has not been able to bring more than 20 per cent of the planned monthly supplies. This can't be accepted as valid.

Tuzla's people heard some good news.

On 10 November the 'Ship to Bosnia' was to leave from Stockholm for Split. It will bring hundreds of containers full of aid. A considerable quantity is bound for Tuzla to be delivered to miners, medical staff and teachers. Pensioners have been left off again...

Their third age has been transformed into suffering and vegetating not worthy of a human being. Better days for them are not in sight.

Most responsible for this are the local authorities that have neglected the people who worked for them for so many years.

*Translation: Faruk Ibrahimovic*

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## Crisis in the labour movement

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# Women in China

**Science focus**  
A monthly column by Daniel Robertson,  
principal scientist at a leading bio-technology company

THE Chinese government is hosting the Fourth World Conference on Women in September this year.

In the run-up, it published the 'Country report on the People's Republic of China's implementation of the Nairobi strategy to enhance women's status' (February) and a White Paper, 'The Status of Women in China' (June). Both these documents talk of positive achievements women in China have gained, demonstrating the achievements of the ruling Communist Party.

In fact, the status of women had improved before the CCP came to power in 1949.

A century ago, outcries against feudal oppression, such as foot-binding or deprivation of education for women had begun.

During the late 19th-century 'Boxers' Uprising', a whole series of equality rights for men and women were proposed.

After the 1911 revolution, the women's movement focused on women's participation in politics and right to education and individual freedoms.

During 1937-45 War of Resistance to the Japanese invasion and the subsequent Civil War, women fought alongside the men in the revolutionary national and social liberation process.

Hence in 1949, when the 'New China' was formed, the law stipulated that women would enjoy the same rights as men in all aspects of life — politically, economically, culturally and socially. After 1949, women participated actively in all aspects of social life. What women gained was the fruit of a whole century of struggle.

But in China today, the rights and safeguards for women in law do not always correspond to reality. Women still have to fight hard to further their rights and improve their status. The official documents for the women's conference either evaded or simply glossed over these negative aspects.

## Political and human rights

Similar to men engaged in political activities fighting for democracy and human rights, many women have been detained or jailed for trying to use their basic rights of free speech and association.

Examples are the arrests of journalist Gao Yu and Tong Yi, secretary of famous dissident Wei Jingsheng.

Many wives and mothers of jailed dissidents have also been harassed or put under house arrest because of their activities in seeking the release of husbands or sons.

## Workers to pay cost of Italy's budget crisis

THINGS are coming to crunch point as far as the Italian economy is concerned. The state has been in debt for so long that today overall public debt is the equivalent of 120 per cent of the Gross Domestic Product.

To make matters worse, the speculators have so little confidence in the stability of the economy that the state Treasury is forced to service nearly two thirds of the debt through the issue of short-term bonds.

The government is forced to pay investors faster than it can afford to and has no alternative but to issue yet more short-term bonds to cover the growing gap.

It is the untenability of this situation that is driving the government to measures aimed at slashing the state deficit in the

The following article by ZHANG KAI from *October Review* (31 August) was written before the recent international women's conference in Beijing. The *October Review* is a supporter of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International

Amnesty International reports that since 1992 around 200 women have been arrested for participating in demonstrations for Tibet's independence.

The Tiananmen Square crackdown in 1989 is one obvious example of the Chinese government's abuse of human rights.

## Right to employment

Since economic reforms started in 1978, one key problem women have faced is unemployment.

According to the Chinese Labour Bureau, over 70 per cent of the 20 million 'redundant' workers in state or collective enterprises are women. And the Shenzhen Labour Bureau says that 80 per cent of the unemployed above the age of 24 are women.

National Labour Federation deputy president Sit Chaojun commented: 'According to many of our surveys, women constitute about 60 per cent of those dismissed in recent years due to redundancy. They not only suffer from psychological pressure but also find it very difficult to keep a living.'

