

# HANDS OFF IRAQ!

**THE working class movement in Britain and throughout the world must oppose by every possible means the threatened war against Iraq by British and US imperialism.**

Workers throughout the world must stand for the unconditional defence of Iraq against imperialism.

Why is the Clinton administration preparing for war against the regime of Saddam Hussein? One thing is sure. This threat of war has nothing to do with the defence of 'democracy' against 'dictatorship'.

The rulers of Britain and the US have long supported the most bloody dictatorships throughout the world — whenever it has served their interests.

**BY GEOFF PILLING**

The word hypocrisy is written over everything the 'great powers' do in the Middle East.

■ Clinton defends Kuwait and Saudi Arabia — both vicious, anti-working-class semi-feudal regimes. Meanwhile he pretends that he wants to restore 'democracy' in Haiti.

■ At the same time France demands that sanctions against Iraq be lifted.

This is the same France that supports a brutal war against the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) in Algeria; the same

France that backs a reactionary Islamic dictatorship in Sudan, where its oil interests compete with those of US and British companies.

France, like Russia, wants sanctions against Iraq lifted because it sees rich pickings in a renewed arms trade with Saddam.

■ Like the imperialists as a whole, Clinton has stood by and watched Saddam carry out a brutal war against the Kurds of

northern Iraq, and a vicious campaign against all working-class opposition to his rule.

■ Only last week the Turkish regime wiped out 17 villages in eastern Turkey in their continuing war of genocide against the Kurdistan Workers Party.

## Atrocities

The imperialists support these atrocities. Why? Because the Ankara regime is directly subservient to big business in the Middle East.

■ US imperialism did not finish off Saddam in the last Gulf

war because for them, in the face of any alternative regime, he remains a source of 'stability', a safeguard of their interests.

Clinton's decision to prepare for war against Iraq is inspired by fears that if the sanctions against Iraq are lifted and their oil comes onto the world market, this would send its price tumbling and hit the powerful oil monopolists.

The British and US governments repeat the demand that 'sanctions against Saddam Hussein be kept in place'. But the sanctions do not hit Saddam and

the rulers of Iraq.

They hit the workers and oppressed of that country. It is the poor, the elderly, children, and the workers who are suffering from lack of medicines and food.

The Mark Thatcher scandal this week has shown that for the bankers and the arms manufacturers the only thing that matters in the Middle East is not democracy but money.

It is rumoured that the French intelligence services leaked the Thatcher story because they want to win arms contracts in the Middle East

against British arms manufacturers.

The ruling classes of Europe and the US now scream for war against Iraq, deliberately whipping up the threat of war in the region, because for them there are vast profits to be made through such activities.

The working class in Britain and the rest of the world must stand firm against the war.

- Hands off Iraq!
- Against imperialist skulduggery in the Middle East!
- Halt the threat of war against Iraq!



Last Sunday's march in London against the Criminal Justice Bill began in good humour. Report on press coverage, p3  
Photo: Marg Nicol

## Police provocation at anti-bill march

**BY BOB ARCHER**

HEAVY-HANDED policing was evident right from the start of last Sunday's demonstration in central London against the Criminal Justice Bill. Two lines of ten mounted officers trotted at the head of the march, followed by a crowd of press photographers and then another thick wedge of over 30 police on foot.

Only then came the actual marchers, singing, banging drums and dancing happily.

Labour MP Jeremy Corbyn has demanded a public inquiry into the clashes between demonstrators and police in Park Lane.

The police directed the march from the Embankment up past the Ministry of Defence in Whitehall and into Trafalgar Square, which was provocatively guarded by a further squad of mounted police. The march took an hour to pass across the south side of Trafalgar Square on its way to Hyde Park.

The tail of the march was followed at a distance by another huge contingent of police on foot. Behind them a

further squad of police harried a lorry-based sound-system which was trying to participate in the march.

Police tow-trucks had systematically removed vehicles parked along the route of the march. Helicopters circled overhead as police lines sealed off side streets, sullenly preventing marchers even from passing through to use public toilets.

The whole message from the policing operation was that this was a hostile and potentially violent demonstration.

In fact the atmosphere of the march was for the most part relaxed and peaceful. The mainly young women and men laughed, shouted humorous slogans and danced as they marched along Pall Mall.

People juggled Indian clubs and gave each other piggy-back rides as they surged along. A further huge police presence, including a great blockade of police riot vans, nervously sealed off side-streets from the marchers.

'Freedom from oppression', demanded one bright hand-painted banner. 'Knees up' ● TURN TO PAGE 3

## SOUTH AFRICA £5,000 FUND

THE time you read this members of the South African section of Workers International to Rebuild the Fourth International will be holding their conference to discuss the response to the events in their country.

But on Friday 7 October we had only raised £180 of the money needed to do so. Yet the following Tuesday our fund had grown to £2,060 — the list of donors too long to publish. Thanks to to everyone who responded to this appeal we made the conference possible.

We rushed the cheques and cash to bank, transferred funds to our members in South Africa and faxed copies of the transaction so they could collect the money immediately to buy bus tickets to the conference that very evening.

It was also the eleventh hour when we finally got a flight from London to Johannesburg for a comrade from Britain to attend the conference.

The 'new' South Africa is witnessing continuing, widespread strikes and demonstrations of workers demanding democratic rights, living wages, housing and land rights — denied for so long under apartheid, and 'promised' by their leaders in the government of national unity.

Millions fought under the leadership of the African National Congress and South African Communist Party believing that real socialism existed in the USSR and eastern Europe.

The break-up of the Stalinist bureaucracy is having a profound effect.

The SACP now has at least five factions and the trade union federation COSATU is being pressed by many leading workers to break with the ANC and build an independent workers' party.

Now we must press ahead to collect the balance — £2,940 for thousands of copies of a special pamphlet to campaign for the Johannesburg socialist conference on 5-6 November and for a delegation to come to Britain.

Please send donations quickly. Ensure your copy of our South African comrades' paper, 'Workers International News' — £10 for ten issues, £5.50 for five. Send money to the Workers International, South Africa Appeal, PO Box 735, London, SW8 1YB. Cheques, etc., payable to 'South Africa Appeal'.

**Workers Aid for Bosnia**  
**Irish Night for Bosnia**  
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8pm-12 midnight, Camden Irish Centre,  
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Irish bands □ dancing □ buffet. Tickets £3 (£1 conc.)

**Workers Aid's**  
**convoy sets off**  
The latest Workers Aid convoy to Bosnia has set off, departing from Britain and Spain. The Spanish team was joined by comrades in the Brazilian United Socialist Workers Party. See p3.

**On other pages:**  
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Midlands coalfields on edge of tragedy; Youth low pay page 7

**WHAT** faces the working class after the Labour Party conference? This must be a question in the minds of thousands of workers and Labour voters after the events at Blackpool.

While the conference was in session, what was the situation facing the working class? Millions face the hardship of unemployment. The benefits that the most oppressed depend upon are under attack.

Only a movement that sets out to defend those under attack and turns this defence into an offensive movement to clear out big business can serve the interests of the working class.

In the light of this, what actually happened at Blackpool?

■ The Blair-Prescott leadership want to ditch Clause Four from the constitution. This again marks a turning-point.

Whatever the intention of Sydney Webb when he wrote this clause into the party's constitution after the 1917 Russian Revolution, this is the clause that commits the party to the common ownership of the means of production.

Blair and company want to ditch it to finally reassure big business that they have abandoned any connection with socialism, even in words.

■ The Labour leaders now reject the 'welfare state'. Blair trumpets the supposed virtues of the 'market economy'. It is rumoured that the Commission on Social Justice (the body set up by the Labour Party leaders to report on the future of the 'welfare state') is to recommend that the statutory right to a retirement pension be withdrawn.

Only those that the state thinks need a pension will get one. Others will have to fend for themselves.

■ Blair offers the Gang of Four readmission to the Labour Party. Roy Jenkins, David Owen, Shirley Williams and Bill Rogers — all now peers — tried to destroy the Labour Party when they formed the Social Democratic Party.

# Workers Press

## After Blackpool: what next?

By asking them back into the fold Blair makes clear that he is ready to join an anti-working-class coalition with the Liberals, even with sections of the Tory Party, after the next election.

■ If elected to office, the Labour Party leaders will undoubtedly do what Kinnock intended had he become prime minister after the last general election: to pass a bill through parliament for the state financing of political parties.

This would enable the Labour leaders to finally break their links with the trades unions and therefore sever completely their connections with the labour movement.

\* \* \* \* \*

**THE fact that Blair and co. now want to end that link is an important turning-point not simply in the history of the Labour Party but in the situation facing the working class.**

For the last 90 years or so, the great majority of workers have given their support to the Labour Party as a means of trying to unite politically as a class.

In the past, the strongest sections of the working class, organised in trades unions, were able to win improvements in living standards and conditions against the employers.

Can any group of workers now defend themselves by means of the existing trades unions? Unemployment has brought about a steep decline in union membership. Millions of workers are unorganised, struggling to live on below-poverty-level wages.

At the same time the trade union leaders collaborate openly with the state to further undermine the fighting

capacity and independence of the unions from the state, and to stamp out what is left of any democracy in the unions.

While maintaining a strong trade union movement to defend themselves against the employers, workers tried, by electing Labour governments, to defend and extend the sort of concessions they won from the ruling class under the immediate post-war Attlee government: retirement pensions, unemployment and sickness benefits and free medical care.

The intensity of the crisis of capitalism means that the ruling class must carry out a determined assault on the 'welfare state'. This is what 'Thatcherism' expressed. Any government that accepts the capitalist system is now obliged to carry out the same policies.

This is the role that Blair and Prescott were preparing at Blackpool. It is not a question of whether they are 'worse' than their predecessors, such as Hugh Gaitskell or Neil Kinnock.

The role of the trade union and Labour Party leaders throughout the century has been to tie the working class to the needs of capitalism.

