

LABOUR PLANS TO DRIVE YOUTH OFF

The last Straw!

STREETS

A LABOUR government will give the police sweeping new powers to drive children and young people off the street after nine o'clock.

BY THE EDITOR

Not content with forcing the homeless and squeegees off the streets, shadow home secretary Jack Straw has now turned his sinister attentions to teenagers and children.

Straw wants to see all nine- and ten-year-olds off the streets by 9pm. Police would be empowered to take children home and if their parents persisted in allowing them out after the set hour they would be subject to prosecution.

This is yet another carbon-copy policy from the US where 'teen curfews' have been introduced into many cities. Only days before Straw's announcement President Bill Clinton, as part of his cynical bid for re-election, praised curfews as a means of combating 'youth violence'.

US civil rights activists warned that Clinton's support for curfews for under 17s in New Orleans could drive all teenagers off the streets, whether they were a threat or whether they had committed any crime.

Young children today, but who next tomorrow?

Straw's reactionary plans have nothing to do with crime. Last week criminologists poured scorn on the idea that keeping nine- and ten-year-olds indoors after nine would have any impact on crime figures.

No: Straw wants to convince the ruling class that they, and not the Tories, are the real party of 'law and order'.

The Labour leader says there have been 'a lot of complaints' from constituencies about youngsters on the

streets. Naturally Straw provides not a shred of evidence for his outrageous claim.

In fact his announcement is part of the plan to whip up the most reactionary sentiments in the middle class and turn these forces against working-class children and teenagers.

Straw's plan is also an expression of the depth of the social crisis now ravaging millions of lives in Britain.

These acute problems — homelessness, unemployment, falling living standards for millions, lack of any proper jobs for the young — are now being deliberately hidden behind Straw's slogan of the 'war against crime'.

Corralled

Teenagers, with no money in their pockets, with no jobs to go to, denied access to any recreational facilities, are to be corralled by the police and driven back indoors.

It becomes clearer every day that the next Labour government will be a brutal dictatorial government aimed at breaking all working-class resistance to its pro-capitalist policies.

The real danger on Britain's streets are not young people but individuals like Straw. It is these dangerous individuals who must be cleared out of the way.

There must be the widest possible campaign in the labour movement as well as among civil rights campaigners against the latest ominous moves by Straw and company.

International workers' conference



The International Trade Union Solidarity Campaign/Africa Liberation Support Campaign international workers' conference is this weekend (8-9 June). Over 20 countries will be represented by delegates. Be there! (See editorial on page 2.)

Photo of ITUSC banner on last year's London May Day: Marg Nicol

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

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

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

DOCKERS CHARTER LATEST ISSUE OUT NOW!

Available from the Liverpool Docks Shop Stewards' Committee, c/o 19 Scorton Street, Liverpool L6 4AS. Money to 'Merseyside Dockers Shop Stewards' Appeal'. Price 50p (20p unwaged). Add postage. Also send donations. Bulk orders tel: 0151-207 3388.

International Trade Unionist Bulletin: Just out!

- Rebuild workers' internationalism
 - Liverpool dockers help unionise Mexican transport workers in USA
 - Reports on Germany, Mexico and China
- All for only 50p from ITUSC, PO Box 18, Epsom KT18 7YB, Britain

Workers Press

A warm welcome to ITUSC conference

WORKERS PRESS extends the warmest welcome to all delegates and visitors to this weekend's international trade union conference called by the International Trade Union Solidarity Campaign.

The ITUSC is a body organised around three principles:

- the independence of the trade unions from the state;
- the fight for internal democracy within the trade unions; and,
- the need of the trade union movement to organise on an international scale.

* * * * *

THE conference meets when the trade union movement is at a historical cross roads. The present trade union movement is in deep crisis and rebuilding this movement on an international scale is one of the most urgent tasks facing the working class.

■ In many countries trade unions are illegal and membership of a union invites persecution, jail, and even death.

■ Even where trade unions are legal bodies they are often led by people who seek to undermine their fighting capacity by trying to tie them to the direct needs of the capitalist state. In Britain, the birthplace of trade unionism, the Labour Party leaders, and many trade union leaders, today support the retention of anti-union laws for use against the working class.

■ In the advanced countries, under the impact of capitalist decay, union membership is in decline and millions of the most exploited workers — young workers and women especially — are quite outside the trade union movement.

Such workers are at the direct mercy of the employers — stripped of all protection against the brutal drive of capital to step up the rate of exploitation. Meanwhile the growing ranks of the unemployed, older workers and sick workers, are all subject to the unbridled dictatorship of capital, with no immediate means of defence.

* * * * *

THE fact that these attacks against trade unions now occur in country after country indicates that they arise not from policy options by employers or governments but from the needs of capitalism itself. The fact is that capitalism can no longer live with a trade union movement that represents even the most basic interests of the working class.

So deep is the crisis of capitalism that the ruling class must now destroy every defence mechanism that the workers have built up against its rule and exploitation.

At the same time the trade unions constitute the most basic, elementary organisation of the working class against the power of capital. The unions were originally built to overcome the divisions of the working class as it was forced to sell its ability to work against the unified power of capital. As such the unions remain indispensable in the fight against capitalist exploitation which is today organised not on a national but an international scale.

That is why the rebuilding of an effective trade union movement is now one of the crucial questions facing the working class. But this rebuilt movement, controlled by its members, will have to embrace far wider and bolder aims than those to which the present leaders wish to confine the movement.

It must become a real focus of every struggle of the oppressed, whether of those in the unions or not, against the oppressive power of capital. In short it must aim to unite the whole of the working class against the capitalist class. In so doing it must become a truly international movement, directed against the international power of capital.

If this weekend's conference begins to discuss these sort of issues it will have marked an important step for the working class and the rebuilding of the trade union movement.

Letters

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

Letters
longer than
500 words
WILL be cut

Women and Workers Press

As a reader who has enjoyed Workers' Press for two year, I wish to make a suggestion.

I have been pleased to see women writing in the pages of the paper and articles (albeit not regularly) which deal specifically with the struggles of women workers.

It strikes me, however, that as women's struggles are central to the workers' movement as a whole, the paper might provide more regular space to women's demands.

What are women fighting for? Well, the same rights as men really, with emphasis on more rights given the inequality of work under capitalism.

Women demand equal pay for equal work, equal access to all jobs without discrimination,

equal rights to progress through the ranks, free and accessible day-care, female/male parity in parental leave, universal access to abortion, equal employer and state benefits for sick leave and pensions.

Also, voluntary retirement on full-pay at 55, a 35-hour working week without loss of pay for benefits, abolition of compulsory overtime and night work, equal rights for refugee and immigrant women, state pay and benefits for

caregiving, affordable and livable accommodation, equitable and accessible divorce rights and the decriminalisation of prostitution.

These aren't new demands, but it is worth repeating in these difficult times that the struggle of women workers is the struggle of all workers. May your paper remain an instrument in the class struggle.

Ellen L. Ramsay
Aberystwyth, Wales

Obituary

Nan (MacLean) and Ellice Milton (1913-96)

NAN and Ellice Milton will be remembered with great fondness by all who knew them. Nan was a kind, caring, active person in her own right.

Nan's biography of her father, John MacLean, and her selection of his works, *In the Rapids of Revolution*, are now out print. Published in 1973 by a London-based unionist left group, they are the definitive works on John MacLean.

Earlier and subsequent biographies published by his unionist opponents all claimed or inferred that MacLean was a mental and political deviant for proposing Scottish independence.

Apart from Guy Aldred, an English anarchist who became an adopted Scot, and James D. Young, the Scottish labour historian, Nan became the main defender and protagonist of her father's memory.

As secretary of the John MacLean society, her correspondence was legendary among the academic left, non-British world. She was once a member of the Communist Party of Great Britain, an odd imperial title she

opined. She was a communist but never a Stalinist or Great Brit.

Her 'career' was short-lived in that direction, as was her 'career' as a Labour councillor, due to uncompromising socialist principles. She joined the Scottish National Party in her later years, though too old to be active, and was happy and unafraid to lend her name to the cause of independence.

She was also 'honorary and active president of the embryonic Scottish Republican Socialist Party — her favourite. She would freely avail herself, her archives and her wonderful sense of humour to lampoon the mighty poseurs of the Great British left and right.

Nan was admitted to St John's hospital, Livingston, suffering from shingles, where she prolonged her stay after falling off her zimmer and breaking her leg. She kept the hospital staff amused with her tirade against the anti-National Health brigade.

During her incarceration her loving soulmate, fellow republican socialist and husband Ellice Milton died in Blackfaulds Home

on 18 March. Ellice was a great active republican socialist and worked in the SNP.

Nan and Ellice lost their elder son through illness a few years ago. She is survived by a younger sister, her son Ellice and two grandsons and all who love her dearly.

Good friend, neighbour and SNP leader William Wolfe delivered her funeral oration along with Donald Anderson of the Scottish Republican Socialist Party.

Peter MacIntosh from the Falkirk and District Trades Council also paid a warm tribute and Scottish TUC leaders Campbell Christie and Bill Speirs sent warm greetings and sponsored a bus from Glasgow.

Nan, who spoke at the unveiling of her father's memorial cairn, was responsible for the inscription describing him as the Scottish link in the golden chain of world socialism. All Nan and Ellice taught will aye be that unbreakable link.

When will we see their likes again?

Domhnaill MacAindreas

Edinburgh Action Group For a new party for socialism

FOR some time a group has been meeting regularly in Edinburgh to discuss the crisis into which capitalism is plunging the poor, the working class and many professional people, in Britain and worldwide. We feel the time has come to broaden the discussion.

We come from different political backgrounds, and met in bodies such as anti-poll-tax groups, the Edinburgh Timex Workers' Support Group and Bosnian Workers Aid campaigns.

None of us believe that either a Labour government or a Scottish assembly will of themselves resolve the crisis.

What Blair does in government will be designed to appease the multinationals, and Britain's own parasitic financiers. That means making ordinary people work more for less, and breaking down further the right to organise independently and democratically, and to protest.

We are all disillusioned (often through experience) with left groups, however active and sincere they may be. New practical initiatives are required which empower people at their work and in their communities to have the confidence to deal with the problems THEY ALONE FULLY UNDERSTAND.

Some of us have joined in with the Scottish Socialist Alliance, and/or the 'New Party' initiative launched by the weekly paper Workers Press. All are significant indicators of the new situation we are in, and important parts of the discussion we want to promote.

But we need to act locally, as well as thinking globally. And we need new ideas as well as alliances and bodies dominated by traditional leaders — even the few courageous class fighters among them like miners' leader Arthur Scargill.

The Edinburgh postal workers are among those who, along with the Liverpool dockers, have recently shown the class-struggle road forward. Their experiences are vital to our discussions.

The trade unions must be thoroughly overhauled in line with the purposes of those — like the Calton Weavers (1787), the Tolpuddle Martyrs (1834) and the Glasgow Cotton Spinners (1837-38) — who first made sacrifices in the fight to establish them.

If you agree with the general tone of this statement, why not join our discussions now! Our meetings centre around particular struggles and campaigns, as well as more general political perspectives and ideas.

We want to see a new socialist party based — unlike existing parties — on real democracy and internationalism, established as soon as possible. We believe there is no other way forward against the barbarism with which the present set-up threatens humanity.

■ Write for details of meetings in Edinburgh, or to discuss setting up similar groups elsewhere as part of a network of 'new party' action groups, to:

Action Group, c/o 20b Chalmers Crescent, Edinburgh EH9 1TS. Include a phone number if possible.

Yorkshire Miners' Gala

Barnsley, Saturday 17 June

March 10.30am from Churchfields (near town hall) to town centre.

