

LABOUR ATTACK ON STUDENTS

FREE university education will disappear completely under the next Labour government.

With Blair in Downing Street students will have to spend 20 years of their working lives repaying the costs of their education.

To make sure nobody escapes payment Labour has announced that it will introduce a scheme where graduates will have their national insurance numbers adjusted so that money is taken from them at source.

At the moment students can apply for money from the National Student Loans Company which they have to repay in the first five years of their working lives.

Many find it impossible to repay the money. As with the poll tax, others simply refuse to pay and the scheme has effectively collapsed.

BY THE EDITOR

As on virtually all polices, Labour has swung sharply to the right on this issue. Only two years ago Jeff Rooker was sacked from Labour's front bench for proposing student charges.

As a further 'economy' measure, Labour will tell students to stay at home and study locally for the first year of their degrees and then move away for the final two years of their courses.

'Credits' would be built up at various institutions towards a degree.

Such a system, known derisively among university teachers as a 'lego degree', would itself effectively destroy the greater part of what is left of the university system.

The idea of university education as a planned programme of systematic study over a sustained period will soon be a thing of the past for most young people.

University education would be confined to a favoured elite, conducted at Oxford, Cambridge and a handful of other privileged places. Such bodies will charge higher fees that only

the children of the rich will be able to afford.

Under the Tories this situation has almost arrived. Last week some university chiefs proposed that research be confined to a small number of institutions.

The rest would be starved of any proper resources and reduced to inferior teaching institutions.

But without research and scholarship an institution is a university in name only. Already money for the arts and pure sciences is being savagely cut back as cash is concentrated on 'vocational' subjects.

The Labour leaders are plunging us back towards the last century where an education was the prerogative of the rich. The rest were taught little more than the 3Rs to get them ready, at best, to spend their lives making profit for the bosses.

After the last war for the first time children from working-class families got the chance of a university education. This is now to go — and the proposals for this come from a party that was set up to represent and defend working-class organisations, trade unions, in parliament.

Labour's reactionary plans go further than the Tories have dared to travel.

Instruments

Blair and company are the instruments through which the university, one of the great institutions associated with the very rise of capitalism, is to be all but destroyed.

Where will this end? Under Labour people will not only have to finance their own education; they will have to find money for their pensions, for unemployment and illness.

Only last week a right-

wing 'think tank' proposed that the school leaving age be reduced to 14. How long before Blair and company take this one on board?

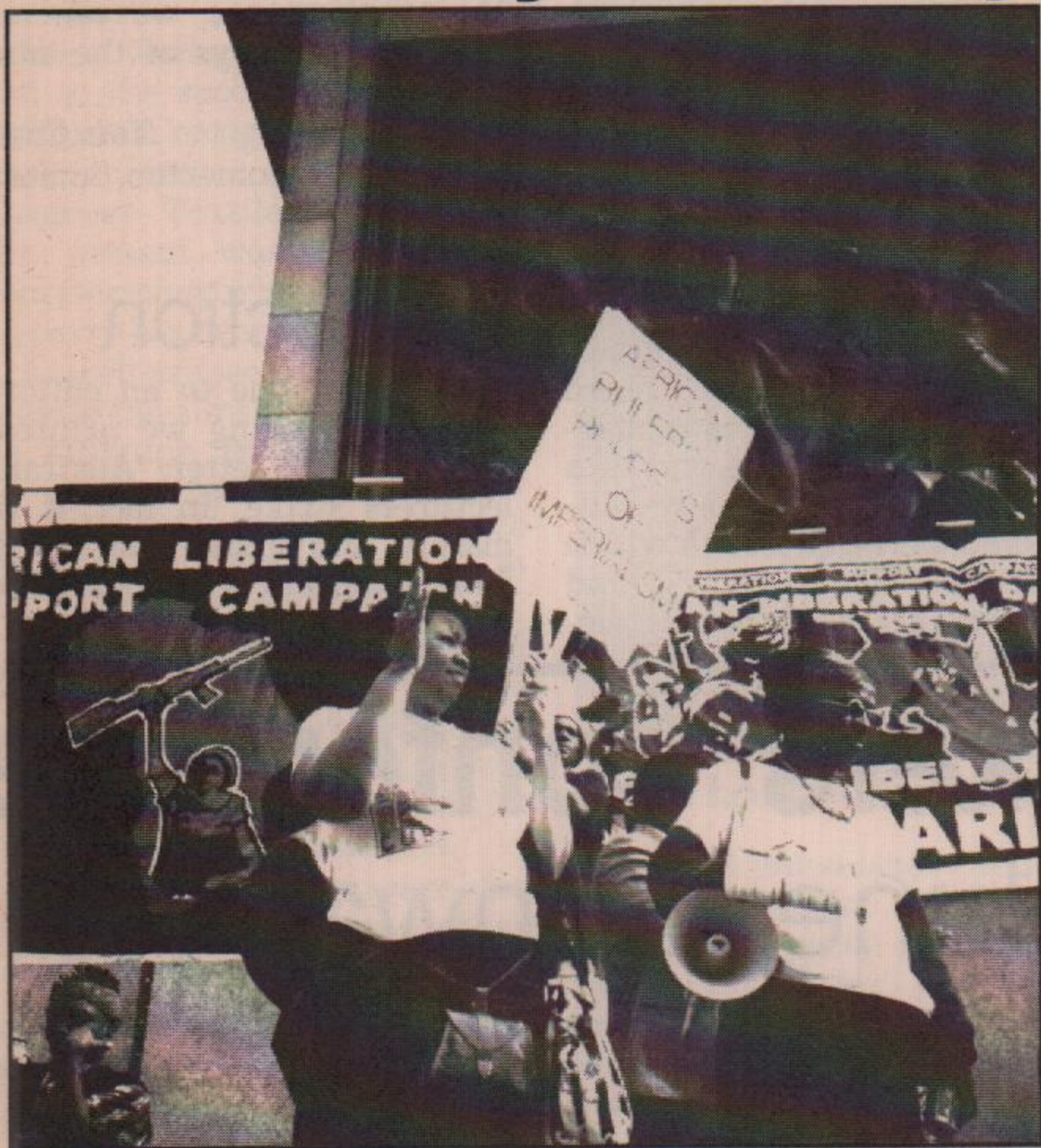
It is time to stop the rot! A united campaign of students, university teachers, parents and the labour movement must reject the Labour Party's sinister proposals.

This campaign must demand the restoration of free higher education for all who wish to study before and after 18.

On top of this young people need the finance to live, in and out of study, under their own control, from the age of 16.

This means scrapping student loans and restoring full grants for all students and restoring income support to those under 21 and out of work, and not just defending a child benefit that's under the control of parents, however well meaning.

African Liberation Day Saturday 25 May 1996, 1pm



Last year's Africa Liberation Day rally in Trafalgar Square

Max Roach Park, opp. Rosary Catholic Church, Brixton Road, London SW9. Nearest tube: Brixton
WORKERS OF THE WORLD UNITE!
March in solidarity with African workers!
Bring your banners!

IMPERIALIST organisations like the IMF and World Bank impose devastating economic policies which cause starvation, civil wars and create refugees.

Multinationals exploit the labour of African workers, and African regimes, in collaboration with Western governments, arrest, torture and murder workers, trade unionists and others who fight for democratic rights and self-determination.

Despite this, African workers, like their comrades in oppressed parts of the world, continue to resist exploitation and state attacks.

Dockers put their case

BY DOT GIBSON

THE lie that Mersey Docks and Harbour Company (MDHC) has not, does not and never will employ casual labour was thoroughly exposed by the sacked Liverpool dockers at an Education and Employment sub-committee in parliament last Tuesday, 21 May.

Every one of the 19 companies either owned, part owned or contracted by MDHC employs casual labour.

The whole of the Mersey Port Shop Stewards' Committee was present. Jimmy Nolan, Mike Carden, Jimmy Davies and Terry Teague represented the dockers and presented their case and answered questions before

the parliamentary sub-committee.

Their 26-page submission was accompanied by 63 supporting documents. It is certainly a book which every active worker should read. It was understandable that the sub-committee chair, Ernie Ross MP, said that although he had received many circulars and leaflets in the course of the dispute, this presentation enabled him to grasp more clearly the actual events.

Mersey Docks and Harbour Company representatives blamed the situation on the shop stewards who they depicted as troublemakers.

Suffice to say that when the sub-committee asked the length of service of the four shop stewards' representatives it was told: 32, 26, 36 and 29 years!

Jimmy Nolan accused the government and the employers of renegeing on its promise of no casualisation in the ports. This promise was made when the government rammed through legislation abolishing the National Dock Labour Scheme in 1989. Nolan said that MDHC drew confidence from the fact that it knew it had political friends in the government.

Last Wednesday, 22 May, the Arbitration and Conciliation Service, ACAS, held a hearing of the dispute.

Funds needed: send money now!

ITUSC meeting: Sunday 26 May, 2pm

Queen's Head pub, Acton Street, London.

King's Cross tube, off Gray's Inn Road

Agenda: Preparations for the International Workers' Conference on 8-9 June

All comrades and friends welcome

International Trade Union Solidarity Campaign — African Liberation Support Campaign
Conference address: PO Box 18, Epsom, KT18 7YR, Britain. Tel/Fax: +441372 721 550

AN INTERNATIONAL WORKERS' CONFERENCE

- Trade unions independent of the state and the employers
- Democracy in the trade unions • Workers' internationalism

AN INJURY TO ONE IS AN INJURY TO ALL

Saturday-Sunday 8-9 June, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1.

Near Holborn. Start 10.30am Saturday, 10am Sunday.

This important conference is convened jointly by the ITUSC and ALISC. It will follow the 'Africa Month' here in Britain. We will be discussing and deciding how to take forward workers' international solidarity in the coming struggles. *Delegates will be travelling from Africa, India, Bangladesh, South America, Russia, Ukraine and eastern Europe.*

Therefore, rather than have a set attendance fee we are asking you to give whatever you can towards the cost of the conference and the fares of those delegates. A draft resolution will be sent to you, and we ask you to keep in touch during the preparation of the conference and let us have any resolutions and/or written material on the issues you wish to be discussed.

Workers Press

'Downsizing' for the chop?

ONLY yesterday US business chiefs were hailed for making their companies leaner and meaner. They had found the master key to unlimited profits. The 'road to riches' was in the buzzword of the early 1990s: downsizing.

The way to make profits was to sack workers, as many as possible in the shortest possible time. Indeed many fresh-faced and hard-nosed 'financial consultants' were paid according to how many workers they managed to put on the streets. King of the asset strippers, Lord Hanson, became as representative a figure of capitalism at the end of the 20th century as Marx's Moneybags had been of the last.

This policy of 'fire but don't hire' is now being attacked for its short-sightedness, and the policies that went along with it are being called into question. Right-wing populist Pat Buchanan has led the charge against 'downsizing' as part of his campaign to whip up frightened sections of the US middle class who have been one of the chief victims of this policy. But he is not alone.

Chief economist of Morgan Stanley, Stephen Roach, one of the main gurus of 'downsizing', has recanted, questioning it as involving a short-term 'slash and burn policy'. What is remarkable is that Roach's somersault is focused on the question of productivity. Sacking workers may not be the simple answer to increased profits it once seemed.