In the past these leaders did this by being able to get concessions for a minority of workers. Now this is not possible. A Labour government, like the present Tory government, will be forced to attack the working class on all fronts. It is for this role that Blair, Prescott and co. prepare. This is why they are winning support from sections of big business.

\* \* \* \* \*

**THE genuine feeling for the defence**

of Clause Four seen at Blackpool, only 48 hours after Blair proposed that it be dropped, overturned the leadership position.

We support completely all those who are fighting against the leadership's attempt to get rid of Clause Four. We will find every way possible to collaborate in the defence of Clause Four. But the fact remains. The working class is at a turning-point in its relations with the Labour Party. Blair and company want to break all links with the working class.

Mike Mansfield QC, speaking at the rally following the march against the Criminal Justice Bill last weekend, said that if the Labour leaders were to continue on their present path, then some other form of organisation would have to be considered.

We believe that Blair and company, because they accept completely the rotting capitalist system, must continue on their present trajectory.

\* \* \* \* \*

**THE question arises: what sort of movement or party does the working class now require, one that is able to serve its real interests?**

We believe that the working class now needs a party through which it can unite in the struggle against capitalism and in the fight for socialism.

As far as we are concerned this must be a party based on Marxism. It must be one that is not tied to capitalism through the nation state. That is it must be an internationalist party.

This issue of a new party for the working class is one that Workers Press has been raising for the last year and more. It will be an issue we will discuss at our coming congress.

We invite all members of the Labour Party who oppose the course being taken by Blair and Prescott to join us in a discussion about the sort of party the working class now needs.

Bronwen Handyside reports

## Two nations



### Who says miracles don't happen?

ERNEST SAUNDERS must be one of the luckiest men in history. In 1991 he was released from prison on 'compassionate grounds', after serving a scant ten months of a five-year sentence on 12 counts of fraud involving the multi-million-pound Guinness scandal.

Six months later he made the first full recovery in medical history from the Alzheimer's disease which had prompted the court to cancel the rest of his sentence.

Shortly after leaving Ford open prison, Saunders was photographed playing tennis. Within a year he was back in the saddle in the business world — giving lectures on business ethics and 'sustainable recovery' (not his own, but the economy's).

He is now working with the Carphone Warehouse, and is president of Stambridge Associates.

The doctor who diagnosed Saunders's Alzheimer's in prison was a Patrick Galloway. He now says: 'It does look now as if the diagnosis was wrong but looking back I think, thank God, I am perfectly happy to be wrong. My conscience is perfectly clear.'

Galloway found when he examined Saunders in prison that 'he was confused, unable to express himself, and at one point

failed to remember how he had entered a room.'

A second doctor also concluded that Saunders was in a bad way — not only did he think Gerald Ford was president of the US, although the Gulf war was going on at the time, he had never heard of Chief-of-staff Colin Powell.

A third doctor was not so impressed. Dr Perkin, a consultant neurologist at Charing Cross hospital, said: 'There was never enough evidence to prove he had Alzheimer's.'

While Dr Perkin had wanted to wait six months and examine Saunders again, Dr Galloway said: 'Saunders only had about a year to do, and if we had hung on he would have lost six months of his life in prison. I thought the humane thing was for him to be released to enjoy what time he had left.'

That, we must presume, is exactly what he is doing.

### Not to be forgotten

ON THE other side of the class divide, the legal and medical departments are not quite so caring. Despite successful challenges against wrongful imprisonment the number of people being jailed for non-payment of the poll tax continues to increase.

From October 1993 to March 1994, 620 were jailed, compared with 582 in the period April to September 1993 and 434 in the previous six months.

### The yaks had the right idea

LAST week the Duchess of York set off on yet another world trip — not as you sceptics might think, in order to have a good time, but to promote a charity called the 'MacIntyre Foundation'.

After flying to Kenya — all expenses paid — she spent her first night at Mombasa's Serena hotel, followed by an overnight stay at the exclusive Mount Kenya safari club. The visit was nicely rounded off by a black-tie dinner at the Norfolk hotel in Nairobi.

The cost of the trip amounts to quite a few thousand quid.

Apparently the MacIntyre Foundation helps 'about a hundred people' in Kenya. They could probably help about a hundred more with the cash spent on the Duchess's trip.

The same charity sponsored Fergie's trip up Everest last year — undertaken to convince the proletariat that she was not a soggy-toed slacker, but a hard-working upstanding member of a fine upstanding family.

Following in one of the finest old traditions of the European aristocracy, Fergie brought back one of the natives — a Nepalese sherpa — as a servant, and a curiosity for her household.

In the same glorious old bone-headed tradition she calls him by a pet name — 'Yeltsin' — because she can't pronounce his own.

He carried her rucksack, put up her tent, and saved her from a herd of yaks — so she brought him home with her. As that hideous old bat Barbara Cartland says: 'Darling, you really can't find good help anywhere.'

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

## Workers Press £3,000 Monthly Fund

I HAVE reported in a previous column that the WRP is not the only party to have financial shortfalls — the Tories themselves have a considerable debt that is still a cause of worry to the government.

They've also recently lost a lot of backing from big business and the Asil Nadir money was an all-round embarrassment.

So can't those thousands of Tory party members cough-up some more? Apparently not. Its membership is . . . not wealthy enough to make significant donations to party funds,' according to the 'Guardian' (10 October).

A book by Paul Whitely, Patrick Seyd and Jeremy Richardson, 'True Blues' (Oxford University Press, £12.95) reports that 45 per cent of Tories have a household income of less than £15,000.

This 'lack' of income among the overwhelmingly middle-class membership is supposedly a reflection of an ageing party. Almost half the members of Conservative associations are more than 66 years old. The average

age is 62. The situation is set to get worse. These results are based on a survey of 2,466 members out of an estimated 750,000.

The same authors in a report in 1992 found that Labour was in a sociologically 'rosier' condition — there were as many members below 45 as above. I suspect that the 'Guardian' was gilding the lily, since I have found it increasingly reluctant to report on Labour's weaknesses.

I'm not comparing the WRP with these bourgeois parties — our members are far more dedicated and give far more to our movement than the average £20 a year coughed up by your average Tory member.

We are fighting to rebuild and build anew the working-class movement to fulfil its socialist tasks. The Tories and the Labour leaders are defending an established order that's fast crumbling away.

And our party is not restricted to Britain. In South Africa the Workers International to Rebuild the Fourth International has a

section that gained more than 5,000 votes in the provincial elections and is increasingly being looked to by the working class for advice.

And in Namibia the WRP is to stand in elections in December. So we need money for all our work — in Britain, Namibia, South Africa, and also for work started in Bosnia, eastern Europe and in our work to join up with many others in all the countries of the world.

Mike Cooke  
Send money to Workers Press,  
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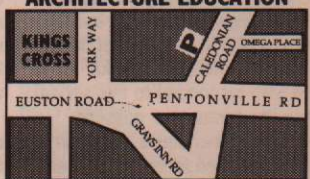
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# Press lies cover up for police oppression of anti-bill protest

**WHY some newspapers bother employing reporters at all is a mystery.**

After last Sunday's march in London against the Criminal Justice Bill, 'The Times', for example, reported the violence largely on the basis of police statements. It followed this by three short comments from the march's chief steward, Labour MP Jeremy Corbyn, and the deputy chief steward.

The police are expected to make statements bearing little relation to the truth, but the ease with which they do it still comes as a shock.

## Funny

'Can we police demonstrations with the officers wearing only ordinary beat uniforms when they are coming under savage attack?' asked chief su-

perintendent Richard Cullen, the most senior officer at the scene. Apparently this same Cullen told the 'Evening Standard':

'[H]ow officers — mostly in ordinary uniforms and without the protection of riot shields and crash helmets — came under a barrage of missiles from a hard core of anarchists who had

come prepared for riot and pilage'.

Funny how every picture you see in the papers, including the 'Evening Standard' itself, shows the police fully kitted out in protective clothing, crash helmets, riot shields and batons/clubs.

## Swerve

No mention either of the mounted police charging through crowds in the park in scenes reminiscent of the 1819 Peterloo massacre. Several people were knocked down by the horses. I saw one mounted police officer swerve his horse to make sure he hit one demonstrator.

One man was arrested dur-

ing these charges because he insisted on continuing to pick up litter yards in front of the horsemen of the Apocalypse preparing to charge.

Fortunately, unlike Peterloo, the police decided this tactic would not get them anywhere and it was called off.

Much has been made of the CS gas. Certainly some, but not all police were wearing masks on top of all their other clobber. When the canister went off it affected demonstrators as much as, if not more than the police. I sneezed and saw some watery eyes around me.

While, as usual, they underestimated the size of the march — police put it at 20,000, while organisers say 500,000 took part — the police grossly overesti-

mated those prepared beforehand to do battle with the police.

'A hard core of six or seven hundred people have spoilt a legitimate protest,' said Cullen. 'It seems as if it was fully orchestrated.'

They had CS gas and bricks, and these are not things they found on the route.'

## Intention

Later Cullen goes further: 'The people we should be condemning are the 2,000 or so who come with the intention of fighting the police.'

Now there were probably more than 2,000 people at the demonstration who wouldn't mind seeing the police getting, in the immortal words of Bernie Grant, 'a bloody good hiding'.

But apart from 'violently running away' — perhaps that's what Cullen meant when he described the 'hard core' as 'co-wardly', the traditional epithet on such occasions — when the 'peaceful' baton-wielding riot squad charged, the majority did nothing more than shout in unison 'Fuck off' at the police lines.

## Handful

It was a mere handful that threw placard poles, beer cans, burning leaves and sand. I didn't see any bricks at all.

Funny, too, was the fact that where there were no police

lines there was no violence.

And why did it start? People had the audacity to want to take their music into Hyde Park.

For a long time the trucks were stuck outside the park with people gyrating around to the music on the three trucks, while an orange-faced fire-eater blew smoke rings into the air.