The White Paper made no mention of the large-scale unemployment among women. It stressed that women enjoyed the same rights to a job as men and only said in passing: 'Women have some difficulty in finding a job because some enterprises are reluctant to recruit them.'

## Rights to women workers

The rights of women workers have often been abused, especially in joint ventures.

Wang Jun, deputy head of the women's section of National Labour Federation, has highlighted surveys showing serious abuses of women workers' legal rights in foreign-owned enterprises: no safeguards of labour rights; violations of rights of the person; stipulations in the Ordinance to Protect Women Workers not implemented; humiliation and sexual harassment.

A survey of Shanghai joint ventures in spring 1995 found that more than half did not strictly adhere to the 44-hour working week, overtime work was normal practice and that

quickest possible time. In April of this year, prime minister Lamberto Dini made an initial £800mn worth of cuts through a combination of tax increases and spending cuts. Two months later he finalised a 'reform' of Italy's pension scheme, which has recently been consuming 20 per cent of GDP.

Dini's aim is now to force a further £1.2bn in cuts before his administration falls to further political in-fighting. But every area of public life is now up for scrutiny.

Three years ago a 'clean hands' team of magistrates was established in Milan which brought down almost an entire generation of politicians following their anti-corruption investigations.

The campaign against corruption was not predominantly a moral one. For one thing companies simply could not afford the level of bribes they were being asked to pay in return for contracts.

As Italy hit recession along with the rest of Europe it made no sense to pay anything up to 60 per cent of a contract's price in kick-backs to individual politicians and parties.

At first the drive was aimed

some enterprises asked for as much as 137 hours overtime a month.

## Right to form free trade unions

There are 56 million women in state enterprises with another 50 million in rural industries. It is important for workers to have the right to form free trade unions to protect themselves.

The official trade unions follow government policies and often cannot represent the interests or will of the workers.

The Women's Federation, though called a 'mass organisation', is also under the leadership of the CCP. Incidents where Chinese workers have followed the example of Polish workers in organising independent trade unions have all resulted in repression.

## Rights of the person

The White Paper says that Chinese women enjoy the right to life and health as men do and that the law safeguards women's reproductive rights.

In reality, the one-child policy is carried out ruthlessly at all levels. The suffering of many women and the abuse or even killing of girls are facts of life many people are familiar with.

This is on top of the discrimination women suffer.

At the same time the male-female ration is being upset. In the 30-44 age group, there are 7.4 million unmarried men while there are only 0.5 million unmarried women. This will worsen in coming years.

According to a scholar from the Shanghai Social Sciences Academy, cases of discrimination and abuse of women have increased, and cases of wife battering and domestic violence have risen.

## Right to education

At the end of 1992, 2.1 million girls were not in school, according to an international conference on Women and Education.

Only 1.1 per cent of all women are university graduates. Most

principally at politicians who stashed huge sums of the country's money into secret bank accounts in the Far East. But now the spotlight has been turned on other areas.

Last month a Rome magistrate claimed that there were as many as 50,000 fake invalids who are claiming disability benefit through cosy jobs in the public sector, in particular the post office.

Whatever the truth of the story, it seems that the magistrates may have been tipped off by post-office bosses looking for a pretext to slash as much as a quarter off the 200,000-strong workforce.

Workers at La Scala in Milan are currently threatening to call off the opening night of the new opera season because of management's attempts to slash costs following the withdrawal of millions of lire from the government's arts budget.

## Fed closes Daiwa

THE Federal Reserve has closed all operations of the Daiwa Bank

working women have received only primary education. The White Paper reports a 32 per cent illiteracy rate among women.

## Right to political participation

The White Paper claims women are participating in general social affairs and quotes figures of women in the National People's Congress and the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference. But it is generally known that these two bodies are merely rubber stamps for the Communist Party bodies.