Demonstration rally 12noon in Civic Theatre, Eldon Street.

Chair: National Union of Mineworkers' vice-president **Frank Cave**.

Speakers: Barnsley Mayor, councillor **Clarrie Wroe** (to give civic welcome); Fire Brigades' Union general secretary **Ken Cameron**; and, **Ken Livingstone** MP.

Afternoon of traditional Gala activities — events and entertainment for everyone!

Workers Press — May/June lectures

MARXISM AND THE HISTORY OF THE BRITISH WORKING-CLASS MOVEMENT

Some lessons for today

By **Geoff Pilling**, Workers Press editorial board

Lucas Arms, Gray's Inn Road, London.

Thursday 20 June, 7.30pm.

Nearest tube King's Cross.

Here is your chance to come for the final lecture in Geoff Pilling's excellent series on Marxism and the history of the British Labour movement:

4. Frederick Engels and the foundations of the Second International
The origins of the Second Inter-

national, founded in 1889. The role of the struggle for mass trade unionism in its formation.

The entry of new forces into new politics in this period. Struggles in the East End of London. The part played by Marx's daughter, Eleanor, in the formation of the 'New Unions' and the International.

Wolfe Tone Society

James Connolly / Bobby Sands

Annual commemoration
Sunday 16 June,
1pm

Camden Irish Centre, 50-52
Camden Square,
London NW1

Mitchel McLaughlain (Sinn Fein), Tony Benn MP, Kurdish

representative, Indian Workers Association, Basque representative
Workshops, rally, video, social until late
Creche and food all day

Sinn Fein trapped

Hard man Straw

BY JOHN STEELE

DESPITE the increased vote for Sinn Fein, last week's elections in the north of Ireland have ensnared the nationalist working class deeper in British imperialism's attempts to find a new way of ruling — the purpose of the so-called 'peace process'.

Above all, the elections demonstrated once again that the more the Sinn Fein leadership ditches a principled defence of the Republican position, the more its options are limited.

Gerry Adams and other Sinn Fein leaders had condemned the elections and the proposed forum as a sop to Unionism, and an attempt at an internal, Six-County settlement.

They had threatened not to stand, and to call for a boycott. But inevitably, and hypocritically, they took their place on the Tories' 'approved party' list, making no protest about the exclusion of others, including the Irish Republican Socialist Party.

And they took part despite the Tories' rigid condition that, no matter how many votes they received, they would not be allowed to take part in the all-party negotiations on 10 June with representatives of all the

other parties elected to the forum unless the IRA called a ceasefire.

Now with 15.5 per cent of the vote and 17 seats, including four out of five in West Belfast, Adams has nowhere else to go but to increase pressure on the IRA for a ceasefire, because he has rejected any turn to mobilising the working class in pursuit of Irish unity.

Adams has already said that, if all other parties do likewise, he will accept the 'Mitchell Principles' — the conditions set out by former US senator George Mitchell to which all parties must affirm their 'total and absolute commitment' if they are to join the all-party talks. These include:

- Democratic and exclusively peaceful means of resolving political issues;
- The total disarmament of all paramilitary organisations;
- Agreement that such disarmament must be verifiable to the satisfaction of an independent commission;
- Agreement to abide by the terms of any agreement reached in all-party negotiations and to resort to democratic and exclusively peaceful methods in trying to alter any aspect of that outcome with which they may disagree.

Sinn Fein received the increased vote despite the IRA

bombing of Canary Wharf and Aldwych, and the killing of two civilians. It reflects the continuing hatred that large sections of the nationalist working class feel for British rule.

But as the Adams leadership is more and more integrated into a 'peace process' which cannot offer any hope of removing partition, but has grave dangers for the whole Irish working class, this support will take a more critical form.

This Forum, with its 110 members, is a caricature of democracy.

Caricature

It will be for a maximum of two years even though it has no legislative powers and will consist of 'talks about talks' — its purpose is described as 'to discuss issues relevant to promoting dialogue and understanding within Northern Ireland'.

As usual the two main Unionist parties collected the majority of the seats. Trimble's Ulster Unionists got a 24.7 per cent share of the votes and 30 seats, and Paisley's Democratic Unionists 18.8 per cent and 24 seats.

The other main nationalist party, John Hume's Social Democratic and Labour Party, won 21.4 per cent and 21 seats.

The electoral system was designed to ensure that the parties representing the loyalist paramilitaries would win seats.

It did this by having an additional regional list where the votes received by each party in all constituencies were totted up and the ten parties receiving the highest totals two extra seats.

This system enabled the Progressive Unionist Party, which is connected to the killer gangs of the UVF, and the Ulster Democratic Party, which is linked to the UDA, to have two delegates, with 3.47 per cent and 2.22 per cent respectively.

It also ensured that the Forum will have two members of the 'Labour' coalition which scraped into tenth place on the aggregate totals with 0.85 per cent of the votes.

Given the long years of betrayal by the trade union and labour leadership this party undoubtedly had an uphill battle to establish its proclaimed aim of an independent working-class movement.

But its dismal vote also reflects the fact that its refusal to condemn partition made it virtually indistinguishable from some of the Unionist parties with their populist 'working class' approach.

BY NICK LEE

JACK STRAW's latest proposal for solving crime and 'anti-social behaviour' — a 9pm curfew for the under-tens — is yet another example of Labour's headlong rush to adopt the most authoritarian policies possible in an effort to demonstrate to international capital that it is a worthy successor to the Tories in waging war on what is left of the Welfare State.

Straw and Blair have moved way to the right of the liberal reform lobbies. This was shown by the reaction to Straw from Labour's natural media allies, the 'left of centre' press.

For the *Observer*, Labour has veered so far to the right that it is in danger of 'crashing through the central reservation' (a motorway analogy). The *Guardian* described Straw's curfew proposal as 'a right-wing, law-and-order lurch too far' and a 'con-trick'.

The crime-control policy for the next Labour government is shaping up very clearly. The first part of Straw's proposals, unleashing a regime of heavy policing on squeegee merchants and street beggars was announced last September.

It was greeted with a somewhat more reserved apprehension by the liberal press than his curfew proposal of last week. But together they amount both to a very clear policy agenda and political philosophy.

In the starkest possible terms it is this:

The problems of unemployment and homelessness — particularly among young people in the inner cities and rotting housing estates of the older industrial towns — are no longer to be approached as 'social' in the old sense.

The Welfare State and what came to be known as 'social policy' aimed, whatever else it was about, to reduce poverty through income support, state education, public housing, health care, and social services which would help poor families to get back 'on the rails'.

Now poverty is *only* a problem if it leads to crime or what is coming to be termed 'disorder' — begging or unsolicited wind-screen washing or noisy kids on the streets at night.

The law-abiding poor can go and take a running jump. Meanwhile perhaps we can solve the crime problem without doing anything about poverty and homelessness.

Again, the older social democratic and liberal traditions of the Welfare State at least saw tackling poverty, rather than tougher policing as the main way to reduce crime.

Indeed traditional social democracy didn't really see the police as something you could have a policy about. They were just 'there' to enforce the law and catch villains.

Policy

But now policing is not just the main arm of policy. It is the policy. Forget about welfare, the only problems are crime problems and the only remedy is more police (closely followed by private security companies) on the streets to 'kick ass'.

Once they have driven the beggars and squeegee merchants out of the city centres and back into the arms of the drugs dealers and muggers who stalk the dilapidated and rat-infested housing estates of the poor then *the problem has been solved*.

Moralists may lament the passing of the old social democracy and Labour's adoption of the 'heartless' policy of Thatcherism. But what lies behind this heartlessness?

The simple fact that capitalism no longer needs the labour of an increasing section of the working class, the young and poor in particular. A few can work for £4 an hour and less in the new sweated labour industries, the rest can get lost.

Neither can capitalism afford a Welfare State to keep them in some sort of civilised existence.

Straw and Co. comfort themselves with the idea that they are speaking to the concerns not just of the middle classes, enraged by foam on their windscreen or being drained of 'spare change' as they walk up Oxford Street, but of Labour's 'natural supporters', stable law-abiding working-class families who are fed up to the back teeth with mugging, noisy neighbours, and drunken louts making it impossible to walk the streets after dark.

But Labour's natural supporters, and increasing sections of the middle class as well, are beginning to see their own sons and daughters, even after a college education, drift down into this very same cycle of poverty, crime and desperation.

And it is beginning to dawn on them that Straw and his cronies are every bit as determined as Michael Howard and Peter 'there is no poverty' Lilley to hold them responsible for the problem.

Sham liquidation to beat union

ONCE again workers in north London have had a victory for trade union rights taken away. Twenty mainly Turkish and Kurdish workers of Euroscene Ltd — a textile factory in Harringay which makes expensive jackets for the Top Man retail chain — won a week-long strike in April this year for trade union rights and improved working conditions.

Now they have been sacked following the liquidation of the company.

But although Euroscene is no

more, the company has not stopped production. It has just changed its name to Flexible Ltd and continued making the same garments with new non-union labour.

With this type of legal manoeuvre the bosses in the sweat-shop textile industries are able to keep the rotten conditions and insecure employment that helps produce huge profits.

This set back follows the development in the JJ Fast Food dispute, in Tottenham, where the workers won a significant vic-



The Euroscene picket line in April

tory for trade union rights and were then faced with the tribunal drawing up a contract of employment which made legal all the worst aspects of their employment conditions.

Needless to say in neither of these two disputes has the union involved, the Transport and Gen-

eral Workers' Union, made any move to win better conditions through the boycott of the company products.

These cases show the inadequacies of old-style trade unionism and syndicalism which limit struggles to rank-and-file actions.

WE MUST DEFEAT PRIVATISATION, CASUALISATION AND ANTI-UNION LAWS!

Dear Comrades, Brothers and Sisters,

EIGHT months ago 500 Liverpool dockers were sacked by Mersey Docks and Harbour Company for refusing to cross a picket line mounted by young dockers fighting against privatisation.

The sacked dockers have refused a £25,000 redundancy offer in order to defend the principle of the right to a permanent job.

They demand reinstatement. Their fight is not just for themselves and their families. It is for all of us and for future generations. They stand alongside the Hillingdon Hospital cleaners, who have stood out against the destruction of wages and conditions imposed by privatisation; and other workers in London, fighting government-backed attacks on working and trade union rights.

Banks, insurance companies, media, shops and other workers are all facing the imposition of individual contracts on a weekly and sometimes daily basis.

We are holding this conference to build unity and solidar-

Dockers' call to London trade unionists

Conference: Saturday 22 June 1996, 11am-5pm, International Students House, 229 Great Portland Street, London. £2 (£1 unwaged)

ity for the dockers' victory. A victory for the dockers will be a big step forward in the fight against casualisation everywhere else.

A no-union casual job contract offered by PDP Services to a worker to take a Liverpool dockers' job is typical of casualisation in most industries and services. The PDP contract pays £4 an hour, gives no sick pay, holiday pay or pension rights.

The worker has no guaranteed hours of work, and must work where and when the agency decides. PAYE is deducted on an emergency basis, meaning that the worker must make his/her own claim for rightful allowances.

A worker found on the job with a Walkman or mobile phone

is subject to disciplinary procedure. If the worker gets a job with any of the agency's client companies he/she must pay six months' salary to the agency!

Our 22 June conference will decide what actions we must take to implement the resolution carried at the Liverpool dockers 27 April national conference. This said:

- The TUC should call a one-day strike — or stay-away from work — in support of the dockers, and in opposition to anti-trade-union laws and must establish a hardship fund.
- The support group network, together with the Liverpool dockers shop stewards' committee to decide on national mass pickets and a national demonstration in London against pri-

vatation, casualisation and anti-trade-union laws.