A friend who was with me suggested that we record the demonstration and sell the sound track the atmosphere was so surreal.

## Diverted

Then the white truck at the front started to bounce towards the police, to applause and cheers from those gathered around. This truck went through the police lines and then was diverted away from the park. The first scuffles then started.

The police drove a van into the gap that was left. Some time later the second and third trucks advanced.

Then they turned off into the park and at this point the police gave up apart from a line of police in 'ordinary uniform' — the only time they were. A partial victory was won. But later, I saw the lead truck being driven off by yellow-jacketed police.

It was petty police opposition to this minor act of 'civil disobedience' that raised the anger of the crowd. It's a case of no police, no problem.

## Police provocation against marchers

● FROM FRONT PAGE  
Mother Earth', suggested another. 'Defend diversity, defend dissent! Wake up, democracy dying!', warned a third. One marcher simply carried a child's toy windmill on a stick. One big cloth-banner had, without comment, a brightly coloured picture of a penguin.

Other banners said: 'We will party, we will picket, CJB, you can stick it!'; 'Fight 4 your right 2 live'; 'Stop trying to kill our culture'; 'Defending our mother earth is no crime'; 'Peaceful protest criminalised'; 'Free speech! Free parties! Free beer!'

The carrier of a placard

saying 'Love the police, hate the bill' later ripped off the word 'Love'.

T-shirts proclaimed slogans ranging from 'Trees not Tarmac' to the old trade union favourite, 'Educate — Agitate — Organise'.

In addition to having its banner on the march, the Fire Bri-

gades Union had sponsored the official placard that read: 'Fight for the right to PROTEST PICKET PARTY'.

There was a much higher union representation than the march earlier this summer, although there was no large-scale turn-out of organised workers.

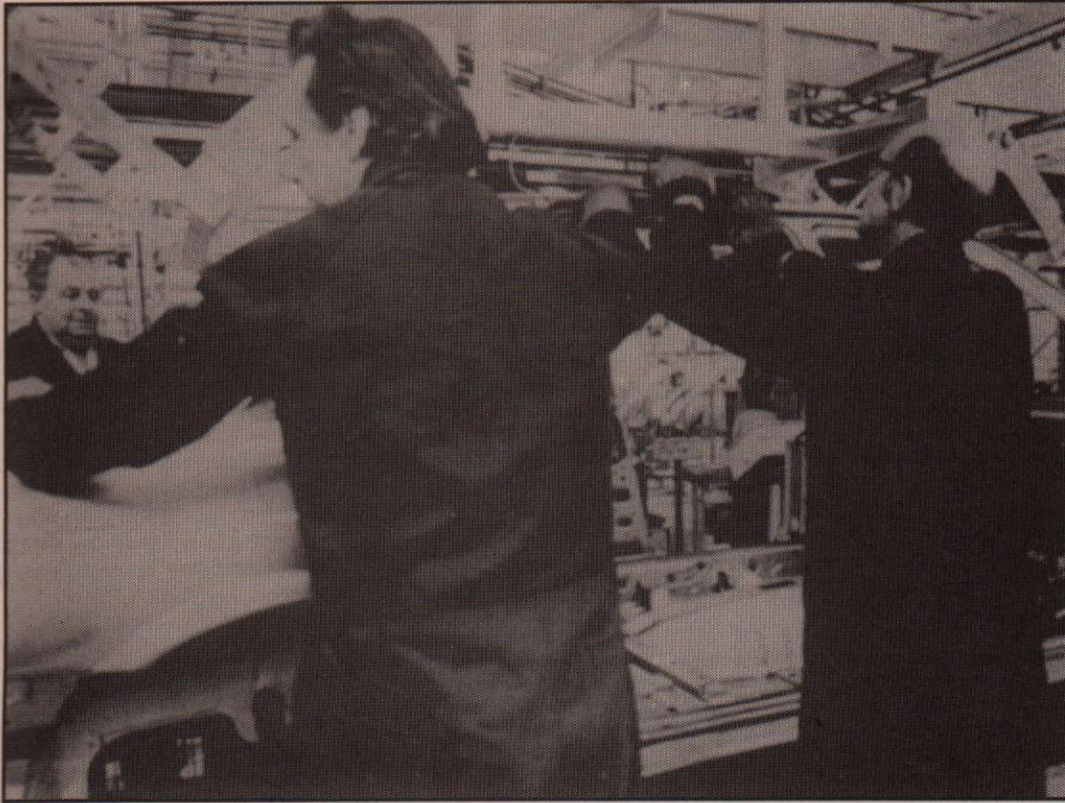
Local union branch banners came from across the movement: the public service union UNISON, the Rail, Maritime and Transport union, the GMB general union, the National Union of Teachers, the Manufacturing Science and Finance union, the Association of University Teachers, the National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education, the broadcasting union BECTU, the Society of Telephone Executives, and the Union of Communications Workers.

## Banners

Ipswich, Portsmouth and Rotherham trades council banners were on the march, together with Crook UCATT building workers from County Durham.

The Association of Probation Officers had their national banner on the march.

Student union banners came from Bangor, Staffordshire University, University of Westminster, Pimlico, and others. Labour and Socialist Workers' student clubs also brought banners.



A relaxed protest was given the heavy hand by police — but the press gave the police view

## Workers Aid lorries off to Bosnia

BY BOB MYERS

THE latest Workers Aid for Bosnia convoy has left for Tuzla, in the north-east of the country. Six lorries from Spain and Britain are carrying food, medicine, clothes and parcels from refugees.

The British team includes

representatives of the Wallsend People's Centre, Tyneside, as well as drivers from previous convoys, a member of Anti-Fascist Action from Edinburgh, and a young student who left the Militant group over its refusal to support Workers Aid. Faruk Ibrahimovic from Tuzla is also travelling with the convoy.

The British team spent some time campaigning in France.

First in Lille with members of the Sarajevo Committee, who had arranged meetings with local trade union representatives and with local and regional government representatives. Both pledged support for the November convoy, and Workers Aid lorries will return to Lille to collect aid for Tuzla's schools.

The team then went on to St Avol to stay with refugees who

had collected aid for Tuzla trades unions. The Spanish lorries are also carrying representatives of the United Socialist Workers Party (PSTU) from Brazil.

Members of the convoy will stop over in Tuzla for the November conference called in solidarity with all those parties standing in the forthcoming Bosnian election that oppose ethnic division.

## Last pit in Lancashire is levelled

BY SETH DRYSDALE

THE last remaining pit in the Lancashire coalfield was finally levelled last Sunday. With the pit camp evicted and the campaign against pit closures effectively neutralised by the Labour and trade union bureaucracy, demolition crews felt safe to

dynamite the giant twin winding-towers at Parkside colliery, Newton-le-Willows, Merseyside.

From employing 49,000 men in 104 pits in Lancashire and Cheshire in 1945, there are now no collieries left.

The majority of local people, many ex-miners, were forced to watch the demolition from a distance, whilst security guards

and police, including a helicopter, insured only the press and invited dignitaries could have ringside seats.

This slap in the face for ex-miners and their supporters continues with British Coal's billing of Sylvia Pye, national executive member of Women Against Pit Closures, for the eviction order that was served on the women's pit camp at

Parkside a few weeks ago. She is being personally charged £16,000 for the eviction. She says this is designed to victimise a single person in order to frighten off collective action.

■ Donations to the Sylvia Pye National Appeal Fund, c/o Bernie Cavanagh, Common Road Nurseries, Common Road, Newton-le-Willows, Merseyside.

## Living proof of what the bill will mean

AT THE Hyde Park rally after the march against the Criminal Justice Bill, speakers from the Birmingham Six, the Bridgewater Four and the Winston Silcott campaigns were living evidence that British 'justice' railroads the innocent even before the new act becomes law.

An ebullient Andrew Puddephat, from civil rights group Liberty, listed the government's abuses of these rights this year alone, and warned: 'MPs can pass all the oppressive laws they want — they cannot make them stick. Liberty will be suing the government in the European Court every week.'

Judy McKnight, National Association of Probation Officers general secretary, suffered some barracking from elements who possibly do not appreciate her members' efforts on their behalf.

But National Union of Mineworkers president Arthur Scargill was strongly supported when he suggested the press should tell the full truth about support for the march: 'You'll lose your jobs, but you'll feel clean.'

'If this law is carried, it is

no good appealing to the European Court.' In was an obvious dig at Puddephat, he said: 'There is only one way to fight unjust laws — defy them.'

'If one thing has sickened me', Scargill went on, 'it is the attitude of the leadership of the Labour Party. There are millions of people who don't understand and won't accept the position of the Labour leadership. They should have opposed this rotten and unacceptable bill.'

## Freedom

A woman speaking for Sound Systems Incorporated said: 'We are all part of a new culture which rejects all materialism. It is based on freedom, tolerance and justice.'

Speakers at the rally, which was chaired by Jeremy Corbyn MP, included Paddy Hill of the Birmingham Six, Tony Benn MP, George Silcott (brother of Winston Silcott), Anthony Barnett of Charter 88, Brian Richardson of the Anti-Nazi League, Anne Whelan of the Bridgewater Four campaign, and Mike Mansfield QC on behalf of the coalition that organised the march.

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## Inside left

### Not just a 'detail'

IN July this year, South African police used killer dogs, tear-gas, stun grenades and rubber bullets against shopworkers on strike at Pick 'n' Pay supermarkets.

On 5 October, speaking about South Africa at the Labour Party conference, Garfield Davies, general secretary of Britain's Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers (USDAW), warned that political apartheid had been abolished but economic and social struggles remained. Davies was proud that his union was helping the South African shopworkers' union, and had invited delegates here. Yet even though he took extra time, the shopworkers' leader finished, to applause, without mentioning the Pick 'n' Pay strikers.

That evening, a Labour Party member asked me whether I'd watched any of the conference, and what I thought. I told him. He thought I was being unreasonable, expecting a speaker to mention 'every detail'. I said a strike by 20,000 shopworkers, during which strikers were savagely assaulted by police, was no small matter to leave out.