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IN A recent letter to Morgan Stanley's clients Roach declares that improvements in US business efficiency have been the 'result of plant closures, job cuts and other forms of downsizing that are not recipes for lasting productivity and profit enhancement'.

Roach says that sacking workers and what he calls 'real wage compression' (!) are recipes for 'industrial extinction'. Roach is worried that the savage reduction of US corporations may have reached the point where they lack a sufficiently large base, with a suitably trained labour force, to compete in an increasingly fierce world market.

What concerns Roach and his like is not of course 'efficiency' and 'labour productivity' as such. They are bothered only about profit: 'Therein lies the trap of this productivity-led recovery. Labour cannot be squeezed forever and corporate America can't rely on the "hollowing" tactics of downsizing to maintain market share in an expanding global economy.'

But Roach is concerned not simply with 'economic' matters: 'Some form of labour backlash is an inevitable by-product of an era that has squeezed labour and yet rewarded shareholders beyond their wildest dreams.' Washington senses that worker unrest and economic anxiety will be the 'hot button of the 1990s'.

In this brave new world 'many of the forces of deflation and company earnings vitality behind the surges in bond and stock markets' will now be tested, Roach cautions. In other words, we are now about to discover whether the upsurge in stock prices over the recent past represented anything real (that is the capacity of enterprises to earn profits) or was simply the expression of short-term plundering by financiers.

* * * * *

THE irony is that when Roach declares that 'Labour cannot be squeezed forever' he is only repeating Marx's warning to capital in the middle of last century.

In *Capital* Marx pointed out that capital seeks to maintain profits by exploiting workers ever more intensely, by extracting ever-greater amounts of surplus value from them in a working day. In 'theory' it might seem that so long as capital is able to raise its rate of exploitation it can make its profits from an ever-smaller labour force. But this is not the case:

'Two workers, each working 12 hours a day, cannot produce the same mass of surplus value as 24 who only work 2 hours, even if they live off air and do not have to work for themselves at all. In this respect, then, the compensation of the reduced number of workers by intensifying the degree of exploitation has certain insurmountable limits. It may, for this reason, well check the fall in the rate of profit, but it cannot prevent it altogether'.

It is these 'insurmountable limits' that are forcing their way even into the consciousness of representatives of capital such as Roach.

Letters

Murders of Trotskyists in World War II

PAUL DAY's report (18 May) on the pressure on the French Communist Party (PCF) to reveal the truth about the murder of Trotskyists by the Stalinists during the Nazi occupation of France is very much to be welcomed.

The 'Spring 1995' issue of *Revolutionary History* includes an essay by Paolo Casciola entitled 'Pietro Tresso (Blasco) and the Early Years of Italian Trotskyism' which gives a good picture of the importance of this militant in the formation and organisation of Trotskyism.

It also presents a mass of evidence about the murder of Tresso, including a statement by the Stalinist 'commandant' of the Wodlis resistance camp where Tresso and his comrades were last seen: 'They were Trotskyists. They were executed as traitors. The local chief of police at the time knew all that.'

The Italian centre for documentation and study of Trotskyism is called the Centro Studi Pietro Tresso, to commemorate his outstanding contribution to the movement and to ensure that the attempt by the Stalinists to abolish his name is never successful.

But there may be something more at stake than simply setting straight the historical record (important though that is).

In many parts of the world (with the notable exception of eastern Europe) there are moves to regroup communists and left-socialists into new formations, in what is thought of as a 'post-Stalinist' era.

In the UK we see this mainly in the Communist Party of Great Britain and Open Polemic (though the Socialist Labour Party figures on the same map for many of its supporters). More substantial movements have been developed in Italy and Latin America.

Trotskyists appear to be either sidelining themselves from these developments because of their long-standing and fully justifiable hostility towards the Stalinists, or to be attempting to hide their politics from public view (as in the case of the Fourth International Supporters Caucus in the SLP).

The exposure the historic crimes of Stalinism — such as the Tresso murders, and the appall-

ing policies of Stalinism in the Spanish Revolution — is one element in demonstrating not only that the Trotskyists have been right to oppose the Stalinists in the post World War II period.

It also teaches invaluable lessons about democracy and tolerance of dissent, which means overthrowing the parody of Lenin's disciplined party, within the workers' movement.

And Trotskyists need to apply the same ruthless criticism to their own history, on cases such as Healyism, and the outrageous treatment of Michel Varga (Balazs Nagy), as well as our failures in Ceylon and Bolivia.

John Plant

jplant@cix.compulink.co.uk

Rebuilding international leadership

IN THE course of the conference called by the Merseyside dockers shop stewards' committee on 27 April, a number of delegates emphasised over and over again that the failure of disputes was the fault of the leadership of the trade union movement.

Despite the fact that there could not have been a single person in the meeting that had not long ago grasped this elementary fact, they limited their contributions to this one aspect of the problems faced by the working class.

In my contribution, I described the statement that it was 'all the result of bad leaders' as a truism, that had existed for over a century.

I may not have made myself clear. What I meant to emphasise was that it was a question of HOW we build an alternative leadership that was the important issue.

This is not achieved by preaching, but by recognising that in their actions the dockers are in fact solving the question of leadership.

The conference was itself a part of that struggle to construct an alternative leadership.

In the same way, the International Trade Union Solidarity Campaign/African Liberation Support Campaign conference on 8-9 June will not be an occasion where the 'enlightened' impart to the unenlightened the answers to all their problems.

It will be a conference where workers from different countries come together to discuss prob-

lems by the extension of international solidarity.

This is precisely what the Merseyside dockers have been doing in the course of their dispute and there can be no more important task for us today than to make the conference a success, precisely because it constitutes the rebuilding of the international leadership of the working class.

Dave Temple
Durham

■ See front page for details of the conference and below for the call from the ITUSC.

Paris Commune

AS PETER FRYER (18 May) writes, '125 years later, we have no need of myths, proletarian or otherwise', where the Paris Commune is concerned.

Indeed, only ten years later, Marx himself was warning against mistaken views regarding that event.

'Apart from the fact that this was merely the rising of one city under exceptional conditions, the majority of the Commune was in no wise socialist, nor could it be. With a modicum of common sense, however, it could have reached a compromise with Versailles useful to the mass of the people — all that could be attained at that time. Appropriation of the Bank of France would alone have been enough to dissolve in terror all the pretensions of the men of Versailles' (letter to F. Domela-Nieuwenhuis, 22 February 1881).

Lenin considered, rather controversially, that the Commune saved France from a monarchist restoration. The Republic had only the heroism of the proletariat to thank for its consolidation' ('The Historical Destiny of Karl Marx's Doctrine', March 1913).

In an article published in December 1911 and January 1912 he had shown how he saw the Commune as the end-event in a long process which made French society and political life significantly different from that of Germany.

'At the beginning of the era of bourgeois revolutions the French liberal bourgeoisie was monarchist in outlook: at the end of a long period of bourgeois revolutions, and to the extent to which the actions of the proletariat and of the bourgeois-democratic ele-

ments . . . became increasingly determined and independent, the French bourgeoisie in its entirety was recast into a republican bourgeoisie, retrained, re-educated, reborn.

In Prussia, and in Germany in general, the landowner never relinquished his hegemony during the whole period of bourgeois revolutions and he 'educated' the bourgeoisie in his own likeness.

In France, during all the 80 years of bourgeois revolutions, the proletariat, in various combinations with the 'left-bloc' elements of the petty-bourgeoisie, won itself hegemony at least four times, and as a result the bourgeoisie had to create a political system more acceptable to its opposite' ('Fundamental Problems of the Election Campaign').

Brian Pearce
New Barnet, Herts.

All the young fogeys

KENAN MALIK's career on the *Spectator* continues to flourish.

On 11 May, this writer from the Revolutionary Communist Party's journal *Living Marxism* criticised the 'race relations industry' in the manner of Michael Wharton's 'Peter Simple' column in the Daily Telegraph.

This all part of the editorial style of *Spectator* editor Frank Johnson.

The previous editor, Dominic Lawson, published some very trenchant editorials on the conflict in ex-Yugoslavia and was an admirer of Noel Malcolm who has consistently supported Bosnia.

Johnson, on the other hand, has always backed ex-foreign secretary Douglas Hurd. Johnson's attitude to the Bosnian war was that Hurd had done jolly well and that it was an incomprehensible fight between equally disreputable Balkan tribes whose surnames all ended in 'itch'.

Since this had been *Living Marxism's* stance, we can only say: 'Young fogeys of the world unite!'

Tom Carter
Somerton, Somerset

Correction

LAST week due to an editorial misunderstanding we printed a headline to a letter: 'Australian lecturers strike'. In fact, it was mainly university staff apart from lecturers who took action. Apologies for any confusion.

An international workers' conference Saturday-Sunday 8-9 June, Conway Hall

Dear brother, sister, comrade,

From sacked Liverpool dockers in Britain, to garment workers of Bangladesh, busworkers of Mexico City, Russian and Ukrainian miners, Nigerian oil workers, retrenched Ugandan workers, South African nurses, French railway workers, the shoeworkers of Indonesia, building workers of Germany, and those who have been forced to flee their homeland and have taken refuge in the West — workers of the world struggle against the same enemy and must be united in that struggle.

Therefore we warmly invite you to this conference jointly organised by us.

The first International Trade Union Solidarity Campaign conference took place in April 1991.

Since then we have fought to produce a bulletin and maintain contact with workers and their struggles in many countries. That is how the ITUSC met the African Liberation Support Campaign. Our call remains simple and direct:

The right of all workers to combine in democratic trade unions, independent of employers and the state is a fundamental

right. The right to work, the right to strike, the right to asylum and freedom to live and work in any part of the world are also basic democratic rights. Laws which take away these fundamental rights are against basic democratic freedoms.

Capital operates globally through multi-national companies, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the United Nations. Through brutal colonisation and super-exploitation — using worker to undercut worker — capital seeks to create divisions in the working class, using war, nationalism, unemployment, racism, religion, the break-up of communities and control of the media and production to attack us.

The systematic global erosion of wages and conditions, employment contracts, hours of work, pensions and health and safety must no longer be tolerated, nor must the spread of privatisation, casual labour and the use of low pay, poor conditions and unemployment to attack hard-won wages and conditions.

Millions of workers in the so-called 'Third World' have never even had the luxury of these con-

ditions. Workers doing the same work are entitled to the same wages and conditions in every country. An injury to one is an injury to all!

The division of the working class means that workers in one country not only are unaware of the problems of their sisters and brothers in other countries, but are hi-jacked into supporting 'their own' company against others, thus widening the divisions.

Although capital is the primary cause, responsibility for these divisions also lies in the workers' movement:

■ The nationalist pro-capital social-democratic trade union and political parties in the West;

■ The policies of 'socialism in one country' and 'peaceful co-existence with capital' carried out by the now collapsed bureaucratic regimes in the former Soviet Union and eastern Europe;

■ The nationalist pro-capital regimes which have taken office in the so-called independent one-time colonial countries and are administering the IMF/World Bank structural adjustment programme to the detriment of workers and peasants. For these reasons, despite its enormous cri-

sis, capital has continued to rule the world. We have been brought to the point where the future of humanity itself is threatened.

The 'market' dominates every aspect of our lives. Nothing matters to capital except profit. The 'market' cares nothing for millions of ordinary people and their children. Our fightback starts now!