- Support groups to organise picketing and leafletting of those firms which continue to ship their goods through Liverpool docks. Support Groups to continue action against employment agencies, Drake International and PDP Services, which supply scab labour to the Mersey Docks and Harbour Company.

VICTORY FOR THE LIVERPOOL DOCKERS IS A VICTORY FOR ALL!

We invite trade union branches, trades councils and shop stewards' committees to send representatives. We ask all those who want to build workers' solidarity, to put an end to privatisation, casualisation and anti-trade union laws: Come along on 22 June. Let's get together!

With comradesly greetings,

- Jim Nolan — Secretary Mersey Port Shop Stewards Committee
- Mick Fenn — ex-Tilbury docker
- Kim Hendry — London Support Group, conference organiser.

Assumptions

Of course all sorts of assumptions lay behind this — the idea of the poor as feckless inadequates, the bureaucratic control of private lives, etc. But what was agreed was that there was a problem of poverty and it needed to be dealt with.

The idea behind this was that capitalism ultimately needed even the poor as part of its efficient and growing labour force. So there was no conflict between welfare and capitalism.

But the poor are no longer a social problem they are a crime problem. Of course the old philosophy of the Welfare State knew that poverty led to crime but poverty was a problem in its own right.

CSC asbestos conference calls national march

ASBESTOS kills between 3,000 and 3,500 people every year in Britain. In ten years time this will have increased 10,000 DEATHS a year.

Last Saturday a Construction Safety Campaign conference on this tragedy decided to stage a national demonstration and call an international conference.

At last week's conference

speakers from the US described the campaigning being done there. Asbestos companies in the US face more litigation than in Britain.

■ Funds are need for the international conference NOW! Send money to the Construction Safety Campaign, c/o 255 Poplar High Street, London E14. Tel: 0171-537 7220.

Conference details from:

Conference organiser Kim Hendry, c/o Lambeth Union, 6a Acre Lane, London SW2 5SG. Tel: 0171-226 9754. Cheques/ money orders to 'London Support Group'. Send names and addresses and organisations represented.

- Join the 3.30-6pm weekly pickets of Drake International, 96 High Holborn, WC1.
- Two dockers are in London to raise funds and publicise the dispute. Tel: 0171-387 4771 (ask for Liverpool dockers).
- Next Liverpool community march for the dockers, Saturday 29 June. Tel: 0956 138 496.
- Support group meetings first and third Thursdays every month. Lucas Arms, 245A Gray's Inn Road, London WC1.

Leicester Support Group for Liverpool Dockers

First meeting Thursday 20 June, 7.30pm

Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate, Leicester

Phone: 0116-270 7730

Liverpool benefit Sunday 16 June, 7.30pm

Trade Union and Unemployed Resource Centre, Hardman Street, LIVERPOOL

Ken Loach's film Riff Raff

Ken Loach will be there to take part in the discussion.

Admission £3.50 (unwaged £2)

WORKERS PRESS IS THE PAPER OF THE WORKERS REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

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

Please send me information about the WRP

Name: date:

Address:

Trade union (if any) Age (if under 21)

Send to: PO Box 735, London SW8 1YB

Inside left Justice delayed

LABOUR'S national executive has rejected John Lloyd as candidate for Premier because of his activity in South Africa. It seemed more worried that he'd been labelled a 'terrorist' by Tory newspapers than by accusations that his evidence helped send anti-apartheid fighters to the gallows.

Writing to the *Guardian* on 28 May, Barry and Mary Barnett asked whether Labour would remedy the justice done to David Kitson and his family. Released after 20 years in South African jails, Kitson began a lecture-tour at Ruskin College, Oxford, funded by his union, the technical and supervisory staffs' TASS, now merged in MSF.

'But South African agents inside the ANC in Britain had been at work even before his release,' say the Barnetts. Through a process of obscure political machery they instigated the suspension from the ANC of both David and Irma Kitson, blackened their name throughout the ANC, the British anti-apartheid Movement and his union. As a result, the union withdrew funding. Deprived of his job and chance of a pension, the Kitsons moved to Zimbabwe. Exonerated by the ANC, he has become Ruskin's first emeritus scholar; but the MSF has not honoured its promise to help him. 'What a disgrace to the union and the British labour movement that a distinguished hero should have to exist on charity,' the Barnetts say.

But two agents in the ANC office could not have done the damage they did without help, particularly from Stalinists, in Anti-Apartheid and MSF. It's time justice was done for the Kitsons. And time the bureaucrats who disgraced the labour movement were brought to book.

Better life

Section of the working class committed to fighting back has to be brought to existence before it can be co-ordinated... Our aim is to attract those with the highest aspirations and the strongest drive for a better life, and provide them with the intellectual and organisational weapons necessary for them to meet those aspirations.'

That was the *Next Step*, on 1 May 1992. Reduced to four sides of A4 while Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP) concentrated resources on the glossy *Living Marxism*, it decided talk about a 'class struggle labour movement' or reviving the traditions of May 1968. Its *Next Step* was into its grave.

Nowadays *Living Marxism* seldom mentions the working class, and never reports those who, like the Liverpool dockers, are fighting back.

The *Next Step's* last editor, Kenan Malik, writes in the right-wing *Spectator* where, as reader Tom Carter noted ('All the young fogeys', letter *Workers Press* 25 May), he has attacked 'race relations industry'. Does he aim to attract 'those with the highest aspirations'? Some *Spectator* readers will put up the 'fiercest fight for a better life' — the one they already enjoy.

Soon the thoughts of *Living Marxism* may be reaching a more serious membership. Pluto Press has announced new editions of Marx and Engels' *Communist Manifesto* (1848) and Lenin's *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*. They are to be introduced respectively by *Living Marxism* editor Mick Hume, and economics correspondent James Malone.

Considering that *Living Marxism* is the class struggle has been 'suspended' in history, and refers to imperialism as 'the West', it seems an incongruous choice. I expect there's a perfectly simple explanation. A materialist one, perhaps.

Charlie Pottins

Australia: It's English ro

From PETER BAILEY
in Australia

THE Libs' election campaign that brought these Australian Tories into office in a new federal government under Prime Minister John Howard was a masterful piece of politicking. All soft sell before the election: social values, family support, etc. Now, eight weeks after, the old refrains and colours re-emerge:

- First. **Slash** spending (on welfare, etc.);
- Second. **Belt** the unions as hard as possible.

The latest is they plan to slash \$8 billion in two years. As one public servant put it: 'They're not just going to bring enforced redundancies here and there. This will be much fairer: They'll do away with whole programmes.'

Social security and the Commonwealth Employment Service will cop the brunt of the cuts. The union officials are squawking as usual: 'They promised before the election they would only cut 2,000 jobs from the public service and now they are talking about 20,000.'

In traditional Liberal fashion, 'states' rights' are to the fore: they are doing away with tied federal grants for most things. One example of what this means is that care for the sick and elderly is to be put under the control of the states.

Industrial relations are another hot topic as is the privatisation programme, with the Telstra satellite telecom company leading the way, and various environmental issues: doing away with environmental impact statements for new companies, more uranium mines...

The statement from the new minister for social security, Jocelyn Newman, 'We're here to provide a safety net, not a safety hammock', expresses their view of the unemployed — life on the dole is easy. So there is to be a crackdown of social security fraud, toughening of the work test, more random checking, harder eligibility criteria for young people, etc.

Contentious

The industrial relations legislation, probably the Libs' most contentious election promise, is currently before parliament, and the only thing that's stopping it, along with the sale of Telstra, is the Democrat-controlled upper house. Basically it's down the English road for us!

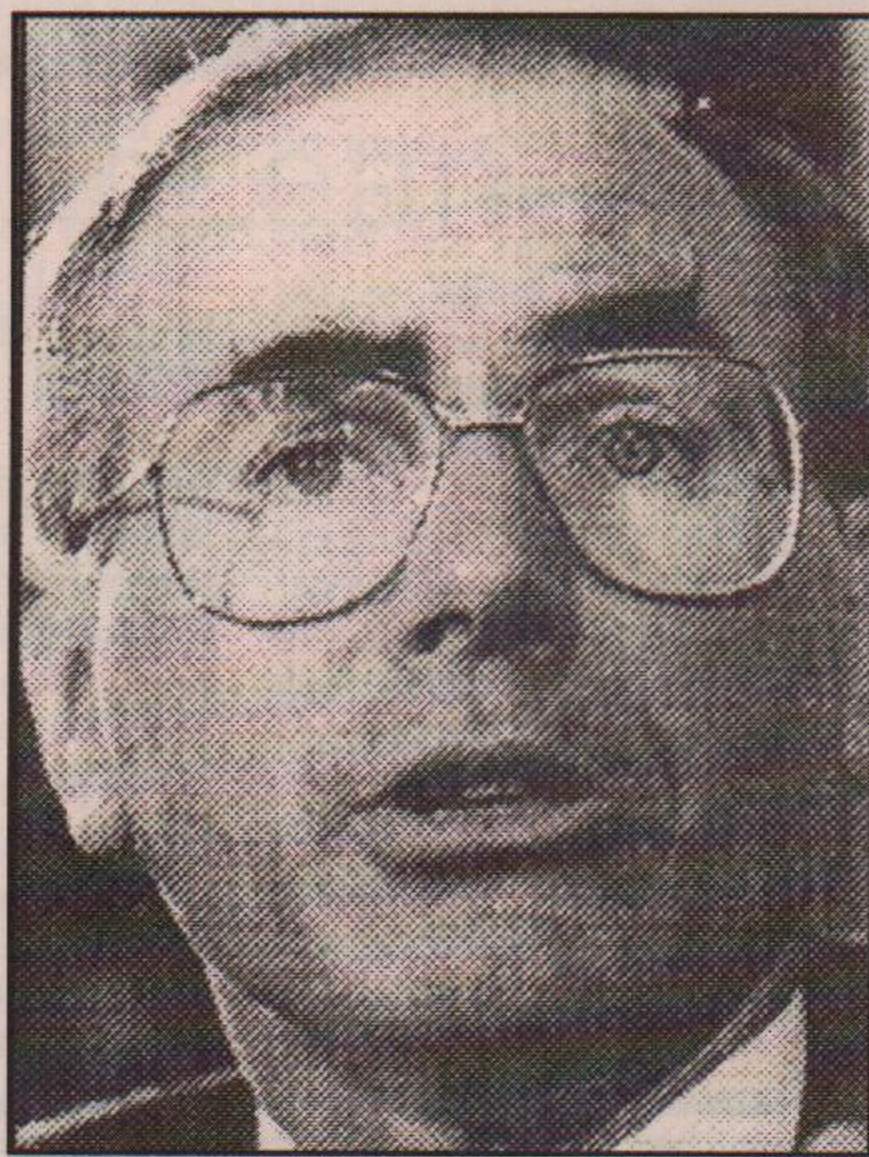
There is a police Royal Commission in New South Wales into organised paedophilia and it's not a pretty picture. Corruption is rife from top to bottom from the Department of Foreign Affairs (many diplomats implicated) to the Lord

Another controversial move by the Liberal government is its plan to lift the former Labour 5.2m tonne ceiling on woodchip exports. Although designed as a protectionist measure to encourage local use for the production of things like fibreboard, the ceiling has the support of environmentalists opposed to deforestation in Australia.

The Minister for Primary Industries, Mr Anderson, has family connections with the woodchip export company Boral Ltd. Shares owned by Anderson's wife were listed on the MPs register of interests.

Government privatisation of the Telstra satellite telecom company could be in jeopardy, with negotiations in the upper house with the National Party, where the government doesn't hold a majority, potentially foundering on the issue.