'Well, we know everything's not perfect, but you've got to give the African National Congress government a chance... you WRP people are never satisfied,' the Labour member said. I replied that it was the South African workers who were dissatisfied. Was he saying it was all right to set dogs on them, because they're black? He indignantly denied this.

Afterwards I thought, if Labour is returned to office, and continues capitalist attacks on the working class, 'socialists' like this will once again be demanding we 'give the labour government a chance'.

### Manager and mole

FOUR years ago, hard-line Stalinist Gary Lefley quit teaching at a north London comprehensive school to become general secretary of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND). Persuaded he had first-class managerial skills, CND abandoned pay parity to give him a higher salary than other staff.

During the Gulf war, CND headed big demonstrations and recruited new members. Within a year it faced financial crisis. The journal 'Sanity' was shut down. Long-serving staff were sacked. Gary Lefley survived Tory witch-hunts about his Stalinism, staff grumbles about his office golf practice, and a contretemps over a document, 'Socialism and Imperialist War: Theory and Practice in the 1990s', which expressed views that seemed not quite those of CND. He claimed it was just notes he'd been making for his own use.

Now CND has decided it can do without a general secretary. Lefley can apply for the post of office manager, at considerably less than his £22,000-plus salary. He claims someone is leaking information from CND. He may be right. Dedicated anti-CND campaigner Dr Julian Lewis at the Conservative Research Department has been sending Gary's 'notes' on nuclear proliferation to anyone interested.

### Room at the inn?

CHRISTMAS seems to come earlier every year. It's not just the crackers in Sainsbury's. The pub on the corner, empty since it tried to go 'upmarket' by upping prices, put a sign out weeks ago urging people to book early for parties. And a church near the Workers Press office is advertising a talk by Labour MP Frank Field, on 'Stable Families In Uncertain Times'.

Charlie Pottins

## As Nigerian workers and unions continue their fight against General Sani Abacha's military dictatorship, the Campaign for Independent Unionism has issued this statement, which has been edited

THE recent dissolution, by the federal military government, of the executives of the National Union of Petroleum and Natural Gas Workers (NUPENG), Petroleum and Natural Gas Senior Staff Association (PENGASSAN) and the leadership of the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) constitutes a gross violation of the independence of the Nigerian trade union movement.

This action and the imposition of unelected, puppet sole administrators on these bodies has set a dangerous precedent for employers both in the public and the private sectors to meddle in the affairs of industrial unions, in order to render the labour movement ineffective in the fight for the economic and political rights of its members and the advancement of the entire society.

It is a criminal infringement of the democratic rights of trade union members to elect their leaders and to remove them if they are found wanting. Nigerian workers and other oppressed sections of our society should not fold their arms and allow the state to brazenly usurp their rights.

### Mass action needed

ON 23 and 31 August, two different judges of the federal high court in Lagos gave interim orders *forbidding* the sole administrators who had been imposed from taking over the running of NUPENG and the NLC respectively. But as is now the norm, the government contemptuously disobeyed these judgements and the administrators took

over the secretariats of the unions and the NLC.

To crown it all, on Friday 2 September the junta issued a military decree retrospectively removing the jurisdiction of the courts over this issue.

This is further clear evidence that we cannot rely on the courts alone to defeat the draconian policies and actions of this regime. The enormous industrial power of the working class needs to be mobilised now for concrete action.

### Why the ban?

NUPENG and PENGASSAN are being persecuted by the military regime solely because of their principled stand and militant efforts to end military rule and put in place a democratically-elected government.

The historical, two-month-long strike of these oil workers' unions — which ended last month — paralysed economic and social activities in most parts of the country, and put the greatest pressure so far on the military dictatorship led by Abacha and Diya.

### The NLC

THE dissolution of the NLC executive led by Pascal Bafyau has come as a surprise to many workers and other Nigerians. This is because, over the years, the NLC leaders, particularly the incumbent president, comrade Pascal Bafyau, have acquired a reputation as collaborators with the government rather than as defenders of the interests of the masses.

For instance, many Nigerians were disappointed that instead of mobilising workers for concrete mass actions to establish democracy, the NLC leadership pinned all its hopes on *dialogue*, even when it was crystal clear that the Abacha regime was not ready to meet any of the workers' demands.

Nevertheless, we must resist the attack on the NLC executive. For it is a clampdown not simply on Pascal Bafyau or any other individual NLC leader, but the entire labour movement. We must tell the Abacha junta that the right to remove a union leader who does no

longer serve the interests of the labour movement rests with the rank-and-file members of labour and not with any government or employer.

The objective of Abacha and co. is not to strengthen the NLC or to make it serve the interests of workers. Rather it is to render the NLC even *weaker* than it is in order to impose leaders who will obediently take orders from the government and employers.

If we allow this anti-democratic government to get away scot free with its removal of the present weak NLC leaders, the same excuse will be given to remove radical or militant union leaders who defend the jobs and welfare of their members.

### Workers' unity essential

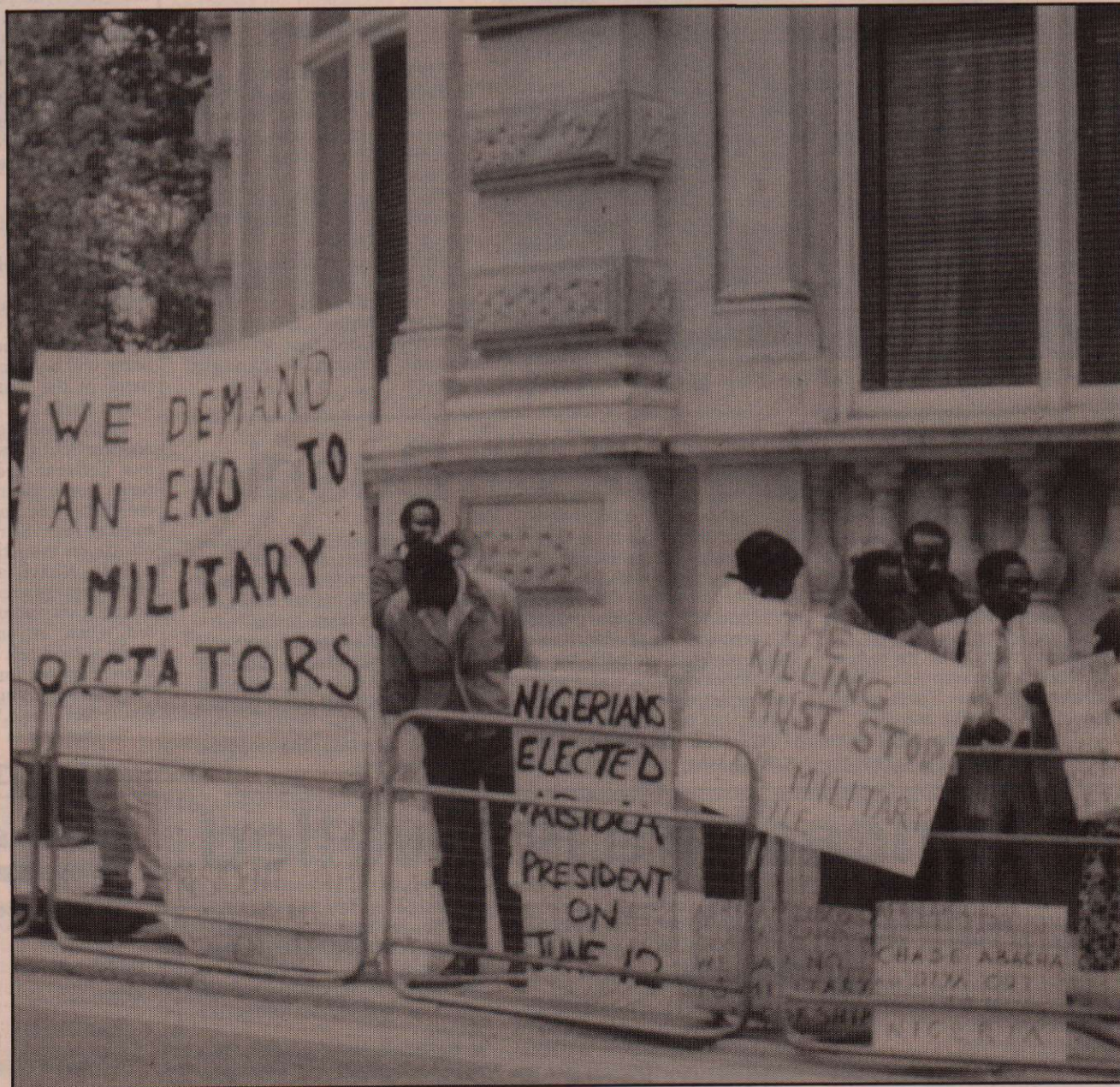
GENERAL Abacha and his regime seek to portray NUPENG and PENGASSAN's principled role in the struggle for democracy as sectional or ethnically motivated. This is nothing but the usual, yet dangerous divide-and-rule tactic used to weaken the growing mass opposition to the regime by splitting the Nigerian working class along ethnic and regional lines.

We must not allow ourselves to be hoodwinked. This government does not represent the genuine interests of workers, nor does it have any love for any section of Nigerian workers, either north, south, east or west.

For the sake of the labour movement and the survival and progress of the nation, Nigerian workers, irrespective of ethnic origin or religious affiliation, must join together to demand an end to the military dictatorship and a return to a democratic, civil rule, and to resist the current clampdown on workers' organisations.

### Politics and labour

NIGERIAN workers also reject the Abacha junta's claim that NUPENG, PENGASSAN and the NLC are being banned because of their involvement in political activities. No to any idea that the labour movement should as a class have nothing to do with politics.