The outcome of this conference should be the establishment of real links towards an international and internationalist association of organised workers and the communities. It brings us together, people of various political persuasions, but with the universal understanding that the class struggle is alive as ever it was, and that together we have a world to win — for socialism.

We urge your organisation to ensure a delegate attends the conference. Please photocopy and circulate this invitation and please write with your name address and organisation and any cheques payable to the ITUSC at the address on the front page ad.

Peter Gibson (chair) and Keith Standing (organiser) for ITUSC and Alfred Banya (secretary) for ALISC

Irish election farce

BY JOHN STEELE

ELECTIONS in the north of Ireland have traditionally been rather short on democracy — to put it mildly. Gerrymandered constituencies, limited franchise, plural voting, intimidation and widespread personation were some of the factors that ensured large elements of farce.

But the 30 May election, which was only agreed by Prime Minister John Major to stop the Unionists bringing down the government, surpass anything that has gone before in its denial of fundamental rights.

No individual candidates have been allowed to put themselves forward. Voters must choose only from a list of political parties approved by the Tories.

To circumvent this many independents have grouped together, irrespective of their disparate views, and been approved as 'political' parties. Thus there is the Independent McMullan Party and the Independent Chambers Party, both named after individual candi-

dates. There are 22 approved parties for this political circus. The most striking omissions are the Irish Republican Socialist Party and Republican Sinn Fein — the two main opponents of the 'peace process'.

And no matter how many votes Sinn Fein collect, they will not be allowed to take part in the all-party talks which are supposed to flow from the assembly unless the IRA has called a ceasefire.

Bizarre

So behind this bizarre set-up is the core of the 'peace process' — the over-riding need of imperialism to behead the nationalist struggle.

As the Sinn Fein leadership gets deeper and deeper into this

process it is more than ever clear that the Irish working class needs an independent voice.

It is also clear that the assortment of independents and groups who have come together as 'Labour' to take part in the election have turned their backs on the principled questions that must be faced if an independent workers' party is to be built.

Militant Labour is a dominant group in this amalgam which also includes those who call for the British Labour Party to organise in the north.

They are fighting the election on what they call the 'class issues' — low pay, attacks on the NHS, privatisation, unemployment and social deprivation.

They refuse to have a position on the partition of Ireland or to explain how that division has

critically weakened the Irish working class — the very issues which have been at the centre of the struggles of the past 28 years and which are at the heart of the election.

They do not call for withdrawal of British troops, the release of political prisoners or for the abolition of the Prevention of Terrorism Act or other legislation. These they say are not class politics.

Shamefully

And, shamefully, they do not demand the lifting of the ban on the IRSP and RSF, but dutifully accept their place on the Tories' approved list.

They have a position to the right of the old Northern Ireland Labour Party (NILP), which at least maintained the token demand for the abolition of the Special Powers Act.

The NILP was blown away by the upsurge in the class struggle in the 1960s.

Any political movement claiming to be socialist will suffer a similar fate if it does not have a principled stand on partition.

Cutting the cost of 'justice'

BY DANIEL ROBERTSON

THE admission that contaminated laboratory equipment has made a series of convictions of IRA volunteers unsafe has spotlighted declining standards in laboratories.

At least a dozen convictions are now being questioned because traces of Semtex in a second hand laboratory centrifuge may have caused 'false positive' analyses to occur. These could have given an incorrect indication of traces of this powerful explosive on items of evidence.

Normal procedure in analytical laboratories is to run control samples containing either known quantities or a known absence of the chemical being analysed. Controls like this would be expected to prevent false positive results.

This has led some suspicious observers to question the credibility of these allegations and to suggest that the government is looking for a cover for a back door amnesty for imprisoned IRA volunteers.

The aim would be to lure Republicans back into the 'peace

process' with a review of past convictions.

However the plain truth seems to have been that elementary scientific precautions were neglected. Forensic laboratories have been reorganised as 'agencies', that is they charge the police for their services. This results in a reluctance by the police to use them — and cheaper private laboratories are now also allowed to compete for this work.

Laboratory management responds by cutting costs, with the purchase of second-hand equipment, a drive to employ under-skilled temporary staff and slipshod methods being the result. Where police are anxious to get convictions the temptation could develop to use cowboy laboratories that ensure the 'right' results at the cheapest price.

The resulting fudging of the mechanisms of justice may well suit the state as it increasingly lurches towards more authoritarian forms of rule. But it will also raise public concerns about the continued drive to reduce standards in all areas of life to suit the needs of profit.

Turkish Labour Party celebration

BY NICK BAILEY

ALMOST 2,000 members of the Turkish and Kurdish communities came together last weekend in north London to celebrate the recent launch in Turkey of the Emek Partisi (Labour Party).

Many workers who had taken part in the successful fights for trade union recognition at JJ Fast Food, Jenny Design and Euroscene Textiles were there. Also present was a delegation from Germany where a branch of the party has been established.

As well as speeches and discussions on the aims of the party and the situation in Turkey, there were poetry readings, song recitals and a theatrical performance depicting episodes of struggle in the workers' movement.

Bill Hodge, full-time official from the textile section of the Transport and General Workers' Union, brought fraternal greetings on behalf of the union and its general secretary Bill Morris.

Solidarity greetings were also conveyed by Liverpool docker Kevin Robinson. He outlined the struggle in Merseyside and stressed the importance of the dockers' international campaign. He called for all sections of the international labour movement to demand the immediate release of workers victimised and jailed in Turkey.

Other main speakers were



North London textile and JJ Fast Food workers on Liverpool dockers' demonstration

transport union leader and Emek Partisi executive member Sabri Topcu and party general secretary Levent Tuzel.

Initiative

They said that the initiative for an independent workers' party had come from the working class itself. The idea had been discussed for a long period in the

factories and workplaces and tens of thousands had participated in meetings held in 40 towns. 'There is a demand in the working class for a legal party that would be socialist and revolutionary,' said Tuzel.

The recent government ban on the socialist daily, *Evrensel*, for 'propagating class against class' as it hailed the launch of Emek Partisi, is an indication of how

much the Turkish state fears a united working class.

Emek Partisi stresses its internationalism. The involvement of the Liverpool dockers and the struggles of the Turkish and Kurdish workers in north London show how, with the collapse of Stalinism, new opportunities for reconstructing working-class internationalism are being grasped.

30 human rights activists arrested in Turkey

ISTANBUL police have arrested 30 delegates to an international conference on disappearances in police custody. Among those arrested was Jenny Sutton, a teacher of English as a second language, from Tottenham, north London.

The arrests took place at 8pm on 17 May. The conference was to take place at the Technical University in Istanbul, but as delegates arrived they were confronted by rows of armed riot police and tanks. The conference was transferred to the premises of the Med-Com community association.

At the end of the main conference sessions, delegates went to Kadikoy Altiyol in central Istanbul to light candles and lay flow-

ers in remembrance of those who have disappeared in police custody.

The conference was organised by the Platform of Democratic Struggle. This organisation is made up from the friends and relatives of 'disappeared' people in Turkey, of whom there are about 500.

The police arrested delegates to prevent the vigil taking place. Although the exact charge being made against delegates was unclear, a police spokesperson told British consulate officials that Jenny had been arrested for attending an illegal gathering, in contravention of state law 2911, which allows police to ban meetings and demonstrations.

Later, police threatened to

make charges of possessing terrorist literature, which could cover any document critical of the Turkish state.

Police transferred all detainees to their specialist 'Struggle Against Terrorism' interrogation centre.

International

Two other international delegates were also taken into police custody: Vincent Raynal of the French CGT trade union federation and Baki Selcuk representing the German Refugee Workers Federation. At least half the Turkish detainees are women.

Jenny and her arrested colleagues were due to appear in court last Saturday. Jenny's hus-

band, Andy Higginbottom, has been calling from London to try and make contact with his wife, but police did not allow any conversation except for one minute.

Andy said: 'We are very worried for Jenny's safety, and especially for all the Turkish people arrested at the same time who risk beatings and worse. We will do everything we can to get them all released.'

It appears that, in the eyes of the Turkish police authorities, simply attending an event critical of their appalling human rights record is cause for arrest. This latest action confirms that Turkey is a police state.'

Further information from Hacı or Andy Higginbottom on 0171-275 8685.

Urgent campaign to stop Edinburgh deportation

BY HILARY HORROCKS

EMERGENCY action has been mounted over the last two weeks in the Edinburgh area in a last-minute attempt to stop the deportation of Nigerian student John Gotip.

John, 26, came to Britain in 1967 with his parents: his father was a diplomat, and when, eventually, he was posted elsewhere, John decided to stay in Edinburgh to continue his studies at Telford college.

The young student had been issued with an unlimited visa exempting him from immigration control.

But in 1992 the Home Office contacted him, insisting that he regularise his stay or leave the country in 28 days. There followed a series of legal appeals by John, unsuccessful primarily because of mistakes by solicitors whom he has now replaced.

In July 1995, seven immigration officers and police appeared without warning at John's house: he was arrested, threatened with immediate deportation, and thrown into Saughton jail, Edinburgh, without any charges having been made against him.

It was only when Eileen Dickie, mother of an old school friend, and Margaret Mackintosh, his ex-headteacher, heard of John's plight that a campaign was started which, after three months, won his release from jail.

His freedom was subject to the condition that he did not take up

any form of employment, and so John has been forced to live through handouts from friends. He is currently studying a software engineering course at Napier University, due to finish in 1997.

The Home Office agreed to review John's case, but on 7 May they wrote to him warning that he was to be deported.

The next day John received a letter instructing him to report at Edinburgh airport on 17 May for a flight to Lagos — a city where he now has absolutely no family nor means of supporting himself.

Friends and supporters were appalled by the brutal treatment of John by the Home Office, and within a few days organised a well-attended rally in his defence in the centre of Edinburgh.

Action

Local trade unions, the trades council, community groups and political organisations have responded to the call for action, bombarding John's constituency MP, Lord James Douglas Hamilton, and the Home Office with letters and faxes of protest.

A few days' postponement has been won but campaigners are appealing for the widest possible help, urgently.

They are asking for protests to be sent to Home Secretary Michael Howard or to your local MP, and for messages of support to: The John Gotip Support Campaign, c/o Africa Centre, 45 Blackfriars Street, Edinburgh

Brazil's landless workers killed

MILITARY police in Pará, a north-eastern state of Brazil, carried out a cowardly assassination of 21 evicted small farmers and their families in April on the direct orders of the governor. Among the dead was a three-

year-old child. Bodies were mutilated and smashed.

Please send messages repudiating the massacre and demanding an immediate investigation into the events to the President of Brazil, Fernando Henrique Cardoso, c/o the Brazilian Embassy in London. Fax: 0171-493 5105. More details in next week's Workers Press.

WORKERS PRESS IS THE PAPER OF THE WORKERS REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

British section of the Workers International (to Rebuild the Fourth International)

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Inside left

Free press

The firm which loads your local magazine with 'soft porn' whether or not it's wanted, WH Smith, has recently decided to lighten its own shelves by removing numerous insufficiently profitable titles, including *Morning Star* and the left-wing four weekly *Tribune*.

But the country's biggest distribution chain is not neglecting all minor tastes. A new edition of Adolf Hitler's *Mein Kampf* is being sent to selected branches. That's freedom.

However, I'm pleased to read in *the Guardian* (17 May) that Nazi historian David Irving, trying to peddle his lies in Scotland, has been given a high time.