English ro



Prime Minister John Howard

Mayor of Wollongong — a city where local clergy, politicians and businessmen seem to have had a free go with young boys for many years. It's distressing to read about and makes you aware just how tolerated it was — and still is — in this society.

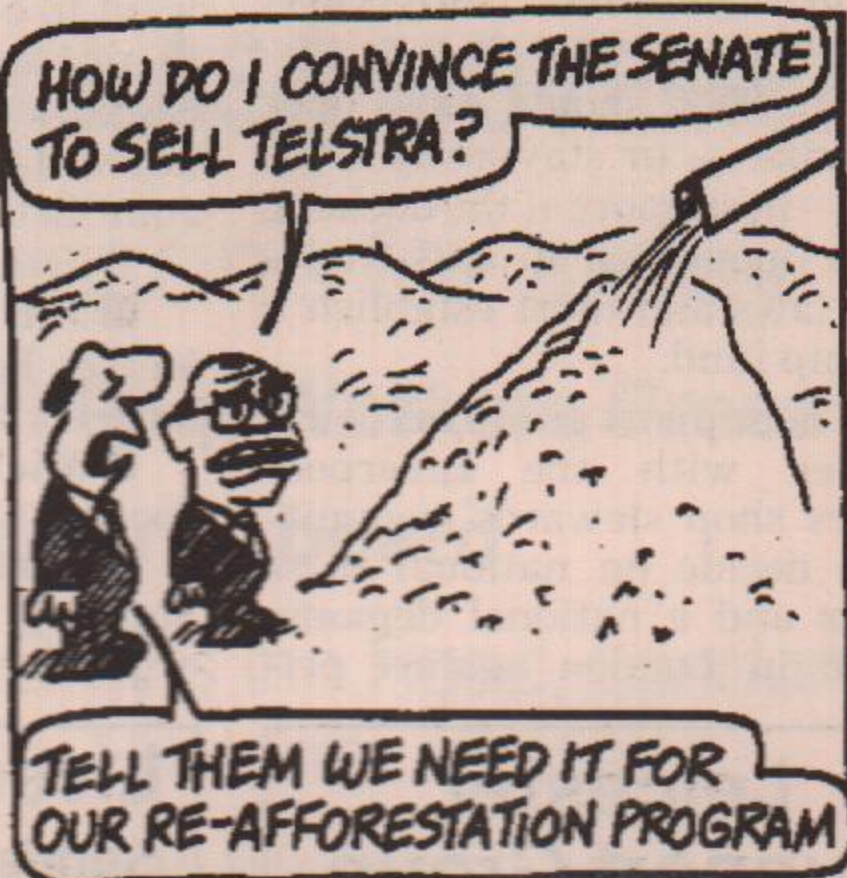
As to the workers' movement, I went to a meeting the other day, 'Way forward for rank-and-file groups under the new government'. There were a few trade unionists from the maritime union, the Builders' Labour Federation, and public services. Sort of interesting, as far as a meeting of nine people can be interesting, but it seemed very much in the old style — how to tell workers what to do to defeat whatever.

There was some discussion about the mythical united front by these nine people from five or six different groups — International Socialist Organisation (related to the British Socialist Workers' Party), Militant, Maritime Defence Committee, etc.

People seemed to see the Labour fiasco as indicating an anti-Labour vote rather than pro-Liberal. This is probably correct. The usual 'arrogance of Keating factor' also got pulled out. (Keating was the former Labour prime minister.)

But I think it's more than that. There's a real disgust with 13 years of Labour backsliding along with a lot of media manipulation of the Libs' 'nice guy' image.

Also mentioned at the meeting were peculiarities of the electoral system whereby the Libs got in with 42 per cent of the primary vote. But there's no denying that when Broken



Hill and Weipa (where striking miners were betrayed by the labour and trade union leaders) both go to the Libs for the first time in history, there's a message to the movement.

There have been several mass meetings, including one series involving 3,500 maritime workers and many in the public services.

In the public services rank-and-file motions were passed in all states except South Australia. In Melbourne the motion was even seconded by the union executive.

The public service union leaders are up to their usual game of letting each department run its own disputes about staff cuts, while desperately trying to avoid national action.

Running

The union officials are all running for cover as hard as they can. The value of rank-and-file pressure groups seems limited at best. The major task is to attempt to build cross-union solidarity.

One trouble with the rank-and-file groups is they are rife with factional disputes. There also seems to be this focus on federal government legislation, when, as somebody once said, they are only the caretakers of capital. In other words, there needs to be more focus on the underlying issues, such as the role of Labour.

■ The BSE scandal has reached us here! There have been bans on feeding infected material to cattle, but it turns out that 80 per cent of it went to chickens and pigs anyway!

Successful univer

From ANDY BLUNDEN
in Melbourne, Australia

ON 30 May, academic and general staff at universities across Australia acted against the federal government's attacks on tertiary education (see back page). The central demand of the strike was for more money from the government, to maintain jobs and increase wages.

The 30 May action was by far the largest industrial action ever to take place in Australia's universities. While union membership is still only around the 50 per cent mark, and compliance with the strike notice varied from institution to institution, the action signifies growing militancy and increasing levels of union membership at a time when there is a decline in other sectors of the movement.

At my own workplace, the University of Melbourne, membership of the National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU) has grown from about 1,000 a year ago to about 1,700 now. Over the past decade, student numbers have grown from 350,000 to 600,000, making higher education the third largest exporter (via overseas students' fees) with \$1.3bn a year, behind wheat at \$1.5bn and iron & steel at \$1.4bn.

During the same period, the staff-student ratio has declined by 33 per cent, but the sector still employs a growing number, about 37,000 people nationally.

Wages have fallen behind not only

Strike pa

THE federal government's offensive against the Australian working class has been launched with new industrial relation laws. In the front line is the federal wage-fixing tribunal which is to be ordered to establish new rules aimed at stripping back minimum wages, etc. The new package has 'an undeniable mandate' according to Industrial Relations Minister Reith.

Strike pay is to be outlawed with fines for both employers and workers who transgress the order as part of new sanctions against illegal strikes. Union officials will be barred from entering workplaces unless two or more members on a site produce 'a written invitation to enter a specified premises occupied by the employer'.

There is to be a new unfair dismissal regime where the Industrial Relations Commission (IRC) will be required when awarding costs to take into account 'the effect of the order on the viability of the employer's undertaking, establishment or service'. So if the employer 'can't afford it' there will be no compensation!

New wage-fixing principles will reduce the current awards to a set of 'safety net' standards. The IRC will be prevented from addressing

the rest of the public sector, but the overall average. Pay rises in 1996 have been 2 per cent in 1996 — but only funded to the extent of 1.3 per cent. The year before the rise was a measly 1.4 per cent.

Higher education has seen the introduction of 'administration fees' and an increasing array of full-fee-paying courses and more and more pressure has been brought to bear on institutions to generate income from other sources. The engineering faculty at Melbourne gets half its income from a variety of contracts and the university as a whole generates as much from property, bequests, etc., as it gets from the federal government.

During 1995, an 'enterprise bargaining' round was negotiated on an institution-by-institution basis in which the NTEU effectively set the agenda with a 2 per cent pay claim.

This low claim was part of a strategy aimed at proving that enterprise bargaining 'didn't work' in the higher education sector. It was to be followed with a national campaign for 10 per cent funded by the federal government.

Refused

During the enterprise bargaining round, all unions in the sector refused to offer trade-offs in exchange for the pay rise.

The Labour government rejected a nationally-funded pay rise.

Instead a 'loan' was offered, under which the government would pro-

down the ad for us!

ay to be outlawed!

issues outside this minimum. In 18 months time, the IRC is to act unilaterally to ensure that the government's objectives are met. These objectives are clearly lower wages for Australia's workers.

The IRC 'must review each award to remove provisions that [have] ceased to have effect' and it will be required to root out 'work practices that restrict the efficient performance of work'.

This will give it powers to delete award provisions covering 40 per cent of the workforce.

Orders

A central plank of the government strategy is to break up unions into local independent branches similar to the 'chapter system' in the US. If there is a majority vote in the workplace for an enterprise branch the IRC is obliged to 'make such orders ... to form the branch as the commission considers necessary'.

These provisions are aimed at breaking up federal agreements and isolating workers into company-dominated 'unions'. A new Office of Employment Advocate is to be set up to bring about local workplace agreements.

The federal government also wants to 'disamalgamate' federally

registered unions and reverse the trend to super-unions.

These measures came after the government backed employers' attempts to keep the minimum 'safety net' wages down. The Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI) wants the IRC to extend the current wage principle beyond their expiry date of 30 June.

The Australian Confederation of Trade Unions (ACTU, the Australian TUC) had wanted to lodge a claim at the IRC in early June for a new 'living wage', aimed at lifting the safety net for workers who had gained nothing from the government-backed enterprise bargaining at a local level.

However, ACTU president Jennie George said the union federation would support an extension of wage principles provided this did not interfere with the right to lodge the living wage claim.

ACTU plans to hold a 'cavalcade' of the federal government seat in Canberra of union and community groups on 19 August, the first day of the parliamentary budget sitting. The ACCI wants the wage principles extended to March next year, preventing ACTU from having its 'living wage' claim heard until then.

iversity workers' strike

vide cash to universities to fund a rise, but this money would have to be paid back — with interest!

On the eve of the announcement of the election which brought the Liberals to office in the federal government this year, three unions accepted the 'offer'; but both NTEU (and AMWU) and the employers refused it.

The conservative government then came in with the unions now united behind 8 per cent and a new 7 per cent pay claim for 1996-97. The employers also support the pay claim — provided the government pays for it.

The new Lib government has delayed any announcement until the Budget in August, but it maintains a pay rise could come from:

■ 'Better funding arrangements' — code for the 'loan' proposed by the previous Labour government).

■ 'Better use of resources' — code for running classes day and night, 12 months a year.

■ 'Wider income sources' — generally understood as post-graduate fees and privatisation.

■ A 'smaller sector' — that is, too many kids from working-class backgrounds get university educations.

Recently, the Liberal government has 'let it be known' that cuts in the higher education 'could be as high as 12 per cent'.

Country campuses — Armidale, Bendigo, Wodonga, etc. — may go, along with teacher-training at Melbourne, law at Latrobe, etc.

The employers, through the Aus-

tralian Vice-Chancellors' Committee, have vigorously objected in the press, and supported the unions' opposition to the cuts AND their pay claim.

But Melbourne vice-chancellor Alan Gilbert, while speaking out in the media, is softening up his own staff asking managers to prepare 1997 budgets with 80, 85, 90 and 95 per cent of the 1996 total payroll — but factoring in a 6 per cent pay rise!

Fearful

After seeing what the elections of Liberal premiers in the states mean, workers in the universities are extremely fearful for their jobs.

There is no 'ivory tower' now. The overwhelming majority of higher education workers have virtually no job security. Most are employed on short-term contracts, and jobs come and go with supply-and-demand. Only a tiny privileged minority have 'tenure'.

While most academic staff are indeed well-paid, the majority are casual or sessional employed, and have to keep themselves on the 'cutting edge' just to have a job.

This crisis in the sector for staff coincides with a growing confrontation between the student unions and the government.

As it prepares for a 'smaller sector', the government has cut off funding for those who can give a voice to the needs of students. Students' unions have consistently supported the NTEU's demand for pay rises.

Private nursing homes to 'own' standards

PRIVATE nursing homes for the frail and elderly are well pleased with the new federal government. They have lobbied the government to change the monitoring system for homes claiming that it is onerous and subjective and victimises private operators. And they have received a sympathetic ear.

The government insists standards for care and safety will not be watered down. It says involving proprietors in a new monitoring body will give them 'ownership of the standards'. And, of course, this will reduce the current 'adversarial relationship' between proprietors and inspectors.