A protest against the military regime was held outside the Nigerian highcommission in London on 30 September

# Har says

We, the workers, toil and suffer to produce the wealth of this nation. Therefore we cannot accept that we should be mere onlookers while a class of professional politicians, both military and civilian, decides on how wealth produced by our sweat and blood is distributed, much to our disadvantage.

In fact, if any group deserves to be penalised for its involvement in politics, it is Abacha, Diya and the other army generals. After all, does not the Nigerian constitution state that nobody can form a government except by constitutional means (i.e. by election)?

### Our demands

THROUGH a well-coordinated campaign of mass trade union action, the regime's clampdown can be defeated. In order to achieve victory, workers, trades unions, union branches, and supporters of the labour movement should advance the following demands:

■ Opposition to the dissolution of the executives and imposition of sole administrators. The immediate restoration of the dissolved executives.

■ NUPENG, PENGASSAN and NLC must defy the government's illegal acts. Industrial unions and state councils of NLC should mobilise the entire labour movement and organise *industrial action* and *protests* to defeat the regime's violation of our trade union rights.

■ All industrial unions and union branches to adopt a policy of non-recognition of and non-cooperation with the sole administrators. Industrial unions should withhold check-off dues from the NLC until the elected executives are restored.

NUPENG and PENGASSAN members should demand that their managements stop the deduction of check-off dues, and that the dues are paid to their elected leaders so that they can conduct activities democratically decided by the workers.

■ Labour movement solidarity actions and material support for NUPENG and PENGASSAN members and for other workers fighting for democracy and better working and living conditions.

■ For the NLC and industrial unions to adopt a clear, fighting programme to defend the economic and political rights of the working class and other oppressed states at all times.

# Union

BRITISH and Norwegian oil workers and the Manufacturing Science and Finance union have declared their support for the removal of the military regime in Nigeria, the African Liberation Support Campaign explained to the demonstration outside the Nigerian high commission in London on 30 September.

The joint statement issued by the Offshore Industry Liaison Com-

# Hands off our unions! Nigerian campaign

■ The democratisation of the structures of the NLC and the industrial unions to pave the way for real rank-and-file participation in decision-making, delegate conferences and the election of leaders.

■ Trade union officials, who should be accountable to rank-and-file members, should receive the average salary of a skilled worker and be subject to *immediate* recall by members if found wanting.

■ An end to the [International

Monetary Fund-imposed] Structural Adjustment Policy of retrenchment, privatisation, commercialisation and other policies directed at the poor.

■ The release of all political detainees including M.K.O. Abiola, Frank Kokori, Anthony Enshoro, Prince Ademola Adeniji-Adele, the NLC leaders in Edo state, etc.

■ An immediate end to military rule. The handing over of power to the winner of the 12 June 1993 pres-

idential elections. A multi-party democracy. An independent mass workers' political party.

## Support the struggle

THE Campaign for Independent Unionism (CIU) calls on all industrial unions, state and local branches of the NLC and industrial unions, other mass organisations, professional bodies, pro-democracy groups, and individual activists

to support and actively participate in this struggle to resist the attacks on labour.

We cannot afford to fold our arms. Any setback for labour is a setback for the struggle for democracy and a better society in Nigeria. We appeal to organisations and individuals to give material support (cash, printing papers, films and plates, etc.) to the campaign.

Finally, we call on workers and trade union bodies in all other coun-

tries to show international solidarity and give support to the cause for which Nigerian workers and the Nigerian people are fighting.

Solidarity for ever!

The union makes us strong!

This statement was issued by the Campaign for Independent Unionism. For more information call or write to the African Liberation Support Campaign (ALISC), PO Box 256, London SE11 5TH. Tel: 081-202 6292.



A demonstration in London last year against General Abacha's military dictatorship in Nigeria

# Workers' support for democracy call

mittee (OILC) and the Oljearbeidernes Fellessammenslutning (OFS) demanded that Nigeria's military regime respect common democratic principles, and called on it 'to implement all necessary action to ensure that the will of the people is respected' (see Workers Press 20 August).

Supporting the Nigerian oil workers then striking against the regime (the strike ended last

month), the joint statement goes on: 'Oil workers affiliated to the OILC and the OFS cannot accept that the profits created by us, through the extraction of British and Norwegian natural resources, are invested in a country which will not recognise democratic elections.'

'Therefore our organisations ask all oil companies involved in the extraction of petroleum in Nigeria to bring their current activities to a

halt. We also say no further investments should be made in the country until democracy is established and secured.'

Roger Lyons, general secretary of the Manufacturing Science Finance (MSF) union, has also expressed 'solidarity against the military junta in Nigeria'.

He has written to the high commissioner for Nigeria, voicing concern at the intervention in the

oil workers' strike and calling for the immediate withdrawal of troops.

He has asked for assurances from the Nigerian government that no harm has befallen Frank Kokori, general secretary of the National Union of Petroleum and Natural Gas Workers, 'or any other trade unionist involved in this struggle for justice'.

And he has called for the im-

mediate unconditional release of all those detained, together with a list of their names, their places of detention, and the charges against them.

The MSF general secretary has urged the Anglo-Dutch oil giant Shell to seek a negotiated settlement to the oil workers' grievances and to stop the recruitment of foreign oil workers as strike-breakers.

## Fresh light on British Stalinism's history

GRADUALLY, as long-secret documents from the Communist International's Moscow archives come to light, a much clearer picture of British Stalinism and its relations with the Soviet bureaucracy is taking shape.

In some respects the picture we're now getting differs from the one generally accepted by historians.

The latest fascinating piece of evidence to come my way is an English translation, by Francis King, of a 16-page top-secret report in Russian on 'The Communist Party of Great Britain', prepared by the cadres department of the Comintern's executive committee. The report, of which only four copies were produced, is dated 14 January 1939.

Two things about this document leap to the eye.

First, it reveals how seriously the Comintern viewed the activities of British Trotskyists. A long and detailed section is devoted to the British Stalinist leaders' underestimation of this 'danger', and to the need for 'driving the Trotskyist wreckers right out of the workers' movement' and 'stopping their venomous fascist propaganda in the mass workers' organisations'.

Second, the report suggests that serious preparations were being made in Moscow, less than a year before the start of World War II, for some sort of purge of the British Stalinist leaders.

'The leadership of the CPGB', declares the report, 'contains a number of comrades who were formerly connected with enemies of the people, and in some cases are connected with politically dubious people.'

A particular accusation is made against Harry Pollitt, the party's general secretary, of 'personal friendship' with Rose Cohen, wife of the former Comintern representative in Britain, Petrovsky ('A.J. Bennett').

When Petrovsky, on his return to the Soviet Union in the 1930s, was executed on spying charges Rose Cohen protested against his arrest, was herself arrested, and disappeared.

We already knew that the CPGB leaders tried to find out what happened to her but got nowhere. According to a letter from R. Palme Dutt to the 'Times Literary Supplement' (5 May 1966), a delegation headed by Pollitt and including Dutt himself went to Moscow in 1937 to raise 'questions concerning the conduct of the security organs'.

Though Dutt's letter did not explicitly say that Rose Cohen's fate was the object of the delegation's inquiries, this has generally been assumed.

Dutt's letter spoke of 'conflict' and added: 'this dispute proved so intense that soundings were made to find support among us for the replacement of the General Secretary; but we all made clear that we stood by Pollitt on this matter.'

The newly accessible 1939 report on the CPGB shows that a year or two later those who wanted to get rid of Pollitt were far from having thrown in the towel.

The report's anonymous compiler recalls that 'many comrades in the leadership of the CPGB have made serious political mistakes in the past', listing in this connection, besides Pollitt, Willie Gallacher, J.R. Campbell, Dutt, Peter Kerrigan, Idris Cox, Dave Springhall, Emile Burns, and Bill Rust.

This is in fact simply a roll-call of the party's core leadership towards the end of the 1930s. The 'serious political mistakes' attributed to some of them date back to 1928 (Campbell), 1922 (Kerrigan), 1921 (Burns), and even 1919-20 (Gallacher).

The nature and tone of these allegations are strikingly similar to some of those made

## PERSONAL COLUMN

against the defendants in the then very recent Moscow trials. The political positions taken by these men in and before 1917, as well as in the early years of the Soviet state, were used against them in the court-room.

I'll come back next week to the Rose Cohen affair and to the case against Pollitt made in this 1939 report, partly on the basis of a personal letter he had written to her two years earlier.

THOUGH Trotskyist activity in Britain and its repercussions inside the CPGB are seriously neglected by most historians of British Stalinism, the 1939 report makes clear that a comparative handful of Trotskyists — they knew the names of at least 93 — were giving Moscow a lot to worry about.

Various CP trades unionists were 'under investigation', and 'This work is acquiring great importance since the Trotskyists of the "Revolutionary Socialist League" are convincing members of the main trade unions of the need to create a new Minority Movement'.

A campaign had been launched for the expulsion of Trotskyists from the Young Communist League: 'As a result some doubtful elements were found in the Kensington and Paddington YCL organisations, suspected of links with Trotskyists. These elements are being investigated...'

Under the heading 'The Struggle of the Communist Party against Trotskyists and Spies', the report speaks of 'blunted' vigilance and a 'gross political mistake', permitting the election of a Trotskyist from Glasgow trades council to an Aid Spain conference.

'Corrupting and demoralising Trotskyist ideas enjoy fairly wide credit among the British bourgeois intelligentsia and among the petty-bourgeois strata in general... Trotsky's book "The Revolution Betrayed" had quite a wide circulation in England.'

The CPGB's cadres commission had compiled 'lists of Trotskyists known to it' and of 'Trotskyist elements who have buried themselves *sic* in the ranks of the Labour Party'.

A case in Macclesfield was thought important enough to bring it to the Comintern leaders' attention.

A CP branch member 'is married to a German refugee... in Germany she belonged to the so-called "Comintern opposition"... This German has a lot of literature in the German language, presumably produced by a Trotskyist publishing house.'