In *Weekly Worker* (9 May), sound-bite like an editorial in *Living Marxism*, Eddie Ford detects 'an alarming trend in the capitalist "democracies" towards creeping censorship.'

Incidentally, this covert censorship is sometimes encouraged by those who think of themselves as on the left. Witness the quiet satisfaction which accompanied the "banning" of Christopher Bland's *The g-factor*, which defended "scientific racism".

I'm not clear what 'banning' in inverted commas means, nor how one can be 'silent satisfaction' (nor lose).

Ford says French intellectual Roger Garaudy faces trouble because of his book *The Founding Myth of Israeli Politics* 'questions the actual number of Jewish victims at Auschwitz' and 'the validity of the entire Zionist state'.

Would some optimum number of Auschwitz victims justify racist oppression in the Middle East? Can Israeli policy towards Palestinians vindicate Hitler's genocide against Jews? Told he had made a mistake at Auschwitz, Garaudy retorted 'at least I didn't make the mistake of invading Lebanon'. Does collective 'guilt' extend back posthumously?

Having journeyed through Stalinism, Catholicism and Islam (none of them associated with 'free speech'), Senator Garaudy has landed in France, writing for far-right journals like *Nationalisme et République* and Alain de Benoist's *Revue*.

Other Communist Party intellectuals have dallied in the same direction. I wouldn't want the 82-year-old philosopher sent to prison, as Eddie Ford fears could happen. We can't trust the fight against fascism to the bourgeois state. But with 'free speech' dominated by the likes of WH Smith and Rupert Murdoch, there must be better cases than Garaudy's to take up.

Focus pocus

You can sell the daftest ideas to some people, if you wrap them in sufficiently obscure language. New York physicist Alan Sokal sent a hoax article to *Social Text*, an intellectual magazine published by Duke University Press, which tries to analyse society the way 'post-modernist' critics deconstruct a piece of literature.

He criticised scientists who 'cling to the dogma imposed by a post-enlightenment hegemony over the Western intellectual outlook, which can be summarised briefly as follows: that there exists an external world, whose properties are independent of any individual human being and indeed of humanity as a whole.'

Sokal packed this wordy attack on materialism in a lot of densely-written text, full of words from physics and philosophy, with extensive footnotes. So far as the author was concerned, it was gibberish. But it duly appeared in *Social Text*, whose editors didn't suspect a thing. Now, that's the betting it won't be republished, and quoted by earnest fellows assuring us our Marxism is out-of-date, and we should 'read Sokal'!

Charlie Pottins

Industrial conflict

SIMON PIRANI reports from Russia on a conference in Perm attended by about 40, some 20 worker activists and 15 to 20 members of various political groups in Russia: the local branches of the three Stalinist parties (led by Zyuganov, Anpilov and Nina Adreevna), Rabochaya Demokratiya (Workers Democracy, once close to the Militant but now closer to the Stalinists), and the Chelyabinsk bureau of the Fourth International (supporters of David North's so-called International Committee of the Fourth International). In addition there were some academics and two international visitors from France and Britain. There were also an Argentinian who now lives in Russia and supports one of the offshoots of the International Workers League/Fourth International (LIT/CI) and a member of the British Socialist Workers' Party who also lives in Russia.

ACTIVISTS from workers' groups in the Urals, academics and international visitors gathered in Perm last month to discuss the development of the workers' movement.

The conference, organised on 27-28 April by the Workers Political-Social Association of Perm, sent a message of support to striking dockers in Liverpool.

A resolution was also passed opposing the war in Chechnya, calling for the withdrawal of the Russian army and supporting the Chechen people's right to decide their own future.

Delegates were divided on a clause specifying Chechnya's right to separation from Russia, but a majority supported it.

The conference gave activists from the vast industrial areas of the Urals a chance to share their political experience.

Activity in the factories

A SESSION on activity in the factories was opened by Alexander Kerzhentsev, a member of the trade union committee at the Perm Instrument Manufacturing company, one of the city's former military-industrial enterprises.

Kerzhentsev and another activist had lost their jobs at the plant after the Workers Political-Social Association distributed leaflets in the workshops criticising the late payment of wages and bad management.

The "communists" [that is, Stalinist parties] tried to help, through their so-called Soviet of Workers, Peasants and Specialists, explained an information bulletin given to conference delegates. 'But, as usual, this "workers" soviet turned not to the workers but to the management.'

'Yes, it's a terrible thing, this soviet: two weeks after their protest the management had not done a thing. And only after more leaflets were posted in the factory by the Workers Political-Social Association were the

victimised workers reinstated and paid compensation.'

Similar stories of industrial conflict were told by other workers, including a representative from the Uralgazservis factory, one of many in the Urals where late payment of wages has sparked off strikes and other protests. (See text of leaflet this page.)

Igor Asako, a member of the free trade union, SMOT, had travelled from Byelarus to give an account of a growing strike movement there and the repression against it by the Lukashenko regime.

N. Gurin from Nizhiny Tagil in Siberia gave an account of the strike movement there since 1992.

There was discussion about the political state of mind of the factory workers.

Vassili Maltsev of the Workers Political-Social Association said that — with the trade unions working hand-in-glove with management and being unwilling and unable to defend workers whose living standards were plummeting — some older workers were saying: 'We would rather have Stalin back.'

Viktor Avdevich, from the Workers Club of Chelyabinsk, highlighted another problem: attempts by commercial firms, close to the local powers that be, to 'buy' activists, by promising financial aid in return for adherence to a particular political line.

The way to resist such corruption of the workers' movement was to ensure that it remained in the hands of workers themselves, he stressed. 'No one can put themselves in the workers' place,' he said.

'Politicising' workers

MEMBERS of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation at the conference intervened in this discussion, claiming that the way to 'politicise' workers was to march them out on May Day and make sure that they

supported Gennady Zyuganov in the presidential elections.

To each worker who spoke they asked: 'And who are YOU going to vote for?' One who was interrupted like this replied: 'Well not for your bloody intelligentsia and nomenklatura, that's for sure.'

Most said they would vote for Zyuganov, abstain altogether, or vote only against Zhirinovskiy if he got to the second round.

The conference organisers tried to raise political issues in a more meaningful manner: by holding a discussion on Chechnya and including reports on the workers' movement internationally.

International reports

FRANCOISE Carrascedo, a member of the white-collar municipal union and of the La Commune group, gave a report on the recent strike movement in France. I myself reported on the workers' movement in Britain and the discussion on the need for a new workers' party.

The conference gave the impression of being sharp and frank, and at the same time open. It should be added that it is too soon, as yet, to speak of a workers' movement in the Urals. There are small groups of workers, fighting fiercely to propagandise among, and mobilise, their workmates.

These activists are fighting against considerable odds. The trade unions in big industrial areas are playing basically the same role they played in Soviet times: collaborating closely with management.

The activity of the Stalinist parties simply feeds the cynicism of many workers toward all politics. And there is the crushing weight of poverty and the fear of unemployment now felt by every Russian worker.

The activists' fight is a brave one and deserves the support of the workers' movement everywhere.

What activists are saying about workmates

'It is clear that the money is there, but it is not being used for the right purpose'



Revolution Betrayed, 60 years on

THE International Committee for the Study of L. Trotsky's legacy is organising a conference in Russia to mark the 60th anniversary of the publication of Trotsky's analysis of the growth of the Soviet bureaucracy *The Revolution Betrayed, What is the Soviet Union and Where is it Going?*

The issues due to be discussed are:

- The publication and fate of *Revolution Betrayed* and its significance for the development of Marxist thought.

- The problem of the nature of the USSR, its development and demise, raised in Trotsky's book.

- Present day problems of the development of socialist theory and practice in the

revolutionary and reformist wings of the workers' movement and the development of post-totalitarian society.


- Problems of the research of L. Trotsky's biography and ways to overcome the dogma of the 'Stalin school of falsification'.

There will also be the opportunity to consider other themes related to *Revolution Betrayed*.

- Those interested in participating should send an application and synopsis of proposed contribution (up to five pages) to: Professor Mikhail Voeykov, Room 620, Institute of Economics (Russian Academy of Sciences), ulitsa Krasikova 27, 117218 Moscow, Russia. Fax: Moscow 310 7001.

THE REVOLUTION BETRAYED

WHAT IS THE SOVIET UNION AND WHERE IS IT GOING?



LEON TROTSKY



Delegates at the Perm conference discuss Chechens' right to decide their support to the 500 sacked Live

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Where has all the money gone?

This is the text of a leaflet distributed by a group of militant workers in the Uralgazservis factory in March. It is typical of many such leaflets produced by the Workers Political-Social Association and its collaborators

an 'information exchange' visit. And last year, together with the economist and chief accountant (there were six people on the trip altogether) he was exchanging information in Greece. And where can you find gas in Greece, may we ask? Polikarov brought a fur coat for his daughter, and the economic department engineer, V.A. Shamshuk, brought back a R2.5 million fur coat for herself. But our young people cannot go abroad.

It is clear that the money is there, but it is not being used for the right purpose.

The managers' pay is 8-12 times greater than that of the average workers. And every one of them has two or three cars.

And what do we, the workers, have?

Leaflets are being distributed stating that the workers at the arms factory will strike on 2 April. At that factory the managers are also sitting comfortably with their ill-gotten gains, while the workers have not been paid for January.

How will we support them?

A group of Uralgazservis workers

THE director and the whole management of Uralgazservis regularly receive their pay on the eighth and 24th of every month, but the workers are still waiting for theirs from February and March.

The third quarter share dividends have not been paid, to say nothing of our money. So how did the whole management scrape together the cash to go to France and the USA this week? And to Greece, Sweden and Spain previously?

The firm's construction vice-president, Polikarov, received his December pay of 11.5 million roubles [about £1,500, average workers' pay is 500,000 roubles or £66] and — at the age of 68 — was off to California for



Money at private Russian bank



... called for withdrawal of Russian troops from Chechnya (above) and supported the... own future and their right to separate from Russia. The conference also sent a message of... pool dockers (below)

City Lights

An expensive marriage

THE ESCALATING costs of unification continue to be the most powerful factor in Germany's deepening economic crisis as a large and rapidly growing public sector deficit threatens the stability of the country's capital markets.

The latest report from the Bundesbank reveals a public sector deficit of DM117bn last year, 42 per cent higher than in 1994 and now equivalent to 4 per cent of total disposable income.

The fear is that German and foreign financial institutions will only cover this mounting deficit if they are paid more to do so, that is if the German government raises its interest rates. But such a move would obviously intensify the deflationary forces at work in the economy.

The public sector's weight in Germany's overall borrowing structure has risen drastically since the unification of 1990, growing by 14 per cent a year over this period, a rate one and a half times that in the decade 1979-89. Last year about a third of all domestic non-banking debt was accounted for by the public sector. It was a quarter in 1989 and a fifth in 1979.

The federal government's cash situation is worsening at a rate that is beginning to alarm sections of finance and big business. In the first four months of this year it has risen to DM23bn as against 7bn in the same period last year. Whereas government spending was 15 per cent higher, tax revenues were up by less than 6 per cent.

The situation is likely to worsen as firms shed more labour and thereby reduce the tax base on which the government depends for its revenues.

According to the latest finding of the Munich-based Ifo research institute, companies are expected to cut employment by 3 per cent this year and a further 1.5 per cent next year, and continue to get rid of workers until the end of the century.