The CCP has over 7 million women party members, 14 per cent of the total. But the Political Bureau has not one woman member out of 20 and has only two women alternate members.

This might not be bad thing for the women's movement, because having women in top power positions does not mean any guarantee for women's interests, since those women would be representing not the interests of the majority but of a minority elite.

## Antagonising women from around the world

While China hopes to gain credibility from hosting the UN conference on women, it has fears for the parallel non-government forum.

Such acts as moving the forum to the Huairou suburb and denying visas to women from many parts of the world have put the Chinese government in antagonism with many women and movements around the world.

Such bureaucratic measures are an extension of the CCP's own domestic repression of women's rights. The furthering of the cause of women will depend on women fighting for their rights with their own strength.

The world conference and the forum on women provided an opportunity for women from different parts of the world to come together and will help advance the cause of women both in China and the world.

in the United States. This is the bank that recently recorded huge losses as a result of fraudulent trading in US bonds on the part of its New York office.

The suspicion is that this punitive action may be designed as much to cover up the activities of the US monetary authorities as to punish Daiwa, the world's 19th leading bank.

Daiwa officials are said to have concealed the existence of a Treasury securities trading office in New York by disguising it as a storeroom shortly before the visit of US bank supervisors.

In this light the Fed had little choice but to shut down Daiwa, if only *pour encourager les autres*.

It is now clear that the lax supervision of the Japanese banking system by the government is now having potentially serious consequences.

For example, take the *usen* housing loan corporations. Nearly half the nominal near-£90bn assets of these affiliates of the big banks is now thought to be quite worthless.

Yet if the banks are required to absorb most of the losses of the corporations there will be an even bigger hole in their balance sheets.

## Science education under attack

The Tory's refusal to adequately fund education is threatening Britain's reputation for quality science research.

Financial pressures on universities have led to a situation where contract staff (many strictly employed only on research contracts) or postgraduates lacking teaching training are increasingly used to teach science subjects.

Retiring science dons are just not being replaced. The supply of school teachers trained in science subjects is also drying up.

Universities are increasingly dependent on funds generated by research contracts from industry to prop up their teaching activities. These projects are often short-term and profit-oriented, and are seen by industry as a cheap alternative to employing their own research scientists.

Employment in industrial R&D has fallen sharply in Britain in recent years.

What does 'New Labour' have to offer? Putting schools on the internet will hardly reverse a trend which reflects the deep crisis of British capitalism.

This crisis in education is an area which causes great concern to many thousands of education professionals, as well as students and their families.

We must argue that it is only in a socialist society that the importance of education as a priority for society could be recognised. It would be a life-long process that would support the fullest possible development of every individual in all areas of their life — and not just be preparation for exploitation.

There can be no return to a 'Golden Age' of capitalism when a fuller education, no matter how limited, could be provided. New Labour argue that this is possible, but in reality will only continue the Tory cuts.

This system has decided that whole areas of society are no longer suitable for exploitation as skilled workers. Their education will be written off as not being 'cost-effective'.

## Rolling back the world

Dealing with environmental problems requires government intervention, as well as popular mobilisation, on a world scale.

This obvious fact causes great problems to the ideologues of the right with their insistence on market solutions.

The Republican right in the US are arguing that human-made pollutants, such as CFCs, are not damaging the ozone layer at all. Scientists are accused of conspiring to promote false claims. The Republicans are totally isolated in their craziness, which is part of a drive to dismantle environmental legislation. This is described as 'rolling back the state'.

They are actually rolling back the world. This backlash against environmental laws is worldwide. It is a product of big business's reluctance to take on extra costs when massive efforts are being made to squeeze out extra profitability by trimming everything that does not immediately add to profit margins.

The market is not resolving this situation. It is producing blindness to a growing crisis of its own creation. However public awareness of environmental issues is very high and has been stimulated by actions such as that of Greenpeace on Brent Spar.