'Her husband... has declared that on all the main political questions he is in agreement with his wife. Despite all of this, the party organisation has taken no steps whatever to protect its ranks from penetration by Trotskyist influences or to investigate under what circumstances this German Trotskyist came to England and based herself in a textile area with a large working-class population...'

'Rust, when he encountered this problem, suggested to the Lancashire District Committee that it deal with this matter, but the district secretary did not treat it as significant. Comrade Rust was compelled to warn... that such quietism and political indifference borders on rendering assistance to the most malicious enemies of the party... and may lead to the CC having to dissolve individual CP branches.'

The report concludes that 'the CPGB C[entral] C[ommittee] underestimates the danger of infection of individual CP organisations by Trotskyist ideas'.

Peter Fryer

# 'Lean' production threat to motor jobs and unions

BY A FORD SHOP STEWARD

WORKERS in the motor industry are facing the most serious threat to their jobs, conditions and union organisations: 'lean' production.

As the giant motor manufacturers battle amongst themselves for domination of world markets, they also work out strategies to increase production, cut labour costs, and undermine and eliminate trade union resistance to their plans.

The new 'religion' being promoted is 'lean' production, and some union leaders are being converted to this pernicious religion and its jargon.

Central to its operation is the setting up of team working led by group leaders or 'champions'. The group 'sets its own targets', under threat from management to meet the target or go under.

Workers raise problems with the group leader, undermining the role of shop stewards. Eventually the union structure is marginalised as groups compete with each other and 'performance-related pay' is introduced, undermining national negotiating agreements as different plants go their own way and make their own deals. 'Lean production' sets itself

the target of reducing a plant's workforce each year — regardless. Those remaining are driven to keep up with production targets.

'Bell-to-bell' working is implemented where even tea breaks are not allowed to stop production and people are urged to work through their dinner breaks to meet the target.

'Inhibitors' who stand in the way are identified and eliminated. Is this some kind of futuristic doomsday? A latter-day 1984? No, it is being introduced into Ford's right now.

At the same time, the outsourcing of work previously done by Ford workers is proceeding apace with little resistance.

Today in Ford's at Dagenham work previously done by women sewing machinists has been taken over by another company in a plant on Ford's Dagenham estate. The paint mixing is now performed by ICI and soon paint spraying will be handed over to outside contractors, as will dashboards, doorboards and front suspension. Janitorial work within the plants has already been contracted out with workers paid half Ford rates.

A factory called 'Ford Direct' has been opened inside Tilbury docks, London, to refurbish cars. This employs 300 peo-

ple and the wages paid are outside the Ford pay structure. No agreement on union recognition has been secured yet.

Ford's spark-plug factory at Treeforest has been sold off to a company wanting to buy the concession to supply Ford's but which refuses to give a guarantee to keep the plant open.

Ford calls its plan 'total productive maintenance'. The idea isn't new. Some eight years ago

'The new "religion" being promoted is "lean" production, and some union leaders are being converted to this pernicious religion and its jargon.'

Ford introduced some aspects of it into its Mexican plant, including 'psychological profiling' in recruitment of workers. From there it was introduced into US Ford plants.

Plant union leaders have been subjected to 'evangelist' sessions by professional promoters of these methods to win them over, with reports of success in some plants.

The 'benchmarks' quoted by management as their targets

are production figures said to be achieved by Toyota and Nissan (where there are no shop stewards) and Honda (where there is no union).

In quoting hours taken to produce cars what is never mentioned is the fact that production is largely outsourced to these companies. So they employ fewer workers. Yet when is the organised resistance by the unions? Why is there no exposure of the dangers by the leaders of the union?

Ford now talks about 'globalisation' in a world plan of rationalisation of its factories. Plants are in danger of closure as production is concentrated on fewer sites where more intensive production takes place. Yet where is the trade union response to organise and unite Ford workers internationally in defence of their jobs and their fellow workers' jobs?

The motor industry is the testing-ground for these 'new' methods of exploitation.

The question is: are the unions going to collaborate with these plans and eventually become marginalised and irrelevant, if not eliminated, or are they going to fight to rally workers to maintain and defend their jobs and conditions and union organisation?

This is the challenge in the whole car industry.



Competition between car giants is leading to the threat of 'lean' production methods being introduced

## Obituary

# Selfless and staunch Iris Beardsmore

IT IS with deep regret that we announce the death of comrade Iris Beardsmore on 3 October, at the age of 84.

Iris first came into contact with the Workers Revolutionary Party in 1977 through a party canvasser of her council estate in Norwood, south London. At that time she and her brother Stanley were supporters of the Socialist Party of Great Britain.

Following the death of her brother, whom she had nursed for many months, Iris began attending WRP meetings and other party activities. She joined the local branch in 1979.

Despite being a retired pensioner, forced to live in the most frugal conditions, Iris was selfless in her financial contributions, insisting on giving every penny she could spare.

Until extreme ill-health physically prevented her from doing so, Iris attended as many branch meetings, party conferences and public functions as she could.

At the time of the 1985 split in the WRP she firmly supported

the expulsion of Healy's corrupt leadership.

Iris's early life was extremely hard. She came from a large, poor, working-class family in Birmingham.

It was in her teens that she developed her strong socialist convictions and her absolute hostility to capitalism. At the age of 14, after her mother's death, she took on the responsibility of looking after several younger brothers and sisters.

This not only prevented Iris from completing her education — she was gifted in English and pictorial art at school — but later restricted her opportunities of employment to mainly low-paid, unskilled work for the rest of her life.

After World War II she moved to London with her brother — by then an Eighth Army veteran — and took cleaning jobs in various hotels, became an ancillary worker at King's College hospital, and worked in a large laundry. She ended her working life cleaning and serving at



Iris Beardsmore (centre) at the Fourth International 50th anniversary meeting in London in 1988

a number of local schools.

Comrade Iris was an intensely warm, compassionate and courageous person. In her retirement, though plagued with diabetes and chronic arthritis, she regularly visited and read to elderly patients at a nearby hospital for the chronically sick.

Eventually confined to her third-floor flat, she struggled to lead as independent a life as possible, doing her own cooking, washing and ironing. Only a month ago she turned down an offer of sheltered accommodation.

During her last few months Iris gained her greatest pleasure from reading, and from listening to music, drama and current affairs programmes on radio and television. She always looked forward to receiving Workers Press and greatly welcomed political discussion with visiting comrades.

She remained a dedicated socialist and loyal member of the WRP to the very end of her life. Comrade Iris will be sorely missed by all who had the special pleasure and great privilege of knowing her.

# A new survey on low pay in Britain reveals the Super-exploitation of youth

Three-quarters of jobs on offer to young adults pay under £4 an hour, while nearly a third pay below state benefit levels. This article is an edited version of one first printed in 'Labour Research' (October)

ALMOST one in three jobs on offer to young adults is paying at below subsistence level, so people applying would be better off on state benefits.

And those under 18 — who are not generally entitled to state benefit — are being expected to survive on even more miserable pay — in many cases below £45 for a full working week.

These are two of the main conclusions of a major investigation of youth pay carried out by the Labour Research Department (LRD) for the GMB general union to build up a real picture of the rates of pay being offered to young people in Britain. This is different from their official earnings as given in government statistics.

The main official source of employees' earnings information in Britain is the 'New Earnings Survey' which is carried out in April each year by the

According to the GMB's Phil Woolas: 'This survey shows the need for a statutory minimum wage. Young workers need financial independence if they are to set up on their own.'

Department of Employment. It is inadequate when assessing areas which are likely to have low pay levels as it excludes most people earning below the income tax threshold, which in the most recent survey (for April 1993) is equivalent to full-time earnings of £86.50 a week.

The information for the LRD survey was gained from two main sources: vacancies publicised in Employment Service Jobcentres, which are mainly, but not exclusively, aimed at people aged 18 and above; and

those advertised in Careers Service centres, which are mainly for under-18s.

The study covered a total of 1,600 Jobcentre vacancies which young people could apply for and showed a depressing picture, with more than three-quarters offering pay at less than £4 an hour. This is equivalent to less than £150 for a 37.5-hour week. Perhaps more shockingly, more than one in four (27 per cent) were paying under £3 an hour.

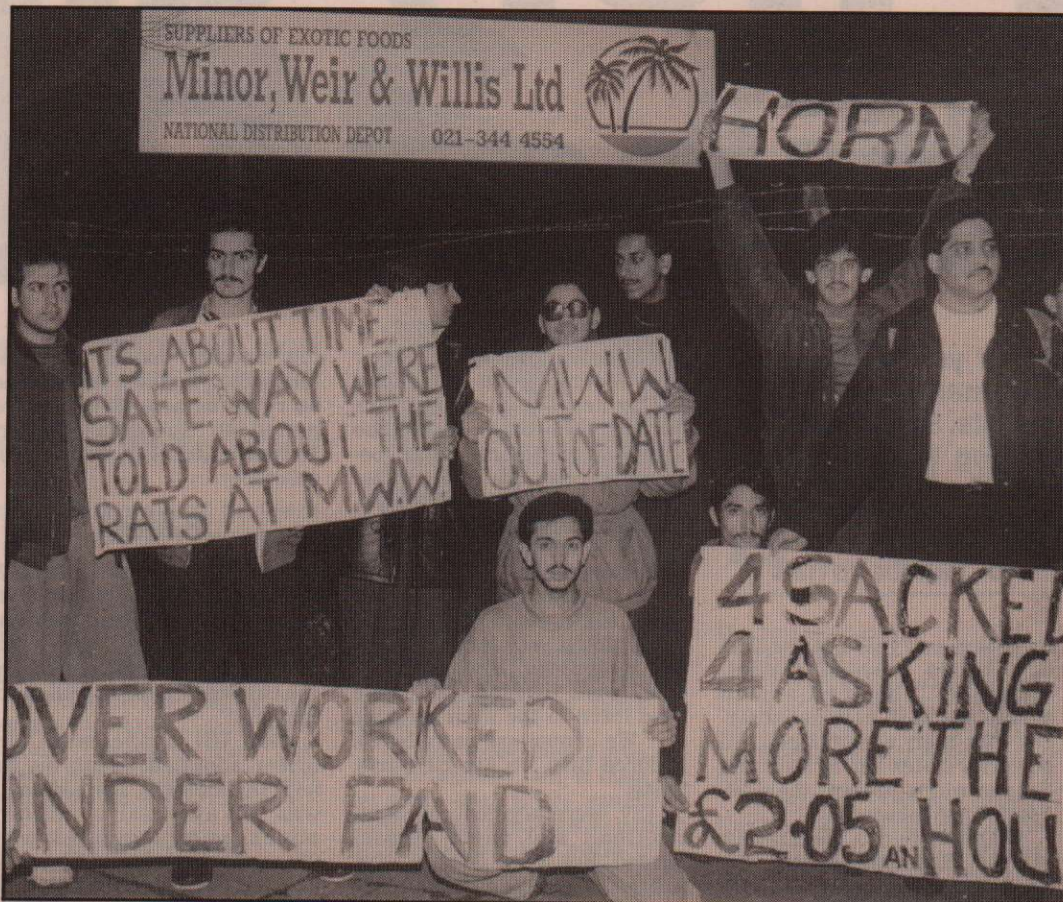
The pattern of pay rates did vary to some extent around the country. London, not surprisingly, had the highest proportion in the £4 per hour and over category, while Newcastle had the highest proportion offering less than £3 an hour.