The same Ifo survey finds that German firms are intensifying their drive for overseas investment in an effort to take advantage of lower wage rates and lighter tax regimes.

In a survey reported last week of some 350 of the country's largest companies 78 per cent expected sales abroad to grow more rapidly than at home, while 60 per cent recorded their intention to step up their foreign investment with only one in six firms expecting to reduce such outlays.

A not so 'popular' capitalism

IF you bump into Sid, an 'I told you so' would not go amiss. 'Sid', you may recall, was the government's name for the small investor during the campaign to privatise British Gas ten years ago.

Last week Sid saw his shares plunge as the gas industry's regulator sought to curb some of the industry's excess profits.

That's assuming Sid still holds any shares. For the Tory attempt to sell the idea of popular capitalism has proved something of a flop.

Privatisation was promoted on the idea that everybody could become a shareholder in a prosperous capitalism.

Spreading shareholding would inspire a new enthusiasm for capitalism. People would eagerly follow the progress of the firms in which they had a 'stake', to use the phrase now *de rigueur* among the Labour

leaders. Nobody believed, or believes, a word of it — certainly not the Tory chiefs. It was a con trick to justify the sale of state assets at give-away prices to the government's friends in the City.

At the same time it was a necessary device not only to try and put the state finances in order but also to help break up the unions in the public sector.

Around 3 million people held shares in 1979. A decade later the number had shot up to 11 million, a figure now down to 9 million. But this hardly tells the story.

A 1992 survey by MORI showed that a derisory 2 per cent of those who first bought shares during a privatisation went on to buy a share in a non-privatised concern. The great majority of Sids who bought shares in privatised firms — at rock bottom prices — sold them almost immediately.

Half of all small shareholders held shares in only one firm, while three-quarters own shares in three firms or less. And while the number of shareholders has risen, the percentage of total shares held by individuals, as opposed to the big institutions, has continued to drop — from 66 per cent in 1957 and 38 per cent in 1975 to around 20 per cent today.

Or put another way: in today's Britain the big institutions — the investment trusts, pension funds and the like — now own some 80 per cent of all shares.

Stop thief!

THE government will rake in a £2bn bonus as it takes control of British Coal's pension fund. The fund is heading for a £4bn surplus, but instead of this providing better pensions for present and former miners and white collar workers, half will be siphoned off by the Treasury, a report from the National Audit Office has revealed.

The NAO is highly critical of the lavish fees paid out to City institutions in their role of coal 'privatisation advisers' as well as the £2.5m 'success fee' handed to merchant bankers Rothchilds half way through its four years' work.

The merchant bank has already received over £9m for helping to flog off the coal industry. The accountants Touche Ross did rather less well at the trough, coming away with a modest £4.3m for their 'services'.

This sort of scandal cannot be left to the NAO. It demands a thorough workers' inquiry. Only then will it be possible to answer the question where is the money to come from to rebuild the NHS and the other almost completely destroyed social services?

Blair's Belgian lessons?

BELGIUM'S prime minister, Jean-Luc Dehaene, is to rule by decree in order to meet the Maastricht criteria for entry into the proposed European single currency system. Dehaene wants to impose extra spending cuts of some £500m next year to reduce the country's yawning budget deficit.

'You work faster with a small team than with 150 parliamentarians,' says Guy Verfaillie, an economist with Générale de Banque. Under the constitution the Belgian government is allowed to rule by decree during times of crisis such as 'war or economic collapse'.

In the week when it was rumoured that Tony Blair was proposing to abolish elections to the shadow cabinet, is there not a lesson here for the Labour leader and his inner circle?

Threadneedle

The anguish of the Kurds

BY THE time this is printed, we shall know whether Kani Yilmaz has succeeded in his appeal against extradition.

On 26 October 1994, in one of the Tory government's most shameful violations of elementary civil liberties, Yilmaz was seized by police on his way to speak to MPs and members of the House of Lords.

Since then, despite protests in this country and all over Europe, the European spokesperson of the Kurdistan Workers' Party and Kurdistan National Liberation Front has been locked up in a British prison.

It was Yilmaz's fifth visit to Britain. Resident in Germany as a refugee after undergoing ten years' imprisonment and torture in Turkey for advocating Kurdish rights, he had come here by invitation. Arrangements for his visit had been made by John Austin-Walker, Labour MP for Woolwich.

Yilmaz is a public figure who travels around Europe as a representative of the Kurdish people, meeting government members and MPs.

Home Secretary Michael Howard, scurrying to do what the Turkish terror state asked of him, has justified Yilmaz's arrest on the ground that he presents a 'threat to national security'. For this allegation, not one single scrap of evidence has ever been produced.

The Yilmaz affair is only the most visible and most outrageous aspect of the current persecution of Kurds in a number of European countries, and is one of the first fruits of the setting-up of a pan-European legal, police, and intelligence network.

Germany, seeking to revive its strategic alliance with Turkey, is providing the finance, weapons, and political and diplomatic support that the Turkish state needs in order to carry out its genocidal war against the Kurds.

Within Germany, Kurdish organisations are banned; Kurdish flags, books, and other publications are seized and burnt; the police suppress, with a heavy hand, all public demonstrations by Kurds.

The purpose of this repression is clear: it is to prevent the German public from learning the truth about Turkish oppression.

If Kani Yilmaz is extradited to Germany he will face further extradition to Turkey. There he would certainly be tortured and very likely murdered or executed.

'The defence of the Kurdish people's rights', declares a leaflet put out by Kurdish refugees in London, 'has become critical in preventing the emergence of a powerful, unaccountable and secret European superstate, trampling over national boundaries, legal safeguards and the right of freedom of speech, thought and assembly.'

KURDISTAN is best known to the British public for the terror bombing eight years ago of Halabja, a town in north-eastern Iraq, a few miles from the Iranian frontier.

On 16-18 March 1988, in more than 20 separate attacks, mustard gas, cyanide, and other chemical weapons were used, killing some 5,000 men, women, and children. Halabja, once the home of 70,000 people, was turned into a ghost town.

For the past 12 years the Turkish state has done its utmost to emulate such barbarities and cruelties perpetrated by Saddam Hussein's regime.

It has destroyed 2,500 Kurdish villages and driven some 3 million people from their homes. It has burnt down three-quarters of the woodland in Kurdish areas and killed livestock indiscriminately. Its terror squads have kidnapped and killed 3,000 Kurds, horribly mutilating their bodies with the aim of striking terror into people's hearts.

There seems to be no limit to the savagery of these troops. They torture pregnant women: in the Dargecit district of Mardin province, three women named Fatma

PERSONAL COLUMN

Bastur, Emine, and Hediye have lost their babies as a result of the torture; the last-named was driven mad and will never recover.

Kurdish MPs have been thrown in jail, Kurdish organisations outlawed, Kurdish politicians, journalists, and writers murdered.

The publisher Aysenur Zarakolu was sentenced to six months' imprisonment for publishing a book by Yasar Kaya, chair of the Kurdish Parliament in Exile.

THERE is all too abundant evidence of these violations of human rights, these atrocities committed without pity or shame against people whose only crime is to defend their language and culture and to campaign for self-determination.

Some of that evidence lies in front of me as I write, in the shape of a booklet issued by the Belgium-based Kurdistan Committee.

The photographs reproduced in this booklet turn the stomach. They are almost too horrible to contemplate.

Some of them were published in the *Sunday Times* on 14 January, but their publication has not led to the general outcry against the Turkish state and its armed forces that might have been expected.

In April last year, in the Hakkari district in the extreme south-east of Turkey, near where the borders of Turkey, Iraq, and Iran meet, Turkish soldiers in uniform, members of the Hakkari Mountain Brigade Command, hold up by the hair the severed heads of four members of the Kurdistan People's Liberation Army.

It is fair to say that they seem well pleased with what they have done. They play to the camera. They grin obscenely. They strike what they take to be a victors' pose. One of them squats down close by the headless bodies, happily clutching a human head in either hand.

In other photographs it is the headless corpses, two of them naked, that are posed for the camera, with heads arranged around them 'artistically'.

You wonder — you can't help wondering — just why these photographs were taken. Were they to send home, to show wives and families the heroic deeds of husbands or sons? Or were they intended for the information and edification of commanding officers?

The dead Kurdish fighters, though bestially mutilated in an attempt to erase their humanity, preserve in death a timeless dignity. It is the living Turkish soldiers who, by choosing to record their act of desecration and thus set a grotesque seal on it, have cast off dignity and humanity alike.

In Kurdistan, says the booklet, 'people have been forced to eat excrement. Dead bodies have been raped and then shot to ribbons. Human beings have been chopped to bits, sometimes while still alive. Their brains have spilled out while soldiers posed by them.'

'We have done our best to denounce this to the world but the savagery has continued....'

'Where are the defenders of human rights, where the advocates of democracy, where the champions of freedom?'

'We call on everyone who claims to be human.... Does humanity no longer care?'

These are words of sheer anguish. It is as if they were not printed on paper but carved in stone by years of unutterable suffering.

They scald the conscience. And they demand a swift and unambiguous response from the entire labour movement.

Peter Fryer

More on 1926 — and 1996

Comment by
CLIFF SLAUGHTER

LEARNING from history is difficult, but not always that difficult.

At the 27 April conference called by the Liverpool dockers, an amendment to the main resolution was moved, calling for the Transport and General Workers' Union to make the dispute official. This amendment was defeated.

Those who supported it would do well to look closely at a very important aspect of the history of the 1926 General Strike.

EVERY socialist who has looked at this history knows that the TUC general council sold out the General Strike, calling it off after nine days at the height of its strength.

In last week's *Workers Press*, Mike Cooke explained how the Stalinist leadership of the Communist International fatally misled the young Communist Party in Britain into:

■ **RELYING** on 'left' members of the general council; and

■ **FAILING** to draw all the conclusions from the fact that what was involved in a general strike was not only support for the miners but the question of mobilising the working class in a struggle for political power.

There were many statements by the right-wing TUC leaders in the weeks leading up to the strike on 3 May which showed their attitude.

One example. On 14 April, rail leader J.H. Thomas said: 'To talk at this stage as if in a few days all the workers of the country were to be called out is letting loose passions that might be difficult to control... Instead of organising, mobilising, and encouraging the feeling that war is inevitable, let them concentrate on finding a solution honourable and acceptable to all sides.'

But once it became clear that no compromise agreement was possible to avoid the General Strike, then these leaders quickly prepared to take control of it as best they could.

Transport and General Workers' Union leader Ernest Bevin told a meeting of executives of TUC-affiliated unions on 29 April: 'You are moving to an extraordinary position. In 24 hours from now you may have to cease being separate unions for this purpose. For this purpose you will become one union with no autonomy.'

Responsibility

'The miners will have to throw their lot and cause into the cause of the general movement, and the general movement will have to take the responsibility for seeing it through.'

We know how the general council 'saw it through!' The actual formula which gave them the power to sell out the strike was agreed two days later, when the strike call was voted.

It was agreed that it would be



J.H. Thomas on 1 May 1926

left to individual unions to call out their members in support of the miners, but these unions were called upon 'to place their powers in the hands of the general council'.

When it came to the vote, the chairman, Pugh, stated that 'the scheme requires that the Miners' Federation hand over to the general council the conduct of this dispute.'