This is slowing efforts to destroy what little environmental law there is. But expect a renewed political offensive in this area as capitalism looks for more justifications to cut costs.

The Tory right have had little to say on this yet. How long before Portillo claims that anti-pollution laws are a socialist plot against big business?

## 'Mad cow disease' is 'harmless'

Tory ministers and 'experts' the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAFF for or should it be Mafia?) have very quick to assure members of the public that 'mad cow disease' poses no human health.

This condition, caused by a very strange infective agent quite unlike a virus or bacterium, has killed very large numbers of cattle in Britain in recent years. The disease was sparked by the practice of cutting contaminated feeding cattle on waste material from dead cattle.

This 'cannibalism' is unnatural to cattle. Cannibalism in humans can lead to a condition called Creutzfeldt Jakob Disease (CJD) that looks very much like 'mad cow disease', and is caused by a similar perhaps the same agent.

The simple fact is that no one knows. This has not stopped Tory ministers from claiming they could not possibly be related.

Material from diseased animals went into meat pies and burgers for years and may be. Now there is evidence that CJD is on the increase, particularly amongst the dairy workers who would have been amongst the first to come into contact with 'mad cow disease'.

Three have now died and a fourth is very ill. This disease is extremely rare. Four farm workers infected is not a coincidence — it should set the alarm ringing full volume.

The symptoms are much like senility. An increase may initially be hidden among the ground of other senility conditions.

It will only be immediately obvious among younger people and where the normal 30 day incubation period is shortened it will inevitably be with individuals.

We may be seeing the earliest stages of an explosion of this condition. If so this is very much a British phenomenon as 'mad cow disease' is rare elsewhere.

Why has this potential disaster been allowed to happen? Quite simply because acknowledging a problem would undermine the Tory's rich friends (many Tory ministers are farmers).

If an epidemic is underway, believe that this should prompt a campaign to hold the government ministers and MAFF off accountable for their lies.

## Whose the monkey?

Western laboratories hungry for animals to experiment on scoured the world for governments that can be persuaded to surrender their wildlife resources expendable for profit.

Thousands of monkeys in Africa and the Far East are regularly collected into holding pens before despatch to laboratories. This has probably resulted in previously rare monkey-borne diseases spreading and in cases jumping the species barrier to humans.

There are now strong suspicions that the HIV, Marburg and Ebola organisms — that will kill tens, possibly hundreds of millions of people — may all come through this route.

Being a scientist I recognise that animals are sometimes sacrificed for the human good in research into diseases cannot be done in any other way. My research using vivisection, however, sadly only panders to the curiosity or simple greed for profit.

I doubt that the benefits of most of these cruel experiments will be worth the count of human lives that will be lost as a result of the terrible new diseases now being unleashed upon us.



# Trail of blood to Rabin's killer

**THE killer of Israeli prime minister Yitzhak Rabin was trained in a fanatical racist tradition, for the flourishing of which Rabin himself and the Israeli establishment bore some responsibility.**

With the Israeli security services' reputation for taking no chances it is odd that they allowed 25-year-old Yigal Amir, already known to them as a threat, to get anywhere near the supposedly well-guarded Rabin.

I acted alone but maybe with God', Amir, a law student, told a Tel Aviv court. Claiming Jewish Halacha (religious law) permitted killing anyone who gave land to 'the enemy', he did not deny planning the murder of the prime minister, whom he accused of 'grovelling' before the nations of the world.

'The people are indifferent to the fact that a Palestinian state is being created,' Amir complained, later telling reporters: 'The nation didn't care that the prime minister was elected by 20 per cent Arabs. I was at the (peace) demonstration. It was 50 per cent Arabs.'

This racist dismissal of others, particularly Palestinians, as less than human and not entitled to rights, recalls the attitude of Baruch Goldstein, the Zionist settler fanatic who gunned down 58 Muslims praying in Hebron's Ibrahimiya mosque at Ramadnan, 25 February 1994.