However, when different living costs are taken into account the picture seems quite different. The capital ends up having one of the largest proportion of vacancies advertising rates at below a 'basic subsistence yardstick'.

The regional 'basic subsistence yardstick' is based on how much someone at work would need to earn to match the lowest level of state benefit available to people aged 18-24. It is made up of income support, housing and council tax benefit for this age group according to region plus travel-to-work costs (cost of basic weekly bus pass in the relevant city and the Capital-card in London).

Added to this figure for each region were the tax and national insurance contributions payable for someone working for this amount. The final figure was compared with the gross pay rates in the Jobcentres survey.

The Jobcentre survey showed that, over all, 29 per cent of the vacancies open to young people over the age of 18 were paid at below the 'basic subsistence yardstick' in the relevant region. However, this ranged from 13 per cent in Cardiff to 65 per cent in Newcastle.



Labour Research has exposed the extent of low pay in Britain

Photo: Mark Salmon

The reality of earnings is probably even worse than this, as many of the jobs advertised were not for a full working week. Nearly a quarter of vacancies did not specify hours or whether they were full- or part-time. But of those that did nearly half (47 per cent) were clearly part time or were less than 30 hours a week.

The levels of low pay might be understandable if the vacancies advertised were largely apprenticeships or other formal training positions. However, a miniscule 7.2 per cent fell into this category, with another 3.3 per cent stating that they offered any formal training.

As the GMB's Phil Woolas told the Trades Union Congress last month, the survey showed that 'young workers are being exploited by employers failing to provide a living wage or offer suitable training'.

Although there was a wide range of job titles among Jobcentre vacancies, the vast majority could be placed in one of 25 categories. In the majority of these categories (15) the most common pay band is £3.00-£3.99 an hour [cleaner, security person, bar person, catering assistant, chef/cook, waiter/waitress, kitchen porter, sales person, shop assistant, stocker/filler, customer service person, cashier, receptionist/telephonist, chamberstaff, and machine operator].

In six occupational categories, the most common pay range was over £4 an hour. These are driver, shop/concession manager, accounts clerk/assistant, typist, secretary and engineer.

But in four categories applicants were more likely to be offered less than £3 an hour than any other rate. These are office junior/clerk, hairdresser, care

assistant and nanny/housekeeper.

The study was based on details posted in Jobcentres which do not identify the employer. However, the findings are backed up by pay rates offered by a sample of well-known employers of young people. Perhaps the best known is McDonald's, whose 'crew members' serving the burgers earn between £3.05 and £3.40 an hour depending where they work.

Other well-known employers who were prepared to give out information included: Sainsbury's, which pays 'junior' shopworkers £3.00-£3.64 an hour; Comet, whose basic adult rate is £3.09 an hour; B&Q, which pays those aged 18 plus £126.75 a week; Texas, which pays £3.03 an hour to those aged 18 plus; and Safeway and Lo-Cost, whose basic adult rate outside London is £3.28-£3.79.

Lower rates tend to be on offer to those aged under 18. For example: Comet pays 16-year-olds £2.24 an hour and 17-year-olds £2.37 an hour; B&Q pays those aged 16 £101.40 a week and those aged 17 £114.07 a week; Superdrug's outside-London rates are £2.40-£2.46 an hour for 16-year-olds and £2.75-£2.82 an hour for 17-year-olds; and Safeway and Lo-Cost pay outside-London rates of £2.03-£2.35 an hour to those aged 16 and £2.30-£2.65 an hour to those aged 17.

Such lower rates for people under 18 were also found in the LRD survey of vacancies at Careers Service centres across the country. The official median hourly earnings of this age group, according to the 'New Earnings Survey' 1993 and updated to give an up-to-date figure, is £2.65 an hour for males and £2.75 an hour for females. But very few of the Careers Service vacancies were anywhere near these rates.

In most of the cities covered there were plenty of examples of jobs offering under £2 an hour and even at under £45 for a week of 35-40 hours. The fact that people in this age group are generally ineligible for state benefits in their own right means that many have no option but to work for paltry wages.

This might be more acceptable if all the jobs offered at these low rates were proper apprenticeships or formal traineeships. The incidence of these varied significantly around the country but they certainly did not account for the majority of these low-paid vacancies. And many of those that were described as 'trainee' positions were not offering formal or off-site training leading to higher levels of skill and thus much higher wages.

According to the GMB's Phil Woolas: 'This survey shows the need for a statutory minimum wage. Young workers need financial independence if they are to set up on their own.'

The union's Young Members' National Committee is now planning a countrywide campaign to win support for a minimum wage.

## On the edge of a social tragedy

The coalfield communities of Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire need a new start to combat the slide into poverty, writes JOHN REES

TWO years on, in the mining heartlands of England the pit closure announcement of October 1992 is almost forgotten and the headstocks have gone in Shirebrook.

We now face a corrosive attack on our communities: the government's so-called regeneration of the local economy. Similar to the way Western aid is served up as warmed-over workhouse soup to the colonial and semi-colonial countries, this 'regeneration' is underdevelopment.

The 'carrot' being dangled is the single regeneration budget that the government claims simplifies grant aid to areas like ours here in north Nottinghamshire and north-east Derbyshire.

In reality the aid offered is no more than a lick of paint on a crumbling edifice. Behind the hype, only link roads and new quality-housing are on offer. These are supposed to stimulate the local economy, creating jobs and wealth. The truth is that speculative activity by developers is being served up behind

this smokescreen of regeneration. The only thing that is generated is profit.

Specifically, the 'regeneration' will mean the:

- Breaking up of existing communities.

- Isolation of particular estates and settlements as ghettos of lawlessness and social decay.

- Refocusing of so-called economic activity toward industrial parks and out-of-town shopping malls.

- Continuing and pernicious influence of private developers.

- Surrender of local planning to speculative developments, so playing with our lives.

- Continuation of the downward spiral into low-paid part-time service-sector jobs. The clearest example being the obscenity of paying increasing numbers of women less than £2 an hour as care assistants in the burgeoning private nursing-homes 'industry'. Home-working is already a well-documented example of this casualisation of the skilled workforce.

Local people have not been sitting back, but attempts to stimulate community alternatives have failed as local land is owned by private landowners, British Coal, Railtrack — and all of these have big plans for speculative developments.

Here in the coalfields we directly confront, on a daily basis, the unresolved issue of the ownership and control of land. Smallholders, who cling to the land through animal husbandry and market gardening, are going to the wall in the same way that small businesses have elsewhere in the coalfield.

### Insecurity

We are on the edge of social tragedy. Born in street-fighting, theft and insecurity, it is set to become a crisis as whole estates of increasingly unemployable people are driven to personal despair: the redundancy money has gone, so poverty knocks and love leaps out the back door.

This personal despair is mocked by the payment of professionals sent in to ameliorate this disaster with welfare and health promotion. Don't smoke, don't drink and buy healthy food from Sainsbury's — if you can afford the car and

the petrol to get you there.

And what of those public servants paid to keep the lid on? Bearing down on them is the increasing attack on public spending coupled with the ideology of privatisation — the consumer-contract culture.

Each person dealt with is a client with their own personal

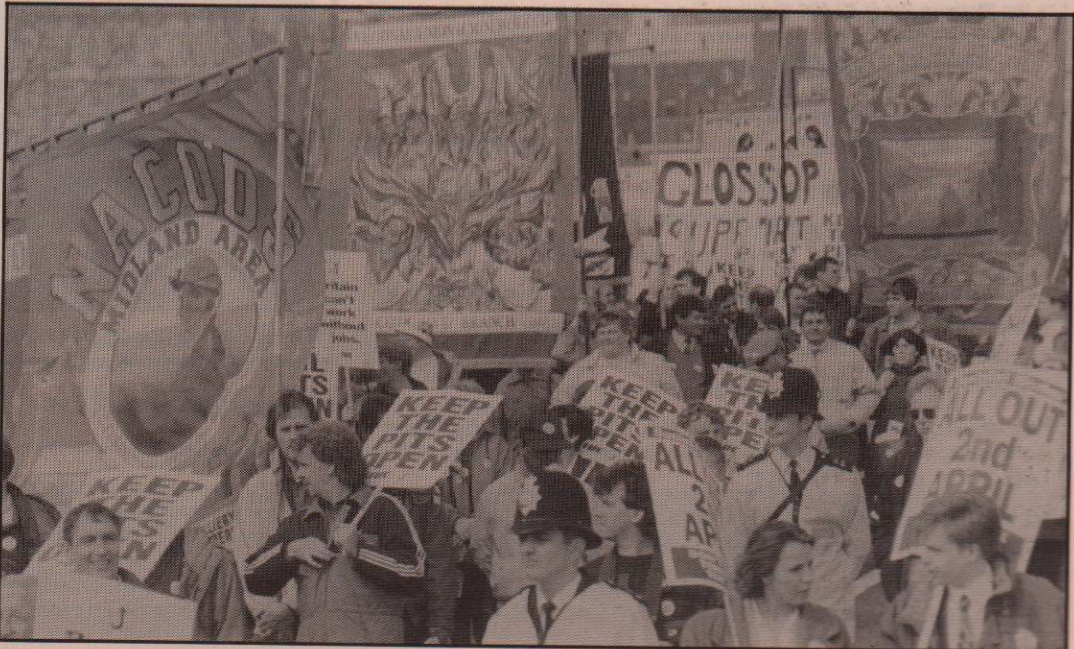
problems; collective and working-class responses to social crisis are replaced by the ideology of privatisation, which is now imprinted on the banner of the 'new' Labour Party under leader Tony Blair, acolyte of capital.