Federal inspectors can boast considerable success identifying substandard operators and forcing them to lift care and safety for their frail, elderly residents', said the *Sydney Morning Herald*.

And Australian Pensioners and Superannuants' Federation president Edith Morgan said: 'There's a natural tendency for industry-run



Mrs Moylan

regulatory systems to avoid exposing the bad side of the industry.' The federal Minister for Family Services, Mrs Moylan, called a meeting in Canberra to brief private industry and church bodies on plans to shift aged care responsibilities from the federal government to the states.

Federal Health and Family Services staff have already been told they face redeployment and staff cuts.

There is much concern in the \$2 billion-a-year 'industry' about an estimated \$600 million shortfall in funds to upgrade dilapidated buildings. 'We don't know where the money will come from,' said Isabel Frean, the executive director of the Aged Services Association of New South Wales, a leading body for church and charitable nursing homes in the state.

One of the private homes' leaders, Australian Nursing Homes and Extended Care Association president Graeme Crofts, expressed concern over the moves from federal to state control. It showed that the government 'plans to continue the attitude of neglect of the frail aged exhibited by the previous [Labour] government', he said.

The rival National Association of Nursing Homes and Private Hospitals welcomed the government plans.

City Lights

An attempt to answer a question

I RAISED in this column last week a question about the impact of the growing productivity of labour on the capitalist crisis, pointing to the fact that this productivity growth had been among the most rapid in Britain over the recent past.

For many bourgeois commentators this sharp increase in output per person has been presented as a sign of strength, an indication that Thatcherism worked; that it may have hurt, but it certainly worked.

This was the question that was raised last week: 'Why should rising labour productivity and the increased exploitation of labour go hand in hand with the tendency for the rate of profit to fall?'

Let us try and unpick the answer to this not altogether easy question.

Before doing so we can say something about the specific case of British capitalism. Paradoxically, much of the increased productivity growth in the British economy over the past decade and a half was in a direct sense an expression of the weakness of the economy, not of its strength. Why was this so?

Simply because much of manufacturing industry went to the wall, forced out by superior competitors abroad. Only the stongest industrial firms were left in Britain after this severe clearing out.

Their average labour productivity was almost bound to have been higher than the average productivity in Germany, Japan, and elsewhere — where even the weaker firms managed to survive against British competition.

(By analogy, two countries — A and B — in a football competition each start with 16 teams; in the case of A, the weakest, 12 are eliminated in the early rounds, while for B only four are knocked out. In this case the average level of skill and ability in the four remaining teams of country A is likely to be higher than in the 12 that remain from B. But this is hardly an indication of the strength of football in country A.)

But there is a second, more general and important factor to consider about the nature and impact of the growth of labour productivity under capitalism, and one that takes us towards an answer to our question.

In considering the tendency of the rate of profit to fall under capitalism, Marx came to the following, general, conclusion: that under capitalism the growth of the productivity of labour expresses itself in the tendency for the rate of profit to fall. (By productivity of labour is meant the output per worker over a given period of time.)

For Marx the law of the tendency of the rate of profit to fall was 'in every respect the single most important law of modern political economy'. Why should this be so?

Capitalism, by its very nature, is not interested in the productivity of labour *as such*. It regards labour from only one angle, as a source, or potential source, of profit. It is not interested in how many goods a worker turns out in a period of time, but what profit is made in relation to the capital invested over that time.

In short it is concerned with profit, and in particular with the rate of profit.

In order to move closer to an answer, some elementary things about the nature of the exploitation of labour by capital must be touched on. (I take my example from Marx and in his time it was 'standard' to imagine a male worker, despite the fact that many women worked in the cotton and other industries.)

The time the worker spends

working for the capitalist is in effect divided into two.

In the first part of the working day the worker creates value equivalent to his wage — his time is devoted to creating value equivalent to the value he needs to keep himself and his family alive for the day.

The rest of the time is given to the capitalist *gratis* in the shape of surplus labour, or more precisely *surplus value*.

The proportions into which the working day is divided between these two elements expresses the rate of exploitation.

Let us assume that the worker spends half his working day reproducing the equivalent of the value of his wages that he needs to live for the day, with the rest devoted to the production of surplus value which the owner of capital pockets. Then the rate of exploitation would be 1:1 or 100 per cent.

Now let us assume that, as a result of technical progress brought about by intensifying competition between the owners of capital, the productivity of labour doubles. The worker would then have to work only a quarter of a day in order to live for the whole day.

Naturally the capitalist does not allow this. If the working day remains the same length, the worker must now work, not half the day but three-quarters of the day *gratis* for capital, with only one-quarter spent working 'for himself'.

But, in giving this example, Marx points out a striking fact. While the productivity of labour has *doubled*, (the worker can now produce the equivalent of his wage in only half the time that he previously required) the surplus labour has grown *by only half*.

In the first case the owner of capital was taking half (two-quarters) of the working day for himself; he now takes three-quarters. As Marx says: '(T)his shows then that surplus labour (from the worker's standpoint) or surplus-value (from capital's standpoint) does not grow in the same numerical proportion as productive force.'

Suppose now that the productivity of labour again doubles. Necessary labour will fall from a quarter of the working day to an eighth, but surplus labour will merely increase by an eighth of a day. And so on ...

In other words, even if the owner of capital runs faster and faster he cannot even stand still but is driven backwards!

(Naturally, these are 'abstract' trends which in reality, because they are always mixed up with many other factors, always operate in a more complex and contradictory manner.)

What does this show? That as the productive power of labour increases it proves more and more difficult to maintain the rate of increase in the exploitation of labour. Or put from the opposite angle, the ever-greater increase in the rate of exploitation of labour cannot resolve the fundamental crisis of capital.

On the contrary: as the productivity of labour increases it becomes more difficult to raise the rate of exploitation and this is reflected in downward pressure on the rate of profit.

As Marx puts it: 'Thus the more developed capital already is ... the more terribly must it develop the productive force [of labour] in order to ... add surplus value to itself, even to a slight degree.'

Here we come close to the very heart of the contradictions of capitalism. The more the productive power of labour is increased, the more it clashes with the limits imposed by the capitalist system, a clash that at the same time lays the basis for ever-greater crises and disruptions — while at same time pointing graphically to the historical limits of this mode of production.

Threadneedle

The fall of 'Hot Rod' Richards

PERSONAL COLUMN

DAVID MELLOR. Tim Yeo. Lord Caithness. David Ashby. Hartley Booth. Stephen Milligan. Michael Brown. Robert Hughes. Richard Spring. And now to this Tory roll of dishonour is added the name of Rod Richards.

All ten of these gentlemen have fallen from grace and high office because, in one way or another, they put personal happiness before discretion.

Mellor had an affair with an actress. When this was made known he dug his heels in as long as he could, but finally had to go when it was revealed that the daughter of a PLO official had paid for his holidays.

Yeo had an affair with, and fathered a daughter by, a Tory councillor. Lord Caithness resigned after his wife, depressed about his relationship with another woman, killed herself with a shotgun.

Ashby admitted sharing an hotel bed with a male friend. Booth, a Methodist lay preacher, had an affair with a Commons researcher.

Milligan accidentally strangled himself while engaged in autoerotic activity. Brown resigned over allegations of a relationship with a male student. Hughes had an extra-marital affair. Spring went to bed with a friend and a Sunday-school teacher.

To the historian and politician Lord Macaulay (1800-1859) the British were the greatest and most highly civilised people the world had ever seen and the acknowledged leaders of the human race. At the same time, to Macaulay there was 'no spectacle so ridiculous as the British public in one of its periodical fits of morality'.

I don't myself believe that the British public, unlike the British sewer press, are nowadays greatly concerned to moralise about the private lives of politicians.

What gets up people's noses is hypocrisy. And the Tories stand exposed as the rankest of hypocrites.

After all, these chaps set themselves up as guardians and exemplars of 'family values'. So they jolly well ought to set a good example. Instead of which they are revealed, one after the other, as being no better than the rest of us.

Rod Richards, you may recall, is the gentleman who called Welsh Labour councillors 'slimy' and 'fundamentally corrupt'. He was always a great one for the family. In his north Wales constituency of Clwyd North West he has, it is said, been spearheading the campaign for a return to traditional family values.

His latest election manifesto was decked out with pictures of him with his wife and children. And among his recreations, as he listed them in *Dod's Parliamentary Companion*, was 'family'.

His more furtive recreation went unlisted. But last Sunday this affair with a woman 20 years his junior was splashed across the front page of the *News of the World*.

I hold no brief for the *News of the World* or for any of those other papers whose hacks earn a crust by spying on people's private lives, garnering malodorous gossip about them, and photographing them entering their lovers' flats.

If there is one thing more nauseating than the policeman in the bedroom — legal regulation of private sexual activity — it is the journalist in the bedroom.

But sex scandals do sell newspapers, for many people relish proof that many of those who set themselves up as paragons of family values are in fact no better than the rest of us.

But surely government ministers should have realised by now that they are fair game for the press vultures? Or did Richards

suppose, like many an adulterer before him, that Venus confers a cloak of invisibility on her votaries? If he did, he's an idiot, and for that alone he did well to resign.

When all's said and done, though, the Tories' ten-times-exposed hypocrisy on the family is a drop in the ocean compared with the rest of their disastrous record.

Nine o'clock lock

NEWLABOUR goes from bad to worse. Jack Straw's American-inspired idea of imposing a 9pm curfew on children under the age of ten is quite the daftest and most reactionary notion to emerge from the shadow home secretary since he got it into his head that Newlabour must out-Tory the Tories on everything to do with 'law and order'.

This idea is inherently oppressive. It would penalise all children, non-offenders and offenders alike. It would hit at all families indiscriminately. It would simply add to the already horrendous problems of working-class parents, for whom life is hard enough as it is.

The best comments on this Straw-brained notion came from two residents of a Bradford housing estate, as reported in the *Guardian*.

Said one: 'My two younger lads play out till 10 at this time of year, but we know they're in this street, and not getting up to any trouble. A play area would have done the world of good.'

And the other said: 'Effing Labour. It's the MPs who need an effing curfew after what they and their council's done to us on this estate. I'd like to see them come here.'

With any luck, this curfew idea will toll the knell for Mr Straw.

Hungarian Tragedy

THE 40th anniversary of the Hungarian revolution is less than five months away. There are two principal dates to remember.

On 23 October 1956 huge crowds surged through the streets of Budapest calling for Imre Nagy to become prime minister and for the withdrawal of Soviet troops. State security police in the radio building fired into the crowds, and the demonstration turned into a revolution.

Within hours a network of elected workers' councils and revolutionary committees was in existence, and in control, all over Hungary.