This supposed 'lone madman', a reserve army officer, was honoured with a commemorative T-shirt by his admirers.

Even as a million Israelis were paying respects to their murdered prime minister, seen as the man who negotiated 'peace from strength' with the Palestinians and neighbouring Arab states, right-wing settlers in the West Bank were either openly glad, or hypocritically blaming 'the atmosphere'.

Contrary to some media comment, the assassination of political opponents, including other Jews, is nothing new for the right-wing Zionists.

## Murdered

In June 1933 the Labour Zionist leader and Jewish Agency chief Chaim Arlosoroff was murdered by members of a Zionist Revisionist group who considered him too conciliatory. At that time those behind such acts did not shrink from calling themselves fascists.

On 17 September 1948, the United Nations mediator Count Folke Bernadotte was ambushed and killed in Jerusalem. The

BY CHARLIE POTTINS

assassins were reputedly members of the Lehi organisation, usually referred to as the 'Stern gang'.

The Israeli government feared the Swede was going to fix cease-fire lines leaving them without Jerusalem. Suspects were rounded up, but nobody ever stood trial.

## Silence

It is thought Labour Prime Minister Ben Gurion knew the killers' identities, at least in later years.

In 1955, after a row over his wartime negotiations with the Nazis, former Hungarian Zionist leader Rudolf Kastner was murdered by an ex-police informer, possibly to silence him from implicating others.

It was the decision by 'moderate' Zionists like Yitzhak Rabin to hold Palestinian territories seized in the 1967 war, and encourage Jewish settlements there, which sowed the seeds of today's right-wing fanaticism.

Invoking Biblical claims to justify use of force, the formerly secular Zionist nationalists encouraged a clerical-chauvinist movement which attracted all kinds of pathological racials and gun-freaks from abroad.

'In these times of doubt, you alone do not question our right to the land,' an army commander told religious officers at their passing-out parade.

When the Palestinian youth erupted in their Intifada, Rabin himself issued the notorious order to Israeli soldiers: 'Break their bones.'

Leading spokespersons for the religious Right, from thugs like Rabbi Meir Kahane to the Gush Emunim (Bloc of the Faithful) academic Harold Fisch, openly declared that democracy was against their national vision.

Putting this into practice, the settler underground — armed and trained by right-wing army officers — bombed three Arab mayors in 1980, and killed numerous civilians.

In February 1983, right-wingers attacked peace demon-

strators in Jerusalem, throwing a grenade which killed Emil Grunzweig and wounded ten others, including Avraham Burg, son of the interior minister.

Had the Israeli labour and peace movements responded with appropriate force to this attack, they might not be facing the threat of civil war now.

While doubting Amir's claim to inspiration from on high, we can recognise the inspiration of right-wing leaders in Israel and the United States who say any concessions to the Palestinians is a 'violation of Holy Law'.