The miners were said to have agreed to this formula. From the statements of miners' leaders it is clear that they took this to mean they thought they had agreed only to the general council acting on the basis of rejecting any reduction in their wages or increase in their hours.

The general council surrendered ten days later and agreed to

the Samuel Commission's proposed wage reductions for the miners.

WHY go over this ground in connection with the amendment rejected at the dockers' conference on 27 April?

Allen Hutt, in his *Post-war History of the British Working Class*, wrote of this formula and its interpretation: 'Of this potentially disastrous schism few can have thought in the highly charged emotional atmosphere of the Memorial Hall that Saturday afternoon.' Quite so.

Disastrous

On 27 April 1996, it was necessary to recognise that to hand over the conduct of the dockers' dispute to the official union leadership was 'potentially disastrous'.

It is necessary, as has been done, to fight to win all possible resources and support from the TGWU, and all other unions, but at the same time to build on the independent leadership of the fight built up by the dockers themselves.

To those who object with formally correct statements about the necessity to fight against the trade union bureaucracy, the answer is not difficult.

The question is to build the real force in the working class that can defeat the bureaucracy not merely to have a sect that knows how to condemn it — and that is what is being done.

Hitler and the new Indian government

Comment by
DANIEL ROBERTSON

A CURRENT Indian political joke says: 'You may not fool all the people all the time, but do it once and make merry for the next five years.' But the time for merry making by India's politicians is clearly over after an election that has totally transformed the composition of the Lok Sabha (parliament).

After much manoeuvring the extreme-nationalist party, the BJP, has emerged as the new government — for now — of India.

The final results gave them and their extreme-right allies the single largest block of seats at 35 per cent, with Congress and allies on just over 25 per cent, the centrist-left-regionalist NF-LF just over 20 per cent and various other mainly regional parties just under 20 per cent.

None of India's parties can now claim to be truly national in the way that the old Congress Party was. Voting followed strong regional trends.

The defeat of Congress represented a backlash by India's increasingly organised lower castes who resent being the victims of recent market reforms.

These reforms have revitalised India's economy — but it is the poor who have paid the price. But will these political changes mean a turning away from an IMF/big business economic agenda?

Big business is moving in quickly to ensure that whatever government finally emerges reflects their agenda of 'liberalisation'.

The BJP is an openly Hindu nationalist party that seeks to scapegoat other religions, particularly Muslims, for India's problems. They will remove legislation protecting the rights of India's 120-million religious minority.

Their agenda, as the *New York Times* has recently pointed out,

owes much to Hitler. They claim that while promoting free-market policies, they will protect Indian capital from foreign competition.

They thus clearly reflect an element in India's capitalist class that wishes to avoid globalisation.

Similar big business groups stand behind right-wing demagogues like Goldsmith in Britain who oppose full exposure to the political and economic institutions of the European Union.

A clear split is emerging internationally between capitalist factions attempting to pursue different solutions to their growing problems.

THE BJP's first budget is expected to be populist with tax cuts, and concessions for their middle class, rural electoral base.

They also intend to develop nuclear weapons and pursue India's territorial claims against neighbouring countries. This is likely to wreck the forthcoming international nuclear test ban treaty negotiations.

Other policies include a national identity card for all Indians, a drive against corruption and strengthening of states' rights.

The BJP government has been welcomed by the US authorities, who no doubt remember its leader's pro-US stance when foreign minister in a previous coalition.

THE NF-LF is a coalition based on the centrist Janata Dal, CPI (Communist Party of India), CPIM (Communist Party of India Marxist), RSP (Revolutionary Socialist Party), and the regional AIFB and JMM.

They missed their first bid for power when Jyoti Basu — the elderly leader of the CPIM and chief minister of West Bengal — declined to lead a movement to form a government based on the NF-LF and other regional groups and tacit support from Congress

despite being offered the opportunity by India's president.

This has resulted in fierce criticism from the more militant rank-and-file, and the CPIM's allies in the LF who see this as a major lost opportunity. The CPIM has a strong position of avoiding alliances with Congress — the reason it split originally from the CPI.

This may go down in Indian history as a classical sectarian mistake that opened the door to fascism. The comparison with the sectarian errors of Stalinism in failing to prevent Hitler's rise has already been made.

The NF-LF claim that they wish to 'save India from a communal and corrupt regime and want to give the people of this country a secular and good regime'.

While growing corruption was certainly an issue in the fall of Congress this bland statement is totally lacking in any commitment to socialist policies.

Centrists

This coalition of centrists, socialists and Stalinists hopes to build on the reputation that Indian regional Stalinist-based governments have for efficiency and lack of corruption.

Once this reputation included good welfare and rights provisions, but India's Stalinists have joined the ranks of the reformed 'post-Communists' and are now committed to the market, that is, attacks on the poor.

INDIA's stock markets responded positively to the news of a BJP government, unlike their response when a NF-LF government seemed a possibility. They will no doubt work hard to reassure big business if they do succeed in replacing the BJP.

Apart from the BJP, regionalist parties emerged as major winners as the victims of market reforms look to politicians offering supposed local solutions.

Market reforms everywhere

promote popular moods favouring nationalism and regionalism.

The most extreme example is perhaps ex-Yugoslavia where the old bureaucracy, scenting chances for greater loot, but also political dangers, has artificially stirred up religious and national differences with bloody results.

The growth of nationalism will be a major threat to working people as capitalism's drive to deregulation destroys welfare systems and living standards everywhere.

Demagogues, like the BJP, will step forward with simplistic but deadly solutions that will be paid for with the blood of innocent people.

Regionalist groups will reflect the inevitable centrifugal force that will threaten the survival of India if the feared BJP holocaust against minorities emerges.

Some of the smaller extreme right groups allied with the BJP will try to drive it towards early confrontation as the price of their support.

THE new BJP regime looks to be increasingly unstable as other groups, particularly the NF-LF, move to topple it. The NF-LF will probably co-operate with Congress in a vote of no-confidence on 31 May that could topple the new government.

A CPI- (Communist Party of India) or Congress-led government could then emerge based on a broad alliance of anti-BJP forces.

However some observers are claiming that the BJP would not have formed a government without secret promises of support, perhaps from rightist sections of Congress that oppose a NF-LF-led government. A coalition based on Congress and the NF, without the leftist LF, is another possibility.

The wilder elements around the BJP say they will retaliate with violence if the BJP is toppled. India looks set for a stormy time ahead.

German unions act against cuts

BY BOB ARCHER

GERMAN trade unions are mobilising a big campaign against plans to cut £22 billion a year from government spending. The main blows fall on pensions, the health service and sick pay, while unemployment and child benefits will be frozen.

Property taxes will be cut to assist employers, while public service workers face a wage freeze.

Union leaders are enraged that Chancellor Kohl failed to listen to their advice even after they offered wage restraint and increased flexibility of labour in order to retain the high level of collaboration between the government, the employers and the unions.

Protests were staged in many German cities on Friday 10 May. There were spontaneous strikes and demonstrations of several tens of thousands in north-west and northern Germany.

The public service union OeTV was well to the fore in the actions. Dustmen and other municipal workers stopped work in some of the first political strikes seen in Germany for many years.

The following week thousands of postworkers went on strike.

National wage negotiations for the 3.2 million OeTV members are under way with the employers' side opposing any increase in labour costs and the union looking for a 4.5 per cent overall rise.

Meanwhile liberal and conservative MPs have agreed to support the government's proposals. The liberals insist that cuts in sick pay should be inflicted on established civil servants as well as other public employees.

While many right-wing commentators call for even more decisive action to break up the 'social market economy' and give more free play to 'market forces', the implications of the cuts are jangling along the nerve-fibres of the complex German state.

The 12 regional (Länder) governments, for example, will have to bear half the cuts while losing income from property taxes and facing other difficulties when the central government cuts the 'solidarity subsidy' it has paid to eastern Germany.

The Social Democratic Party is prominent in most of the regional governments, often in coalition with liberals and Greens.

Their predicament is typified above all by the city government in Berlin, where the minority Social Democrats have helped the

What will they think of next?

Bronwen Handyside reports

Two nations

What will they think of next?

IF YOU were thinking about reincluding beef in your diet, let me give you a piece of advice — MOOOO!

The latest news on cattle feed is that the government's new 'Environment Agency' proposes to add contaminated waste to it.

The agency will publish a report in the summer advising that calcium oxide dust collected in cement kiln chimneys 'could be used in agriculture', including sheep and cattle feed.

The Environment Agency notes in the very same document: 'This dust tends to concentrate trace impurities in fuel and raw materials such as certain volatile metals and dioxins. Calcium oxide is a proscribed substance and its release to land should be prevented or minimised.'

Still, I suppose it's not as bad as the Swiss animal feed company recently banned from including human placentas in its product — along with the bodies of pets salvaged from veterinary surgeries.

Makes you look at Sweeney Todd's additions to his meat pies in a new and more favourable light.

Legal remedies

THE family of a 44-year-old woman who died of Creutzfeld-Jacob disease wants to sue the British government for causing her death. They are convinced she acquired the disease from eating BSE-infected beef.

Her three children and husband say that ministers and government officials lied to the public over a period of years, insisting that British beef was safe to eat.

Ilja Andrews says of her mother: 'At no time was she mad. She always remembered who we were, but she lost control of her body, and all her dignity had gone.'

Just can't get enough

ILJA ANDREWS and the rest of her family have applied for legal aid to take out their case against the British government — I hope they prove as successful in getting it as young Dominic Trusted, a wealthy old Etonian, who took out a case alleging that he should have got more than the £1.5m he received after his millionaire great uncle's death.

Trusted's great uncle died before he finalised a new will, and left his great nephew nothing. A £1.5m trust fund was set up by the major beneficiaries — who were under no obligation to do so.

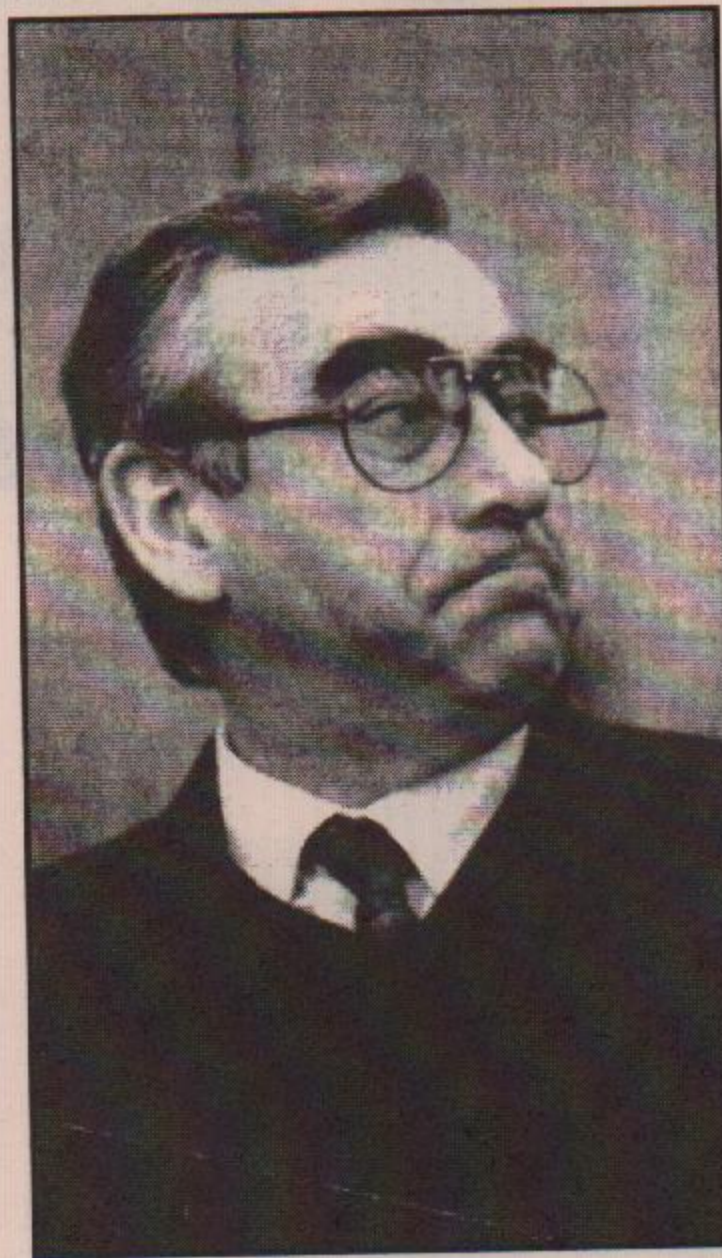
The 22-year-old sued his great uncle's lawyers, saying they should have made sure the old man wrote the new will before he died.