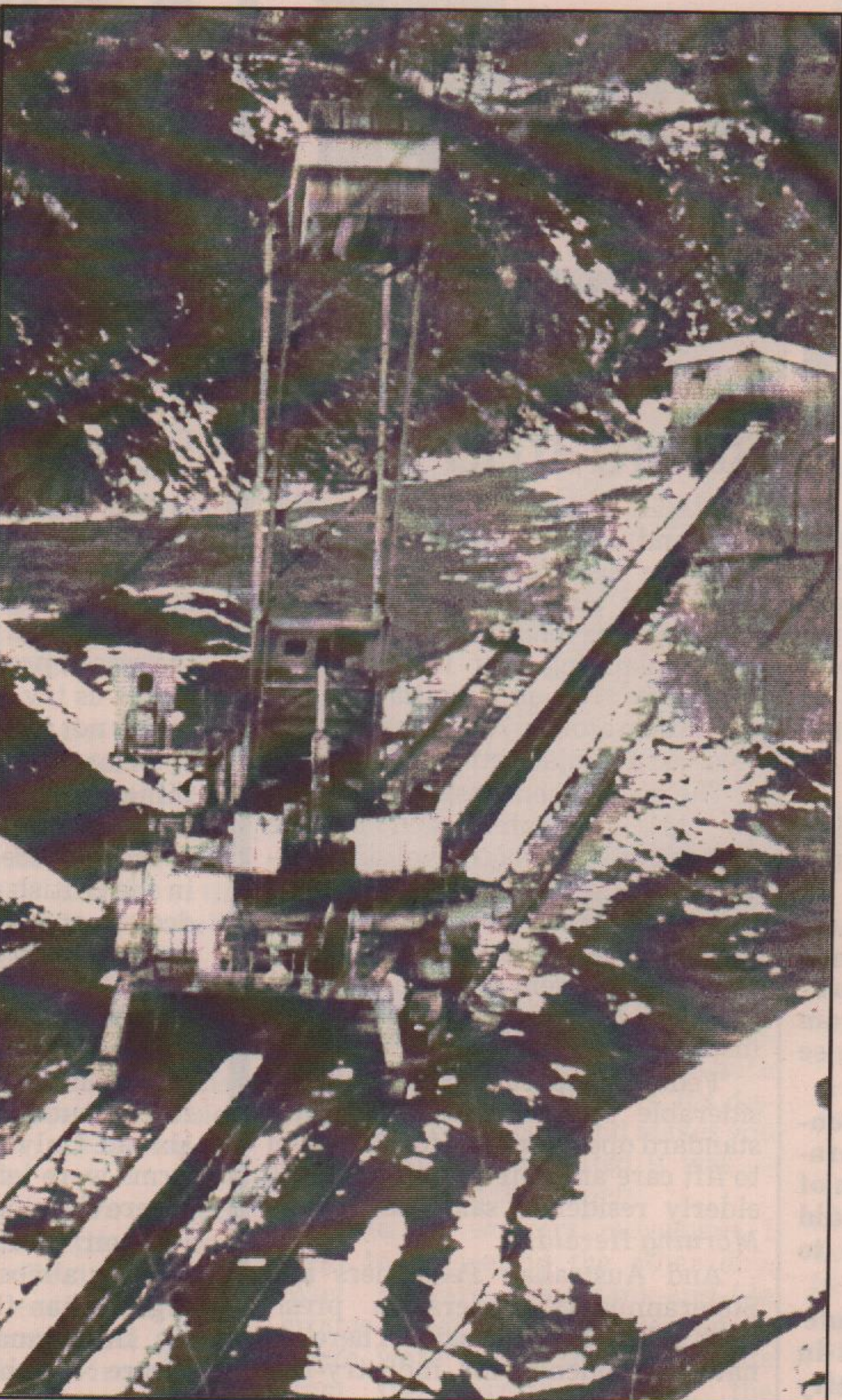
On 4 November 1956 the Soviet army returned. For four days and nights Budapest was under continuous bombardment, and the revolution was drowned in blood.

Ten years ago my eyewitness account, *Hungarian Tragedy* (1956), was reprinted by New Park Publications. Later this year a new, expanded edition is to be published by Index Books.

It will also contain the text of *Hungary and the Communist Party: An appeal against expulsion*, which was issued as a shilling pamphlet in February 1957 and has never been reprinted, and of several articles and reviews of books on the Hungarian events, that I wrote in the years 1957-59.

Peter Fryer

Bosnia and those without eyes . . .



Ljubija mineshaft in Serb-controlled Bosnia where many victims of 'ethnic cleansing' are believed buried

Message from Bosnian coal miners' union

Fax received from Bosnia-Herzegovina coal miners' union on 29 May:

Dear Friends,
The coal miners of Bosnia-Herzegovina have suspended their strike actions. We have given the government until the end of May to answer our demands over wages. If we do not receive a satisfactory answer there will be a general strike of miners.

Once the problem of wages is

Faxes:

Fikret Suljic (Tuzla region) 00 387 75 212 360;
Luka Bradaric (middle Bosnia) 00 387 72 751 620.

Durham NUM, are collecting financial support for the Bosnian miners. Durham NUM, PO Box 6, Red Hills, Durham DH1 4BB. Cheques payable to Tuzla Miners' Appeal.



The Bosnian miners' rebellion of 1920 and our struggle for unity, a Workers Aid for Bosnia pamphlet, is available from Workers Press for £1 plus 30p p&p

BY BOB MYERS
Secretary
Workers Aid for Bosnia

ACROSS Europe, few people claiming to be socialist or anti-fascist took part in the defence of multi-cultural society in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Some, like miners' leader Arthur Scargill, supported the ethnic cleansers, echoing their claim to be defending the Yugoslavia founded by the Partisans. The war against Bosnia, in which mass murder and rape of tens of thousands have taken place on the basis of 'ethnic cleansing', was 'justified' in the fight to defend 'socialism'.

Others preferred to wash their hands of the 'mess' and delivered lectures to the workers of ex-Yugoslavia. Their suffering would continue, so the story went, until all workers united against their existing leaders — Croat, Bosnian and Serb — who were all equally nationalistic.

Having delivered their judgment on the people of Bosnia, these great heroes of the anti-fascist struggle went to bed to read stories of real workers who go into battle, united, with red flags waving in the wind of the pure class struggle.

They kept a somnolent eye open the while to make sure their lectures were right. They found the imperial powers backing different sides, thereby proving it would be wrong for any worker, let alone socialist, to take sides and end up in bed with the bad guys. (Perhaps if the Bosnian government had refused arms from all sides, they themselves would have come in with 'working class' weapons?)

At last! The miners in Bosnia seem to have heard their lectures. They have gone on strike — a proper working-class thing to do.

The Socialist Workers' Party — which founded the Anti-Nazi League to 'drive the fascists off our streets' — spotted the miners' action.

After explaining that the imperialists were pursuing Serb-nationalist leader Radovan Karadzic to hide the ethnic cleansing carried out by others, *Socialist Worker* (25 May) concludes: 'Real peace will only come when workers unite across ethnic lines against the rulers who have whipped up nationalist hatred on all sides.'

It is encouraging there are signs of this struggle. This month 20,000 workers in the southern Serbian city of Nis struck and won payments of overdue wages.

Meanwhile Bosnian miners struck calling for £35 a month pay to be increased to the £140 a month of electricity workers. After four days they won'

Uniting

Leave aside for the moment that they have not yet won their wage claim (see letter from miners' president). If it is encouraging that workers are now uniting across the ethnic lines, why was it not encouraging four years ago? Why did *Socialist Worker* ignore the desperate appeals for help from Bosnian miners in 1993, 1994 and 1995?

Why did *Socialist Worker* not ask its readers to offer assistance to the miners in 1992 when they did unite across the ethnic divide and formed miners' battalions to try and stop the nationalist and fascist forces advancing on mining towns like Tuzla, Kakanj and Zenica?

Throughout this century the Bosnian miners have fought for the unity of all workers. It was their fight against exploitation that was at the centre of the Partisan struggle and the reaffirmation of a multi-cultural society

through the overthrow of the capitalists and the landlords.

The miners have used strikes, demonstrations and armed struggle in order to try and preserve their unity.

Maybe *Socialist Worker* and their Anti-Nazi League could ask them for some lessons in 'driving the fascists off our streets'. They have actually done it many times rather than just printing it on placards.

So happy is *Socialist Worker* to see workers 'waking up' and taking 'class actions' that not only do they give the miners a wage increase they haven't got yet, they miss the central point: Bosnia-Herzegovina is under occupation by 60,000 troops.

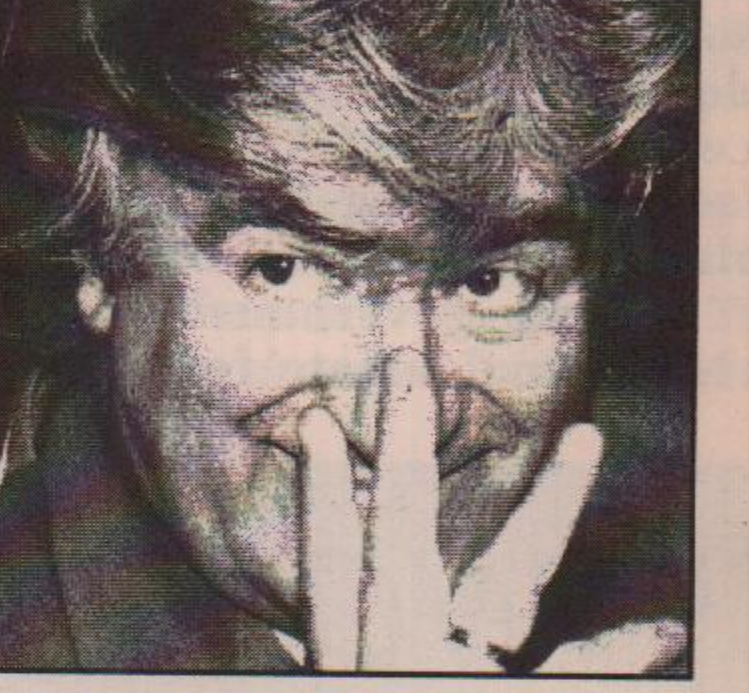
Divided

Nationalism has divided the country. Mines in nationalist-controlled areas are full of dead bodies, including miners.

Perhaps under advice from the IMF, the Bosnian government will back off from the miners until the US has whipped the Bosnian army into line to deal with them.

But there is no permanent way forward for the working class in Bosnia or the whole region without defeating the nationalist forces and the imperialists who back them and reconquering and re-establishing a united, multi-cultural Bosnia-Herzegovina — something *Socialist Worker* refused and still refuses to support.

How can a Bosnian miner unite with a 'worker' in Serbia



Radovan Karadzic

who refuses to recognise the right of all Bosnian miners to live and work together regardless of ethnic background. What could they unite about? The need for a wage increase? Scab and striker would both like a wage increase so why don't they unite?

So far from having actually driven a fascist off anyone's street, our anti-fascists cannot even understand that as long as men like Karadzic and Mladic are free to wander around the working class is divided and in danger.

Socialist Worker wouldn't tell the Lawrence family that they shouldn't have tried to bring their son's killers to trial or tell relatives of those who have died in custody not to pursue the racist police.

Real peace will only come to Bosnia-Herzegovina and to the whole region when the international workers' movement comes to the assistance of those people who are continuing to defy ethnic division.

It is not strikes in Serbia, Bosnia or anywhere else that by themselves can overcome division — important though they are. It is the determination of an undivided, multi-cultural Bosnia-Herzegovina.

They have stood for the unity of the working class in Bosnia. They have laid the principled basis for unity in the region.

It is this fact that gives the present strikes such importance and why every trade unionist and anti-fascist must move support for the appeal launched by Durham National Union of Mineworkers on behalf of the Bosnian miners.

Jailed for fighting unemployment

Release Horacio Panario and Alcides Christiansen now!

From the INTERNATIONAL SOCIALIST LEAGUE, British section of the International Workers League/Fourth International (LIT/CI)

THE Argentinian government is intent on persecuting and jailing honest workers whose only crime is to assist workers' demands in a desperate social situation.

Horacio Panario, Alcides Christiansen and Oscar Martinez have become 'test cases' for the government and its repressive legal system. In all there are over 300 workers are facing charges brought against them because they have been active in protests and demonstrations throughout the country.

On 24 May Alcides Christiansen began a hunger strike demanding:

■ his release and that of Horacio Panario and the cessation of persecutions;

■ the punishment of those responsible for the killing of workers and youth; and,

■ the ending of all repression and police attacks on workers.