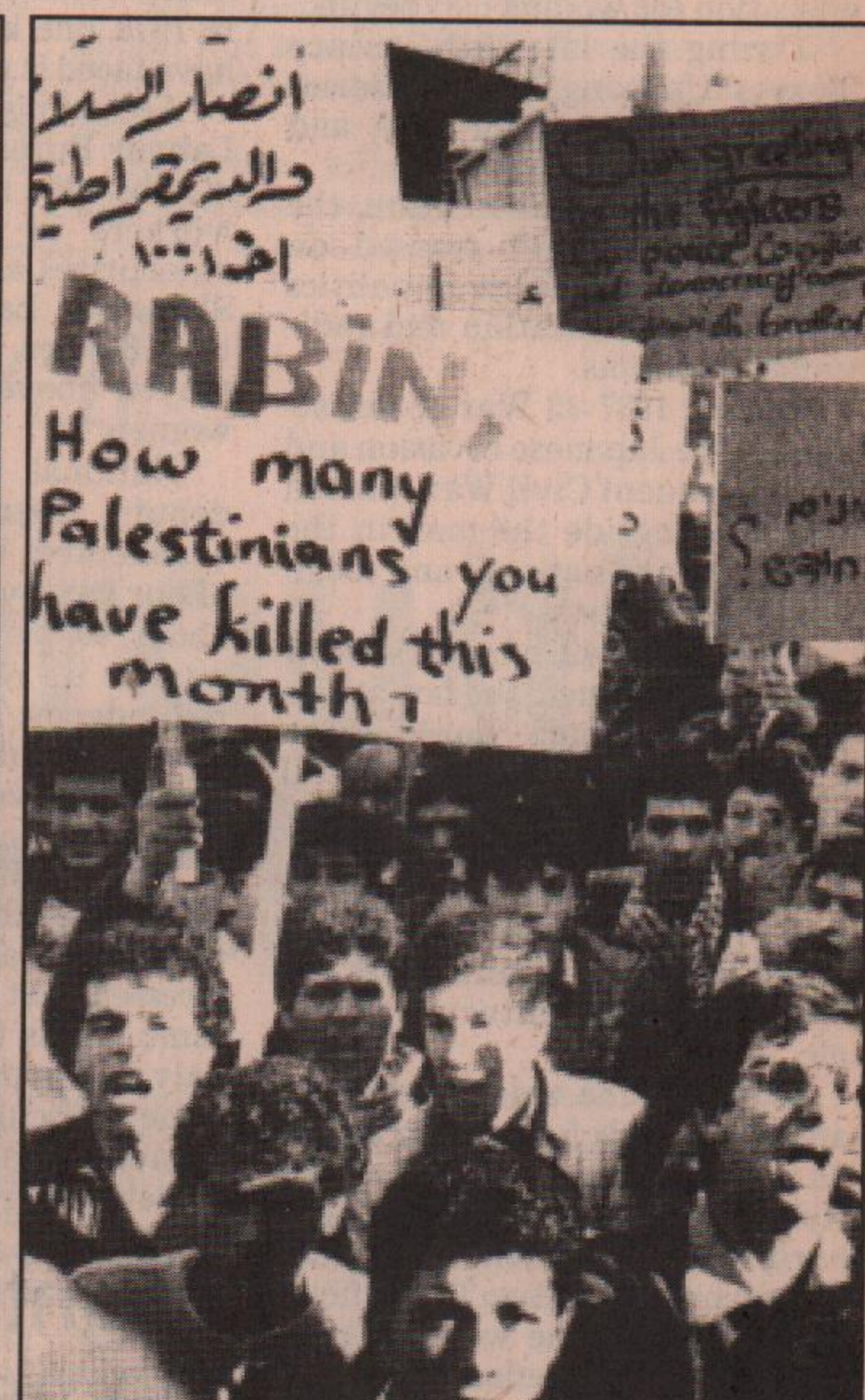
Professor Paul Eidelberg, of the Bar Ilan University, where Amir studied, recently accused Labour and its coalition partners of 'brainwashing Jewish children and soldiers', and waging 'a one-sided civil war'.

What else is that but a summons to the faithful to wage war against an elected government, and more seriously, against its electors?

The assassin's rage against the 'indifferent' public who 'didn't care that the prime minister was elected by Arabs' shows that the bullets which killed Rabin were aimed at the hopes of Israeli as well as Palestinian workers.



Palestinian victims of Israeli oppression (left); Rabin not always the 'peacemaker' (right)



Stop attacks on militant workers and left-wing activists in Argentina!

# No to witch-hunt!

A THOUSAND-strong demonstration in Buenos Aires, Argentina, demanded the release of socialist leader Horacio Panario on 24 October.

This joint demonstration of left-wing parties was the first step of a national and international solidarity campaign on a series of demands resulting from a government witch-hunt of Argentinian workers' organisations and their leaderships.