Be warned. Unless we make giant strides to reforge the

working-class movement, politics will have no mercy, it abhors a vacuum and flooding into these communities will come the forces of barbarism.

As Bertolt Brecht wrote: 'Everything changes, with your last breath you can make a new start.'

We need that start now.



Since the campaign against pit closures the coalfield communities have faced corrosive attack

# UN-holy alliance against Bosnia

**SUPPOSE** London, or Paris, or your home town, was under siege by a ruthless enemy who thought nothing of shelling civilian targets. Suppose enemy forces had succeeded in closing the airport, and had recently taken high ground enabling them to close the last road into the city.

Suppose that people you know — neighbours, relatives, friends — had been killed, wounded, raped, or driven mad by what they have endured. Your children, after two years of hiding in cellars or being sniper targets, are showing mental as well as physical scars. You face another winter with no fuel, and not much food or medicines, and your enemy has cut electricity and water supplies.

## Enemy

Your youth have reluctantly put aside their studies, jobs and normal life, and are up in the hills with their mates, in khaki fatigues, bravely trying to defend their people against the well-armed enemy. But they are denied the right to obtain weapons, by a so-called 'UN peacekeeping force' which does nothing to lift the siege on your city, and threatens to attack you whenever your defence forces try to achieve anything.

Imagine this has gone on for

BY CHARLIE POTTINS  
more than two years. It has. The city is the Bosnian capital, Sarajevo. The well-armed enemy are Serb nationalist forces. But their accomplices are powerful states like Britain and France which present themselves as 'peacekeepers'.

On 4 October Lt General Sir Michael Rose, the United Nations commander in Bosnia, met Serb leaders in Pale.

'The atmosphere was remarkably cordial', reported 'The Times'.

Three days later, French UN troops under General Rose's over-all command opened fire on Bosnian forces on high ground near Trnovo, south-west of Sarajevo, driving them back, then proceeded to blow up the Bosnians' bunkers and trenches.

The UN's special envoy, Yasushi Akashi, had threatened force, including air strikes, if

the Bosnians did not withdraw from Mount Igman and Mount Bjelasnica — vital positions which they need to secure the only aid route into their besieged capital. Serb nationalist leader and war criminal Radovan Karadzic had complained to Akashi that the Bosnians were on the offensive.

On US television the previous week, asked about NATO military action if Serb forces flouted UN resolutions, Britain's General Rose insisted 'We have used force to the limit possible... We cannot use more levels of force than we are currently using.'

UN secretary-general Boutros-Ghali and envoy Akashi agreed. But when Bosnians try to break the siege on their capital, the UN 'peacekeepers' do not hesitate — they go to war on the side of Karadzic's Serbs!

The way was prepared with an 'atrocious' story, describing a daring Bosnian commando attack on a Serb military position as a 'massacre', and claim-

ing victims' bodies had been mutilated. 'Bosnian troops massacre Serbs near Sarajevo' reported the 'Guardian's' eastern Europe editor, Ian Traynor, on 4 October.

## Killed

'Muslim forces killed 20 Serbs, including four nurses', repeated the Stalinist 'Morning Star' on 8 October, adding that 'Mr Akashi, who was stunned by the carnage', had 'appealed for restraint'.

But UN spokesman Tim Spicer admitted: 'With the benefit of hindsight, I would say it was an aggressive military attack on a command post' ('Morning Star', 8 October).

Four Serb sentries had their throats slit — normal when silence is necessary. Others were killed in the attack, not 'executed' as previously claimed by UN spokeswoman Claire Grimes, and some survived. The 'mutilation' charge was also retracted. But the story had

served its purpose. At the end of September, French defence minister Francois Leotard attended a NATO ministerial meeting in Seville — the first French minister at a NATO meeting in 28 years. The main item on the agenda was Bosnia. Leotard lined up with Tory Defence Secretary Malcolm Rifkind to oppose lifting the UN arms embargo on Bosnia.

This followed John Major's Chequers talks with Boris Yeltsin. They agreed a common position opposing the Bosnian people's right to defend themselves. Yeltsin flew on to present this to President Clinton, before addressing the UN in New York.

At the UN on 26 September, urging 'new resolve' to ease the siege of Sarajevo, Clinton said 'NATO stands ready to act' — but he dropped any mention of lifting the arms embargo. Clinton had already spoken to President Izetbegovic, who announced that the Bosnian government did not want the embargo

lifted just yet, but would wait six months. Izetbegovic had been threatened by the British and French governments with withdrawal of UN protection forces and an end to humanitarian aid. But Tory Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd rejected any compromise, warning that the British government would oppose lifting the arms embargo under any circumstances.

'The free world has not supported or defended freedom in Bosnia,' Izetbegovic told the UN. 'The world has got accustomed to unpunished crimes.'

## Envoy

While Bosnians remain unable to use Tuzla or Sarajevo airports, a Russian Aeroflot carrying envoy Vitali Churkin flew into the Serb capital, Belgrade on 5 October.

The JAT airline is expecting clearance from the Department of Trade and Industry to start flights between Belgrade and London shortly.

# Croat police brutality against tenants

CROAT police are brutally evicting people from their homes in Zagreb under a government policy of taking over flats formerly belonging to the Yugoslav National Army.

On 27 September they beat up a mother and her son, and people who tried to stop the family's eviction.

The police had gone to a block of flats to evict a single mother, Mrs Miculinic, and her two children. Mrs Miculinic spent 15 years as an army nurse.

Neighbours, community activists and civil rights campaigners attempted non-violent resistance to stop the eviction. But Kazimir Miculinic had two ribs broken by the police, and his mother suffered a fracture

to one of the vertebrae in her neck.

Zoran Pusic, president of the Citizens Committee for Human Rights, suffered neck injuries. Vesna Bernadic, vice-president of 'Home', an association defending tenants' rights, was among others who were badly bruised.

About ten people were taken to the police station.

Police say they have started summary proceedings against Zoran Pusic, Kazimir Miculinic, Vjekoslav Magas and Vesna Bernadic on charges of insulting officials in the performance of their duties, and against seven other protesters for refusing to leave the flat.

A spokesperson for the Croatian Ministry of Defence

announced that there would be 3,000 evictions. Before the war and Croatia's declaration of independence, the Yugoslav army owned about 38,000 flats in Croatia.

The army's departure left many residents behind — pensioners, medical staff who worked in military hospitals and other military employees. Under the present law they retain their rights as leaseholders.

However, the Croatian government announced in 1991 that these flats henceforth belonged to the Republic of Croatia and were at the disposal of the Ministry of Defence.

Since 1992 the government has been evicting leaseholders on the pretext that the flats are needed for Croatian military,

war invalids and widows, while claiming that their tenants are traitors and Serbian extremists.

In fact, some of those evicted aren't even Serbs. According to Antiwar Campaign Croatia, a local peace and human rights organisation, human rights activists have attempted, with some success, to resist evictions non-violently, by ensuring that many people are present when police come to carry out evictions and that there are witnesses to any violence used by police.

Recently Vesna Bernadic and another woman human rights activist went on a ten-day hunger-strike in protest after a woman who was eight months pregnant and her family were evicted from a flat.



Rwandan refugees at a Zairean border-post — hemmed in by imperialism

# Captain threw Rwandans overboard

THE Dutch master of a St Vincent-registered cargo ship, the Eemmond, was jailed with three crew after a Greek court found them guilty of throwing two Rwandan refugee stowaways overboard.

The ship officers' union NUMAST's paper ('Telegraph', October) reports that the court heard that Greek fishermen had rescued the two men, who had been thrown overboard, with plastic containers tied around their waists, four days after being discovered when the ship left Istanbul bound for Antwerp.

The master received three years for endangering human life, while the ship's Russian chief engineer and two Filipino ratings got lighter sentences.

# US leans on Aristide

BY PIERRE DUPONT

THE US government is leaning on exiled Haitian leader Jean-Bertrand Aristide to turn his back on his poor supporters and

appoint a prime minister acceptable to the rich.

'We would like to see him choose someone with broad political appeal,' said State Department spokesman Michael McCurry. 'Someone who will be seen by the elites as a person interested in getting things to run smoothly and not settle old scores.'

It's thought the Clinton admi-

nistration favours former prime minister Robert Malval, and may also back Port-au-Prince mayor Evans Paul to replace Aristide as president.

The head of the Haitian military's hated thug force FRAPH, Emmanuel 'Toto' Constant, has meanwhile embarrassed Washington by disclosing that he was on the CIA payroll.

Constant says that in 1991 an

American intelligence officer Colonel Patrick Collins, urged him to form a front 'that could balance the Aristide movement'.

FRAPH soon became notorious for murdering and torturing political opponents. Last year it staged a mock riot in Port-au-Prince which dissuaded a US ship Harlan County from landing forces.

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