Thousands of signatures and letters of protest in national and international solidarity have been sent to demand the release of Horacio and Alcides, among them:

■ the international dockers' conference held in Liverpool in February;

■ Jeremy Corbyn MP;

■ a number of French unions including the Sud-PTT (post office workers);

■ Brazil's Workers' Party leaders Lula and Vincentinho;

■ leaders of the CUT (the Brazilian TUC);

■ Brazilian oil workers leader Carlos Spiz;

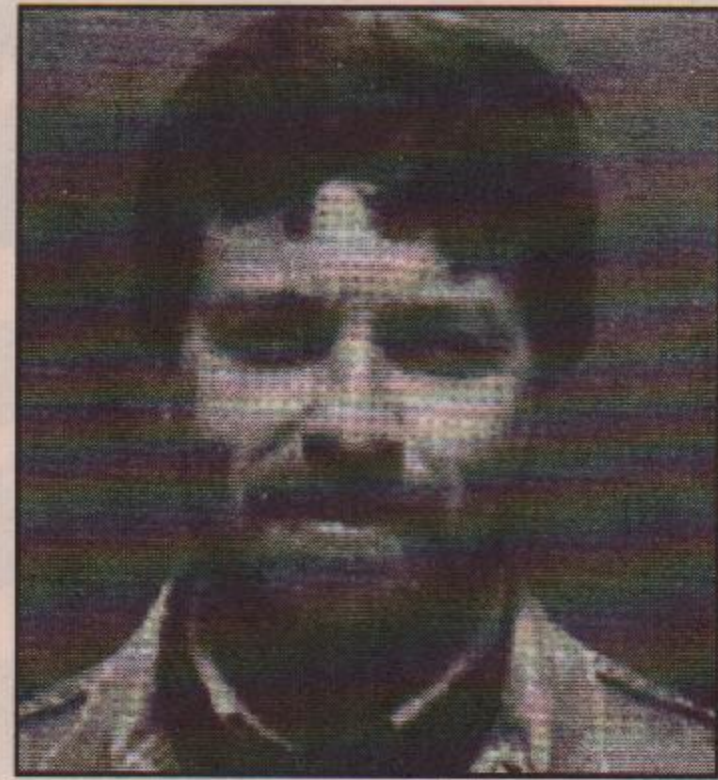
■ Paraguay trade union leader Marcial Canterio;

■ Dr Octavio Rodriguez of the EZLN (Zapatistas) in Chiapas.

The most recent demonstration in Argentina was in Neuquen on 22 May, led by education workers protesting for wages and against labour reforms in the province. They marched to the governor's residence to denounce unemployment policies in the region and to demand the release of Horacio and Alcides.

Many people have demanded to visit them: Nobel prize winner Adolfo Esquivel, north-east Argentinian construction workers' union leader Rogelio De Leonardis, and many other unionists, Communist Party leader Antonio Alac, and Nore Ciaponi from their own party the Movement to Socialism (MAS).

The government are making



Horacio Panario (left) and Oscar Martinez



'coaccion agravada' charges against Horacio and Alcides, which have tremendous repressive consequences. The maximum sentence for such charges is ten years. This law was used by the military dictatorship against the guerrillas and their supporters.

Today the government uses the same laws against the mobilisations and struggles of workers.

Horacio Panario and Alcides Christiansen are imprisoned in the province of Neuquen and Oscar Martinez is charged in Tierra del Fuego.

The laws being used mean that demonstration organisers are held responsible for any disturbances that take place. Police often provoke disturbances on such protests.

Neuquen province of is one of the hardest hit areas in the country. There is high unemployment among construction workers who are particularly affected by the privatisation programmes which mean the end of extensive public works.

The national population census for this area showed that 20 per cent of families were without basic necessities.

Over 1,000 unemployed and their families made a peaceful demonstration called by the Unemployed Workers Co-ordination. The UWC had obtained a

significant victory, which does not exist in any other province of Argentina: a subsidy for the unemployed of over £100.

But the provincial government, because of the cut-backs demanded by the central government, decided to stop the subsidy.

The real level of unemployment in Argentina is 25 per cent in a country which has practically no unemployment benefit.

A delegation went from the demonstration of 2 October last year to the governor's residence. The response was savage. The workers reacted valiantly in trying to stop the attacks.

Pretext

In this process some of the police were hurt. Using these incidents as a pretext, they arrested Panario and Christiansen and ordered the arrest of Hector Etchebaxter, Jorge Chiguay, Victor Sandoval and Veronica Barriga.

No bail was given to those arrested.

The use of 'coaccion agravada' is arbitrary and violates normal judicial processes. The judge has refused to receive the declaration of Panario or consider the testimony of the defence.

Panario is held under cruel conditions, imposed by the judge. He is alone in his cell which meas-

ures 1.5 metres by 3 metres. The jail is in a small village hundreds of kilometres from the capital where his family and friends are.

In winter (Argentina is in the southern hemisphere, so this is now) this area is usually cut off by snow, making it impossible for anyone to visit. The judge has refused permission for Panario to be moved to the capital.

Christiansen was a presidential candidate for the MAS in the last elections. He was also the general secretary of the construction workers' union.

Etchebaxter was a candidate of the MST (Socialist Workers Movement) and Chiquay was also a member of that party.

Tierra del Fuego, in the extreme south of Argentina, is a centre of engineering and electronics. There repression was directed against Oscar Martinez, organising secretary of the engineering workers' union, who led the struggle against the closure of factories.

Many sectors of workers are resisting and struggling: resisting the closure of private factories, the closure and deregulation of public sector work. They are demanding the payment of unemployment benefit.

On 31 March 1995, in Ushuaia, the most southern city in the world and capital of Tierra del Fuego, engineering workers marched to the capital in protest against a factory closure. Police attacked the demonstration.

This resulted in the charging of Oscar Martinez, Fabian Magdalena, Angel Valle and Eduardo Setzes.

On 11 and 12 April the police mounted an assault on the occupation of workers of the Continental factory which led to the death of one worker and numerous injuries and arrests.

The judiciary tried to blame the death of the worker on to Oscar Martinez. If found guilty he

would face a sentence of many years.

Sentences already passed have resulted in jail terms of up to one year which have been turned into forced labour clearing snow from the streets.

Postcards

We are asking for postcards to be sent to Horacio Panario and Alcides Christiansen to show solidarity with their struggle:

■ Horacio Panario, Division de Transito (Policia de Neuquen — Zapata), Ruta 22, 8240 Zapala Prov. de Neuquen, Argentina.

■ Alcides Christiansen, Unidad de Detencion No 11, Pabellon 5, Celda 4, Parque Industrial, 8300 Neuquen, Argentina.

Protests

Trade union, labour movement, human rights and political organisations should send letters of protest to demand the release of all working-class leaders and in particular the release of Alcides Christiansen who is on hunger strike and Horacio Panario.

Letters of protest to: President Menem of Argentina, c/o The Argentine Embassy, 53 Hans Place, London SW1.

Picket

There is to be a picket of the Argentine Embassy, Wednesday 12 June, 6-7.30pm. Nearest tube: Knightsbridge.

The Campaign Against Repression in Argentina (PO Box 7268, London E10 6TX) is also supporting the campaign for the release of the trade union and unemployed prisoners.

International Socialist League, PO Box 9, Eccles, Salford M30 7FX. Tel/fax 0161-707 1584. E-mail: socvoice@gn.apc.org

Anti-cuts rally called in Bonn

BY BOB ARCHER

THE GERMAN trade union federation (DGB) has called a national rally in Bonn on 15 June to focus opposition to the £22 billion cuts in welfare and other state spending proposed by the federal government.

This could be a very large protest indeed. Opposition to the cuts runs so deep that the Social Democratic Party (SPD) has been forced to support the campaign against them.

The party's national business manager Franz Muentferfering called on all party bodies to 'stand shoulder to shoulder with the DGB' in the struggle against the cuts package.

SPD regional premiers have used their majority in the upper chamber, the Bundesrat (federal council), to block attacks on the welfare state.

They have defended asylum-seekers' rights to welfare benefits and opposed changes to the social security system and some forms of unemployment benefit.

They have also campaigned against cuts in property and inheritance tax and certain classes of business taxation.

Germany faces a constitutional crisis as the conservative government threatens to force the cuts and tax reforms through against opposition in the SPD-dominated Bundesrat.

And yet only a few weeks ago SPD members of the Bundesrat were signing joint statements with conservative colleagues demanding even more radical changes in the 'social market economy'.

Their new-found militancy must reflect deep-going opposition to the cuts among German workers.

In turn, a mass rally officially organised by the DGB with SPD support will bring many others into the struggle.

although of course it will not resolve the problem.

Meanwhile arbitrators have been meeting at a secret location to try and find an acceptable solution to public-sector wage negotiations.

A major part of the cuts package is a wage-freeze for federal, state and municipal workers.

The unions are seeking a 4.5 per cent deal, while the employers are offering a tiny wage increase over a 20-month period which in fact represents a wage cut.

Chancellor Kohl has rounded furiously on the SPD leaders, calling on them to help carry through changes needed to keep Germany competitive in world markets.

Meanwhile another German industrial giant is in trouble. Machine-tool manufacturers KHD are in deep debt after problems in a subsidiary firm were fraudulently concealed.

Assets

Massive assets belonging to the mother company were used up to cover losses in the subsidiary.

A rescue package worth many millions of Deutschmarks has been put together by banks and local and regional government.

Earlier this year the Daimler-Benz group had to close a lot of plants, including the Fokker aircraft company.

The Vulkan shipyards in Bremen went bankrupt after management were caught syphoning off European Union aid meant for a sister yard in east Germany.

The east German yards were also rescued using government money. The government austerity programme makes it clear that the state does not have a bottomless purse to bail out stricken companies.

Britain fuels torture epidemic

BY DANIEL ROBERTSON

BARBARIC methods of 'interrogation' are sweeping the world, according to a new report from Amnesty International issued to launch a 'Stop Torture' campaign. The use of torture is now widespread in 40 countries, and reported from another 60.

'Torture takes place every day on every continent. It's happening to someone, somewhere in the world, this minute,' said Amnesty International UK director David Bull.

The complicity of western governments, both through their failure to stop torture and active promotion through training security forces and the export of torture instruments, is slated.

The campaign will focus on attempting to force the British government to pressurise five key torture states — China, Israel, Kenya, Mexico and Turkey.

The Chinese government widely uses torture both as a means of suppressing dissidents and to impose social control on ordinary criminals.

Many victims are workers, peasants, unemployed, vagrants and migrant workers that the ruling bureaucracy sees as a threat to its 'modernisation' drive.

Electric shock batons are a favoured method. These are mass produced by the thousand, based on models supplied by a British company specialising in security control. The British government

provides training for the Chinese police.

The Israeli state's atrocities against Palestinians and Lebanese, such as the recent bombing of a packed refugee camp, is common knowledge to us all. But its use of torture is less well known.

Amnesty reports that 'torture of detainees is a matter of routine in Israel and the Occupied Territories. Over recent years thousands of Palestinians have been tortured. Methods include hooding, shackling in painful positions, beatings, sleep deprivation, confinement in dark cupboard-sized cells and violent shaking.'

Prisoner Abd al-Samad Harizat died of a brain haemorrhage caused by the 'tiltul' shaking torture. This is used because it can be presented as a gentle treatment that cannot be predicted to be fatal.

Israel is one of the few countries where the torture techniques allowed are actually set out in official (but secret) police guidelines.

A new law will specifically absolve police torturers from the effects of their activities. Israel is one of the many torture countries whose security forces receive British training.

The Kenyan police use torture not only against political prisoners, but also against common criminals, often drawn from the poorest and most oppressed sections of society.