On 2 October, a demonstration of more than 500 unemployed workers demanding the payment of benefit promised by the government took place in Neuquén, the capital of Argentina's southern Neuquén province.

It was part of a widespread campaign of resistance to the government's economic plan which has seen President Menem's administration starve the regions of funds.

The Neuquén demonstration was violently repressed by police. Following these clashes, the government has initiated a witch-hunt against the left, particularly against Trotskyist parties. Members of these groups are accused of being responsible for the disturbances.

Leading Movimiento al Socialismo member Horacio Panario was arrested and is being held in prison.

Arrest warrants have been issued for Alcides Christiansen, Héctor Etchebaster, Rith Zurbriggen and Jorge Toledo — all members of the MAS and the state employees' union ATEN.

Also under threat are Hipólito Arameda, Enrique Gómez and Jorge Chiguay of the Movimiento Socialista de los Trabajadores and Alberto Vidal, José Mara and Norberto Calducci of the Partido Obrero.

The attack on the Neuquén militants comes a month after the attempt to sack 13 shop-floor delegates at the state-owned Astilleros Río Santiago shipyard in Ensenada, Buenos Aires. Among the 13 was José Montes, national leader of the Partido de los Trabajadores por el Socialismo, 'Indio' Corzo (MST) and Raimundo (PO).

Legal action is also being taken against members of the JIR-TE (a PTS youth organisation) following a demonstration in Córdoba.

In Tierra del Fuego, the local authorities are prosecuting Oscar Martínez and other metalworkers' union leaders (UOM) as a result of events last April.

A worker was killed by the police during protests against the closure of a television factory in Usuahia.

The Campaign against

Repression in Argentina', set up by the PTS, demands:

■ The immediate release of Horacio Panario and other left leaders in prison in Neuquén.

■ An end to all legal proceedings against members of the MAS, MST and PO and all other working-class militants.

■ Stop the witch-hunt against the left!

They want all working-class organisations to support the campaign by contacting the address or telephone number below or to fax direct to the PTS in Buenos Aires.

A picket of the Argentinian Embassy is planned for Monday 13 November at 5.30pm.

■ Contact: PTS, c/o Workers International League, PO Box 7268, London E10 6TX. Tel: 0181-348 0849. PTS, Buenos Aires: 00 541 932 9297 (fax).

# Eastern Cape nurses demand solidarity

THE Eastern Cape government in South Africa has dismissed most of the 7,000 nurses that have been on strike for better conditions.

The worst conditions of life for the majority of the population exist in the former 'homelands' like Eastern Cape, formerly Transkei.

The local government's action in sacking the strikers does not tackle the underlying grievances of the nurses. Despite this it has been backed up by the central Government of National Unity,

headed by state President Nelson Mandela. The central government remains adamant that none of the issues raised by the nurses strike can be dealt with now.

Mandela himself has suggested that the nurses resign and seek work elsewhere rather than support their action in defence of the health service.

All the other provincial governments have followed Eastern Cape in issuing threats to sack any nurses that take solidarity action with their colleagues in former Transkei.

The Government of National Unity is precipitating a crisis that threatens the health of people throughout South Africa.

The National Nurses Forum is 'calling upon organised nurses across the world to publicise our plight and to extend the hand of solidarity through whatever means are possible, material or otherwise. Nurses all over the world have been victims of public-sector cutbacks for too long. It is time to stand together.'

Messages of protest can be

faxed to: Nelson Mandela (00 27 12 323 8246); Health Minister Dr Zuma (00 27 12 323 8866); Eastern Cape Health Ministry (00 27 401 91625); South African Health and Social Services Organisation (00 27 21 448 3367).

Support or requests for information can be sent to: The Nurses Ad Hoc Committee (00 27 471 312792); National Nurses Forum Chair Gordon Muncho (00 27 531 23721); National Nurses Forum National Secretary Keitumetse Mbengo (00 27 11 333 0525).

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