The case was thrown out last week — the judge remarking that Trusted's case was 'without substance or merit' — and the British taxpayer is now dumped with a £250,000 legal aid bill.

The ease with which this greedy public school boy was granted legal aid contrasts with the enormous difficulty faced by those on benefits who want to make injury claims.

Smokers' charter

AMID all the bad news about environmental pollution and contamination of foodstuffs



Finance Minister Theo Waigel (left) and SPD leader Oskar Lafontaine

ruling conservatives to inflict far-reaching cuts in personnel and services.

Desperate to save through cuts in the heavy tangle of administrative personnel and departments, politicians proposed to fuse the Berlin government with the surrounding Brandenburg region. Brandenburg voters rejected the plan in a recent referendum.

Now the central finance minister Theo Waigel is proposing to change the law, and if necessary the German constitution, to enable regional assemblies to force through such fusions without a referendum.

Heide Simonis, Social Democratic premier of Schleswig-Holstein, was subjected to scorching criticism by the legal accounts watchdog for allowing personnel costs to rise. The number of regional government employees has risen while the region's debts have gone up to DM26bn.

Catastrophe

The president of the regional Court of Accounts said in his report for 1996 that: 'Measures the regional government has taken are so far insufficient to avert a financial catastrophe in Schleswig-Holstein. We are tobogganing towards one if things go on as they are.'

He said that despite warnings there was still no sign of lasting

savings or structural improvements in the budget.

The Social Democratic leaders are impaled on the sharp point of the fiscal crisis of the German state, and they are wriggling like worms.

Mrs Simonis, for example, has rejected the criticism, saying that the high cost of German reunification and the poor economic situation were to blame.

But at the same time she has spearheaded plans to save money by removing the legal status of many civil servants.

The first reaction of many regional SPD leaders to the cuts was extremely interesting.

Gerhard Schröder (SPD, Lower Saxony) joined with Kurt Biedenkopf (conservative, Saxony) to say that 'there is no long-term hope of new jobs in any industrial country' and expressed concerns about the state's ability to finance old-age pensions.

In amongst sage advice about better targetting of job-creation grants, the regional premiers point out that it is no longer realistic to base the whole range of social benefits on state deductions from wages, partly because the proportion of employed workers to unemployed workers will be so low.

Instead, they propose that workers should be 'given better facilities to care for themselves.'

Since a large number of work-

ers are already unemployed and they will be joined by others, it is difficult to see how such facilities can be extended to them. What the premiers are proposing is simply that the state should stop paying for many benefits and services. Workers can go and rot as far as they are concerned.

Nevertheless Oskar Lafontaine, national leader of the SPD, expressed support for the scheme. Like Tony Blair in Britain, Lafontaine and Schröder are really talking about the death of the German equivalent of the welfare state, the 'social market economy'.

German workers will have no alternative but to follow the example of the French trade unionists who burst into action in December to oppose government cuts.

The German working class may be slower to come into action than their French sisters and brothers, but their movement will be all the more thorough and determined.

Because of the great regard for the benefits of the 'social market economy' which has been fostered among all German workers, it is possible for a campaign against the cuts to mobilise the whole working class in both public and private sectors.

Such a powerful movement would be a tremendous factor in re-establishing the worldwide organisation of the working class.

Crime rate up

A 10 PER CENT increase was seen in reported crime last year in Germany, taking the total to 6.7 million.

The most frequent crimes were theft, followed by fraud and damage to property. Breaches of immigration and asylum laws were reported in about 210,000 instances. Only 2.6 million crimes were reported in 1972.

Authorities are worried about juvenile crime statistics and about an upward trend in organised crime.

Interior minister Manfred Kanther reported: 'More violence, more use of firearms, more house-breaking, more drug abuse, more child and juvenile criminals.'

No doubt the crime statistics will continue to rise in proportion to the unemployment figures and cuts in welfare spending.

Bolivian workers strike out against privatisation frenzy

THERE is a 'gold rush' fever in Bolivia which has attracted over 35 mining multinationals, a fever matched by the selling off or attempted selling off of state-controlled industries.

A third fever has arisen of teachers, miners, public sector workers and peasants who have all clashed with the government in opposition to privatisation. It is the largest movement for years.

The main battles have been over the capitalisation of state-owned companies, which means selling off 50 per cent to private business.

The government has already sold off the telephones and is attempting to sell the railways (ENFE) and to privatise pensions. But the main fight is against the capitalisation of YPFB, the state oil company, which is being resisted by oil workers.

Even the powerful mining multinationals have been held back. Comibol, the state-owned mining company, used to produce two-thirds of all Bolivian mineral production but last year it produced under 7 per cent.

However capitalisation of Comibol's tin and antimony smelters at Vinto 'has suffered considerable delay. Much of this responds to resistance by workers in the Huanuni and Colquiri mines' (*Financial Times*, 22 April) — even though there are only 970 miners between the two mines.

On 28 March, the COB union federation held a march that was one of the most important in recent times. On 2 April, transport workers organised strikes and marches all over Bolivia that were massively supported.

In La Paz there was a complete stoppage. A march to the offices of ENFE ended with windows smashed and the contents of managers' offices burnt. In the centre of La Paz the windows of the Chilean airline were stoned. On 4 April, a general strike was organised against privatisation and for increased wages.

Teachers have been on a national strike for a more than a month. The peasants blockaded the roads on 15 April. Nearly all universities have struck, as have

the workers in social security. There have been almost daily demonstrations and strike action on at least one or two days every week. For some time the marches have demanded the end of the government.

A bourgeois group, CONDEPA (conscience of the country), led by the head of the radio and television service, on 25 March organised a march of some thousands of marchers against the capitalisation of YPFB.

Mistake

The president of the Supreme Court (a member of the ADN — party of the 1970s military dictator General Hugo Banzer Suarez) said a mistake had been made selling off the railway company to a Chilean business.

However that did not prevent the jailing of Dr Morales Devila, president of the Committee for the Defence Of National Assets, for more than 30 days for calling President Sanchez de Lozada a traitor to the country.

The significance of this con-

flict is erosion of confidence in the government and a crisis for the regime.

Bolivia is one of poorest countries in Latin America. All the unrest comes at a time when there is a 'gold-led recovery' (*Financial Times*, 22 April) with zinc and even tin prices and exports reviving. But most of the new found wealth is controlled by the multinationals. This is yet another example of the privatisation plans and economic crises which are shaking Latin America and provoking political crisis and fierce resistance from the working class and peasantry.

■ Much of the material for this article came from the MST (Socialist Workers Movement) in Bolivia and was published first in *Socialist Voice*, magazine of the International Socialist League, British section of the International Workers League/Fourth International (LIT/CI). *Socialist Voice* can be obtained for £1, including postage, from ISL, PO Box 9, Eccles SO, Manchester M60 7FX.

comes a little ray of sunshine from 'The European Working Group on Environmental Tobacco Smoke and Lung Cancer', who have published a study which says that passive smoking is not a lung-cancer risk.

The six scientists who did the research insist that the results are completely independent and in no way reflect the fact that the study was funded by Philip Morris Europe, British American Tobacco and Rothmans International. Other scientists without funding from these sources have come to different conclusions.

One of the scientists involved in the 'Working Group' said that if the research had gone against ciggies they would still have published. I hope we can look forward to the cigarette companies coming 'clean' on all the unpublished research that is locked away in their vaults.

New church crisis

DON'T you just love the Anglican church? After ructions over women priests, and that little hiccup over the loss of some tens of millions of pounds from church funds, they now have their laced edged surplines in a twist over homosexual priests.

Lord Runcie, former Archbishop of Canterbury, finally uttered what everybody within the church had known for decades but preferred not to mention — that priests known to be homosexual were being ordained.

Bishops have salvaged their consciences by interpreting the word 'known' in an extremely literal sense — that you would have to be in the bedroom to have conclusive proof.

Unfortunately the less liberal wing of the church is insisting that the words of the Bible forbidding such shenanigans are direct instructions from God and must be obeyed.

I look forward to the next development.

Britain's finest

AND how interesting to read about how women describe their experiences in that other Great British institution, the police force.

Last week the *Guardian* reported that a long-serving policewoman cried as she told an industrial tribunal about a 'culture of sexual harassment' created by male colleagues.

Sergeant Jane McGill's job involves assisting other women in the force. She has been indecently assaulted four times by Yorkshire police officers, and has helped 30 other women who have come to her with problems of sexual harassment.

Mrs McGill had been refused promotion because she was a woman.

And it's not just the lad's uniforms that are blue! McGill has 'experienced inappropriate and sexist language with such frequency that it would be difficult to put a number to it.'

McGill was giving evidence in the case of PC Karen Wade, who said that her career had been ruined by endless sexual taunts and abuse.

'It is difficult to be a woman in the police service,' said McGill. 'What I have experienced is low level compared to the experience of other women.'

The police officers named by Wade said that nothing of any untoward nature ever took place, and that they could not imagine why she was making such accusations. Wade lost her case.

If you have any material for this column, please send it to me at *Workers Press*, PO Box 735, London SW8 1YB.

Investigate Tories' Serb connection!

WHAT is the whole truth about links between the Tory government, Serb business interests, and indicted mass-murderer Radovan Karadzic?

A front-page report in last week's *Sunday Times* alleged Serb businessmen with links to Karadzic had given £100,000 to Tory party funds between 1992 and 1994, while war and 'ethnic cleansing' were raging in Bosnia, and British troops were supposedly there as 'peace-keepers'.

The paper said Tory prospective candidate John Kennedy introduced a British-based 'Yugoslav' entrepreneur to then Tory chairman Jeremy Hanley at a Mayfair club in December 1994, following which a £50,000 donation was made.

Hanley, now a Foreign Office minister, has admitted to the meeting, but wouldn't comment — 'on principle' — about the money.

Tory chair Brian Mawhinney said he would be speaking to Kennedy — also known as Jovan Gvozdenovic, and Tory candidate for Halesowen and Rowley Regis.

As for the generous donor, top-people's lawyer Peter Carter Ruck said their client — 'a British citizen of Yugoslav birth... director of a number of British limited companies... is outraged by any suggestion that he is linked in any way to Radovan Karadzic or the Bosnian Serbs.'