Whippings and beatings on various parts of the body, especially the feet and genitals are a

speciality. Extraction of finger nails, hanging upside-down during beatings and rape are common.

A few courageous magistrates have sometimes spoken out against these practices, but torture is usually ignored. Unlike in Israel, torture is illegal in Kenya and the government denies that it occurs.

Ignoring evidence to the contrary, British governments have continued to provide training for the Kenyan police.

Mexican police have developed one of the widest repertoires of torture techniques — and these are directed mostly against Mexico's poor fighting against exploitation and oppression.

Revolt

The recent peasants' revolt in the Chiapas has been met by brutal treatment of prisoners. Amnesty quotes the example of 18-year-old Julieta Flores Castillo who was raped and tortured using electric shocks, suffocation and beatings in December 1995 for joining a land protest.

Many other groups are also targeted, including trade unionists, peasant organisers, gay rights activists, human rights lawyers and even troublesome judges.

Mexico has its own industry producing torture instruments. Not surprisingly the British government yet again supplies training for this country's security forces.

Turkey — one of Britain's NATO allies — practises torture extensively against trade unionists, political dissidents, human rights campaigners and Kurdish activists. Police have even followed injured prisoners to hospital to continue the torture.

Favoured methods are those that leave little external evidence — hosing with cold water, hanging by the arms, death threats, electrical shocks and rape of both men and women. Guess which government has been providing training for Turkey's police!

An important element that emerges from the Amnesty report is that torture is not being applied just to political prisoners, but increasingly to ordinary criminals.

The brutalisation of state treatment of criminality is a growing phenomenon in all parts of the capitalist world, including Britain, and is an important aspect of increasingly repressive (and desperate) social control.

Given the British government's complicity in the use of violent interrogation and control techniques abroad can it be long before these methods are applied in Britain's overcrowded and increasingly uncontrollable prisons?

Major's response to this Amnesty campaign will be predictable — total silence.

■ *A Glimpse of Hell: Reports of Torture World-wide, published by Amnesty International UK, 99-119 Rosebury Avenue, London EC1R 4RE. Price £12.99*

DOING BUSINESS WITH KARADZIC

THE US government says elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina can go ahead for September, with Serb war criminal Radovan Karadzic still at large in his so-called 'Republika Srpska', and promises about free movement ignored.

BY CHARLIE POTTINS

'Ethnic cleansing' continues. Kris Janowski of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) said hundreds of people had left Teslic in central Bosnia because of Serb nationalist harassment.

'It is outrageous,' he said. 'We know it has happened. We are extremely worried by it. It is a blow to the repatriation process.'

Janowski said Serbs had banned UNHCR buses crossing inter-ethnic boundaries. 'The Bosnian Serbs have banned our bus from Banja Luka to Zenica, just like they did with our bus in the Sarajevo area.'

He said the UNHCR would continue its bus service, set up to promote confidence and freedom of movement, despite the ban.

'As far as we are concerned these are UNHCR vehicles and nobody can stop them.' Several women were injured when buses were stoned near Prijedor. More were attacked near Teslic.

UN spokespersons accused Serb authorities in Prijedor of organising mobs to stop Bosnian refugees visiting their homes.

Five houses in Dugi Dio, a village near Zvornik, were

destroyed by explosives, detonated in the early hours of the morning by professionals, according to UN spokesperson A. Ivanko. The Muslim village was handed over to the Republika Srpska under the Dayton agreement.

Elections could be held before the 14 September deadline, a Bosnia and Herzegovina official with the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) commission agreed, but they would neither be really democratic nor help to end the country's division, under present conditions.

'The main problems are freedom of movement and media, above all in the Serb entity, although the situation in the federation is not ideal,' he told parliament.

MPs warned against legalising genocide by denying refugees the right to vote where they came from. Fears were also raised of vote-rigging.

In Vienna, the International Helsinki Federation said almost none of the conditions was met for free elections. Urging the OSCE to resist political pressures, it warned that accepting the results of 'ethnic cleansing' would have negative consequences for any lasting peace.

Western governments' attempts to raise false hopes that Karadzic was backing down have heightened dismay among his Serb opponents. Karadzic

replaced his prime minister with a more hardline one. People in Banja Luka fear their mayor will go next.

In Belgrade, President Milosevic met Karadzic and General Mladic ahead of a visit by US mediator John Kornblum. But talk of putting pressure on the war criminals came to nothing. Officials in Pale said anyone who believed Karadzic would step down was 'crazy'.

On 2 June, pre-empting the OSCE's report, US Secretary of State Warren Christopher said elections would 'go forward on schedule'.

Bosnian UN ambassador Muhammed Sacirbey said: 'We feel like we are in a car, behind the steering wheel, while the West is stepping on the gas.'

The Clinton administration wants Bosnia out of the way before its own elections in November.

Media

But Bosnian Serb media have also broken the news that Barents Group, a subsidiary of top US accounting firm KPMG Peat Marwick, has entered a major 'mutual co-operation' pact with Karadzic to build a privatised economy. Barents and the Swiss firm Interchem Investments signed agreements after two days of discussions last month.

The plans include revamping the road network and establish-

ing a rail link through the Posavina Corridor, linking Serbia with Serb-held territory in western Bosnia. Hydro-electric schemes would be restored, and there could be a stock exchange at Pale.

KPMG Peat Marwick said later that Barents 'will not undertake any privatisation work in Srpska until the government leadership issue in that country is resolved and a leadership acceptable to the international community is in place.'

But Bosnian Serb officials said they were not aware of any suspension, and praised the contracts for helping to create a separate Bosnian Serb economy. 'Everything is going ahead, as far as we know,' said a senior official.

'These are two very important agreements for us,' Karadzic told Serbian officials. 'We believe our drive to privatise and develop in the coming months will increase with the help of these companies, which have worldwide experience.'

Swiss company president Berndt Robertz said there was nothing illegal about his firm's deal.

'We are not making contracts with single people, but governments,' he said. 'We make agreements to help people. We handle medical supplies and do some engineering and consultancy work. We do not supply military equipment.'

The Greek telecommunications firm OTE has offered a

400,000 Deutschmark 'master plan' for Republika Srpska's civil and military communications, enabling it 'not to be in telephone dependency on the other entity', a Serb official said. (The Dayton agreement promised one Bosnia.)

Having backed Serb nationalism throughout the war, the Greek government, a NATO and European Union member, is providing \$100m credits as part of investment in Republika Srpska, the Banja Luka newspaper *Glas Srpski* reports.

Priority

Karadzic said his priority would be rebuilding a 1,200 megawatt hydro-electric plant.

'This plant alone is worth \$1.2 billion. One of the best investments in the world is an investment in the hydro-electric facilities in Republika Srpska. The investment will be paid back in three and a half years.'

Other projects discussed include refurbishing of oil refineries and pipelines in Modrica.

'We want to privatise,' Karadzic said. 'We want to achieve an effective, free society and a free economy. KPMG will help us to establish a new methodology for our privatisation.'

With fascist thugs terrorising opponents, workers' resistance will not be easy. The working class in Bosnia needs solidarity, not sermons.

Aussie unis fight cuts

UNIVERSITIES closed across Australia on 30 May as an estimated 30,000 staff and students joined a day of action against cuts in education. Traffic was stopped in several cities by demonstrations.

The federal government wants to cut up to 12 per cent from the higher education budget. Even three per cent would mean fewer student places, fewer staff, and reduced quality of education, said Dr Carolyn Allport of the National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU).

The University of New South Wales was closed for the day, and building workers refused to cross picket lines. There was 98 per cent support at Macquarie University. Nearly 5,000 students and staff attended a rally in Sydney.

In Victoria, the union reported 100 per cent support at the College of Agriculture and 90 per cent at the University of Melbourne and the art college. There was a 6,000-strong rally in Queensland. The strike was also supported in Western Australia, following a 2,000 rally.

In South Australia, where a 4,000-strong rally marched to senator Vanstone's office, trade unionists blamed excessive force by police for violence that broke out when a student was arrested, for allegedly trying to break into the senator's office.

Some universities tried to intimidate general staff by requiring them to hand in leave applications before they joined the strike.

But NTEU president Carolyn Allport said the strength of support for the strike by general and academic staff had exceeded all expectations.

'There has been over 90 per cent compliance with the strike, and most campuses have been closed down', she said.

University staff salaries had fallen seriously behind those of comparable workers in the public and private sectors.

'You can't pretend that you're funding the sector properly if staff aren't being paid what they're worth,' Dr Allport said.

See pages 4 and 5 for more on strike and about Australia.

BY DAVID DORFMAN

ISRAELI troops fought Palestinian youth in the West Bank town of Hebron last week. There are warnings that after right-winger Binyamin Netanyahu's election win, there could be a renewal of the Palestinians' Intifada, the popular uprising of the 1980s.

Netanyahu stated during the election that he would ditch the Labour government's promise to withdraw most troops from Hebron.

Some 400 Zionist settlers remain in the Hebron area, many of them fanatics like Baruch Goldstein who carried out the mosque massacre, and they



Israeli soldier in Hebron

expect the Israeli military to continue guarding them.

Labour has deferred its decision, leaving it to Netanyahu. After last week's riot he said troops would be withdrawn 'before long'.

Netanyahu has also ruled out any discussion on the future status of Jerusalem, which was unilaterally annexed by the State of Israel. Arab East Jerusalem is gradually being enfolded by Israeli settlements, cutting it off from its hinterland.

Former Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, Netanyahu's predecessor as leader of the Likud party, says Netanyahu should renege on Israel's agreements with the Palestinians, and hold on to the whole West Bank and Gaza.

Likud's main component, the Herut movement, was committed to a Jewish state on both banks of the river Jordan. The US-trained Netanyahu may be more pragmatic, if only to avoid giving Washington problems, but right-wing ideology could remain a problem for him.

Likud lost seats in the elections. It is counting on the support of small parties even further to the right to help form a government; and on religious parties, for whom the right to hold terri-

tory has become literally an article of faith.

They cheerfully turned a blind eye on Netanyahu's well-publicised adultery and lack of religion, and urged support for him. They will not be so tolerant when enforcing their way on the Israeli public, let alone the Palestinians.

When the New York-based Chabad hasidic movement put up posters saying a vote for Likud would be 'good for the Jews', nobody missed the point — the racist right's gibe for some time was that Labour's majority was due to Arab votes, implying these shouldn't count. Ideas like this motivated the killer of Yitzhak Rabin.

Downfall

Labour contributed to its own downfall. For decades it assisted the religious establishment, with subsidies for schools, and acceptance of religious coercion, and after 1967 it encouraged the settlers.

A survey last year by the newspaper *Ha'aretz* found at least 60 per cent of West Bank and Gaza settlers were in public employment. Many are in well-paid sinecures (including 300 religious councils paid for by the taxpayer) affording plenty of time off to demonstrate.

After the murder of Rabin — himself notorious for ordering Israeli troops to 'break the bones' of Palestinian youth in the Intifada — public revulsion brought an upsurge of support for Labour as the supposed 'peace' party.

It had a 20 per cent lead over Likud. Prime Minister Shimon Peres threw this away; by letting the Mossad intelligence assassinate a Hamas leader, which brought bloody reprisals on Israeli civilians; and by going to war in Lebanon, with the massacre of Lebanese civilians.

Accepting the murderous logic was bound to strengthen the Right.

With troubled President Clinton facing elections this year, Israel 'doves' and Palestinian 'moderates' may be disappointed if they're expecting Washington to rein Netanyahu in.

Palestinians will need to organise popular resistance as they did in the Intifada, reject Hamas terrorist methods, and demand a struggle against imperialism throughout the Arab world.

Israelis who want peace must organise solidarity, disobedience in the forces, and working-class opposition — not a shekel nor a person for oppression.

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