We say there should be a full investigation of the 'Serb connection', and it shouldn't be restricted to Kennedy, nor to Karadzic.

The Chetnik leader is a war criminal, but it was the Milosevic regime in Serbia which started the war, and with UN connivance, kept the arms flowing, and it was Britain's former foreign secretary, Douglas Hurd, who promised Milosevic a chunk of Bosnia.

Bombs

While leading Tories shook their heads about 'age-old Balkan feuds', Serb forces used British-supplied cluster bombs and sniper rifles. But Douglas Hurd said lifting the arms embargo on Bosnia would only create a 'level killing-field'.

When Bosnia and Herzegovina troops tried to break the siege of suffering Sarajevo, British and French commanders threatened them with air strikes.

Late in 1994 sanctions were relaxed against Serbia, and on Lord Owen's instructions, a blind

eye was turned while supplies were reaching Serb forces in Krajina. When these Chetniks launched missiles against Bihac, the British UN command ruled intervention out.

US intelligence took to eavesdropping General Sir Michael Rose's communications because they didn't trust the British commander.

Mortars

A year ago today, on the evening of 25 May, Yugoslav Youth Day, Chetnik mortars targeted a cafe area in the mixed city of Tuzla, blowing more than 70 youngsters to pieces.

'Tonight, parents of Tuzla are collecting parts of their children's bodies on the streets,' said mayor Selim Beslagic in a message to the UN Security Council.

BBC Radio 4's *Today* programme had a spokesperson from the Serb Information Centre in London, justifying the massacre.

The 'Serb connection' probably goes back a long way. British interests were heavily involved in pre-war Yugoslavia.

When the Serb royal family fled in 1940, establishing an exile government in London, they didn't come unconnected, or with empty pockets.

Any investigation now might begin by focussing on several individuals.

Former *Observer* journalist **Nora Beloff** worked for Foreign Office intelligence during World War II. Her book, *Tito's Flawed Legacy* argues Britain should have stuck with the Chetniks. As well as letters to the press supporting Serbia, her name was on a memorandum circulated by the Serb Information Centre proposing efforts to discredit the international war crimes tribunal.

Millionaire property dealer **David Hart**, Margaret Thatcher's 'hidden hand' during the miners' strike, organising strikebreakers

from his suite at Claridges, expressed pro-Serb nationalist views in a *Spectator* article at the start of the war. Engaged by **Malcolm Rifkind** as an adviser at the Ministry of Defence (MoD), Hart has remained there with **Michael Portillo**, a personal friend.

John Kennedy, a.k.a. Gvozdenovic, who claims family connections to the Montenegrin royal family, worked for PR lobby firm **Iain Greer Associates**, making links with Serb industrialists, and as personal secretary to

Prince Michael of Kent, before becoming research assistant to **Henry Bellingham MP**, Malcolm Rifkind's parliamentary private secretary at the MoD.

Bellingham, former chairman of the Conservative Council on Eastern Europe, has followed Rifkind to the Foreign Office.

One of Kennedy's longstanding friends, **Ted Attwell**, 'a well-known Essex Tory fixer', asked about Bosnia, said: 'I can't understand why we are supporting Muslims over Christians.' (*Guar-*

dian, 21 May). Another person for whom Kennedy worked was **Lord Sudely**, now president of the Monday Club.

It was one of this right-wing Tory outfit's leading lights, **Sir Alfred Sherman**, who told a Commons meeting on 'Peace in the Balkans' last year: 'I am proud to have acted as an adviser to Radovan Karadzic.'

There is also a (presumably unpaid) Chetnik lobby on the 'Left', such as those who organised that Commons meet-

ing, and the groups that side with Serb nationalism from stupidity rather than cupidity. Maybe they should go across to Tory Central Office and form an orderly queue to demand their cut!

■ **The Bosnian Solidarity Campaign in London, which is investigating British government complicity in war crimes and 'ethnic cleansing', said revelations about Serb funding vindicated the work they are engaged in.**

Call for resistance to Tudjman

CROATIA'S association of autonomous trade unions has accused President Franjo Tudjman's government of using methods that are incompatible with a democratic society.

The unions denounced attacks on local government and independent media as well as on trade union rights. The Brussels-based International Confederation of Free Trade Unions has warned Tudjman against legislation allowing the state to seize union assets.

The government has given itself powers to prosecute any paper which offends a minister's 'dignity'.

Zagreb's acting state prosecutor has begun action against Viktor Ivancic and Marino Culic, of the satirical journal *Feral Tribune*, on charges of slander and insult against the president.

The Croatian parliament's president, Vlatko Pavletic, has several times cautioned opposition representatives Vladimir Primorac and Bozo Kovacevic (HSLS), Snjezana Biga Friganovic (SDP), Dina Debeljuha (IDS) and others who have protested against the police harassment of *Feral* journalists, the charges against the paper, etc.

What has upset Tudjman —

besides the *Tribune's* barbed jibes at corruption and interference with local government — was its attacks on his plans to 'reconstruct' the World War II concentration camp at Jasenovac, making it no longer a memorial to victims of fascism, but for 'all war victims' — including the fascist Ustashe, who ran the camp.

Some 85,000 people were

slaughtered at Jasenovac — Serbs, Jews and Gypsies for their religion or 'race', and Croats and Bosniaks for resistance to fascism.

Tudjman has tried to rewrite history, exonerating the Ustashe and claiming Hitler only killed 900,000 Jews all told, not 6 million. He has hinted at bringing back the remains of the wartime

'Poglavnik' (fuhrer), Ante Pavelik, for reburial.

Opponents say he is trying to alter the past to determine the present and future.

The Croatian Journalists' Society — listing the accusations against *Feral Tribune* and *Nacional*, the financial attacks on *Novi List*, *La Voce del Popolo*, and *Glas Istre*, the closure of *Panorama* and the use of tame government media to smear rights activist Ivan Cicak as a 'communist police spy' — says this is just the 'visible tip of the iceberg'.

The public had seen the government's 'extreme and nervous face', the society said. Declaring their duty and right under the constitution to inform the public of everything in its interest, the journalists urged the public to support resistance to state repression.

Many people connect and contrast the state's attacks on the media with its indulgence of right-wing thuggery.

Concussion

Slobodan Budak, a lawyer respected for having refused to prosecute dissidents when he was a state prosecutor in the 1970s, was recently taken to hospital with severe concussion after an attack at Zagreb's Intercontinental hotel, during a diplomatic reception. Budak has been president of Croatia's Helsinki human rights committee and of the Zagreb legal centre. His assailants, Mladen Naletilic Tuta and Jozo Smuch, have only been charged with 'misdemeanor'.

During the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Tuta headed a 'convicts battalion' which killed prominent Croat opponents, such as General Kraljevic, and committed infamous atrocities against Muslim civilians. Enriching himself from extortion and racketeering, he is a top Croatia mafia boss opposing reunification in Mostar. Attacking Slobodan Budak he told him 'you have been marked and will get what you deserve'.

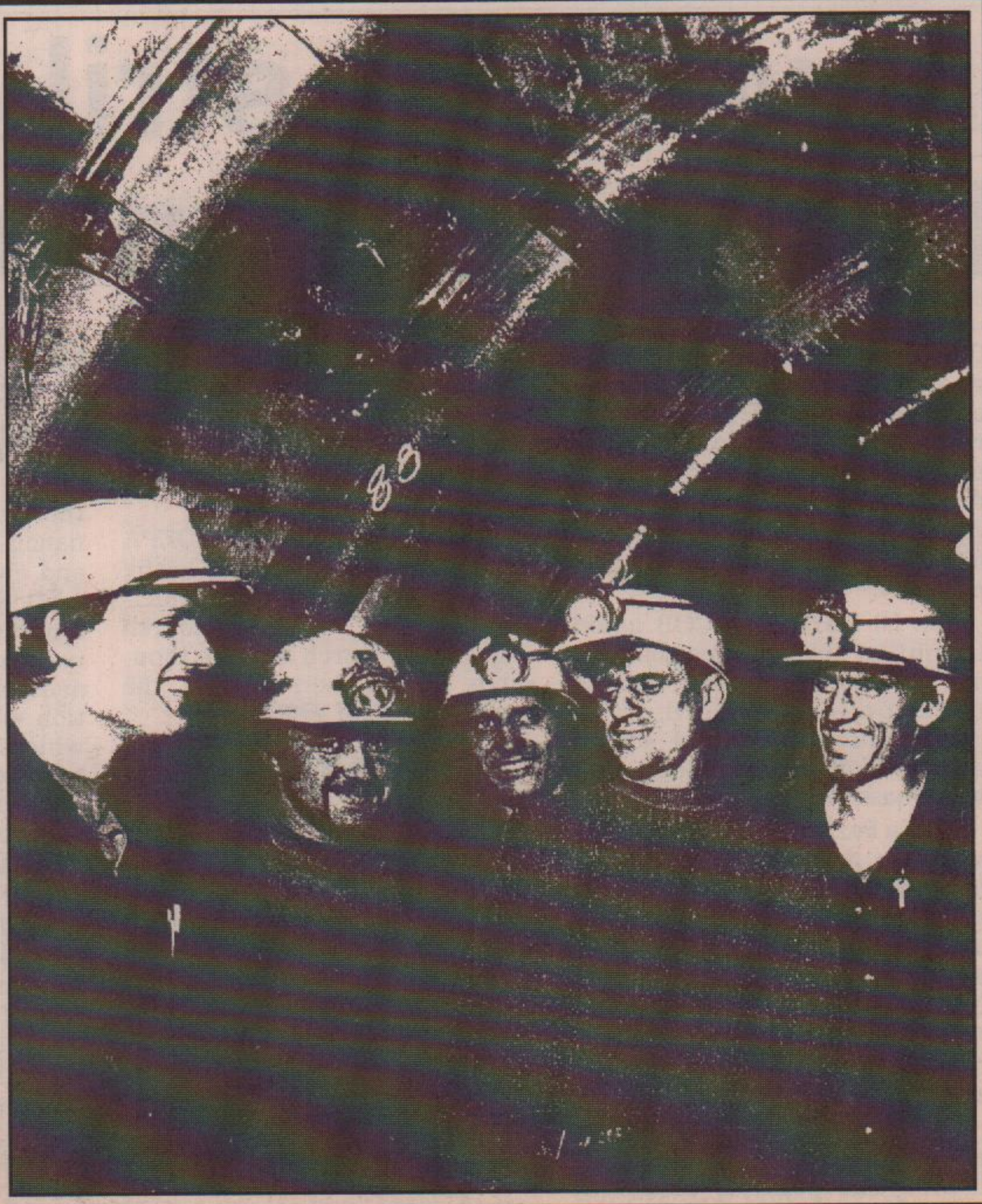
Jozo Smuch, Tuta's bodyguard, has been linked with crime against Serb, Croat and Bosnian civilians, including massacre near Pacrac and in Lika, and the murder of the Zec family near Zagreb. It is alleged that he struck the blows to Budak's head which caused concussion.

Thugs like these know they're not likely to get what they deserve in Tudjman's Croatia, not just because of services rendered but because the regime still has work for them. Budak has warned Croatia is 'marching towards dictatorship'.

The Bosnian miners' rebellion of 1920 and our struggle for unity

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