



Workers Press

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LABOUR JOINS ATTACK ON HOMELESS

PRIME MINISTER John Major's crude attack on the thousands of people forced to live on the streets of London and Britain's other major cities has met with deep revulsion amongst millions of people.

If ever there was a case of blaming the victim for the crime this is it!

After driving thousands of mentally and physically handicapped people out onto the streets in the name of so-called 'community care', after taking away benefits from 16- to 18-year-olds, the Tories, in their struggle to survive, now attack homeless people.

Even the Tory press distanced itself: 'Mr Major was . . . on dangerous ground . . .', commented 'The Times' (30 May). 'Merely to attack the beggars and urge the public to set the police on them is to show a misunderstanding of the nature of the problem. . . He has descended into the banalities of the saloon bar.'

'Mr Major was unwise', said the usually arch-loyal 'Daily Telegraph' (30 May), 'not to have consulted those with first-hand knowledge of the factors at work.'

Major's attack came as part of a general drive against the homeless and others in receipt of state benefits.

■ The government announced plans to slash housing benefit. Chief secretary to the Treasury Michael Portillo is backing moves to allow rents to rise to 'market' levels but not provide full compensation to those receiving housing benefit.

■ It was announced last week that many of London's hostels, on which many homeless people depend, are to close.

Significant

Equally significant has been the reaction of the Labour leaders.

■ Tony Blair, favourite to succeed John Smith as leader, fully agreed with the Tories that 'objectionable begging' should be punished with the full force of the law.

■ After Jack Straw, in charge of Labour's Euro-election campaign, hinted that Labour might restore benefits to 16- and 17-year-olds, Shadow Chancellor Gordon Brown immediately retorted that Labour would come up with a solution 'within existing budgets' — that is that there would be no restoration.

■ Next came social security spokesman Donald Dewar, who refused to say whether the benefits would be reinstated but said he was awaiting the findings of Labour's Commission on Social Justice.

■ Within hours the commission reported on its Citizens' Service plan that would involve 16- to 24-year-olds not in work, in training or in education taking part in community schemes in return for £50 a week plus food and travelling expenses.

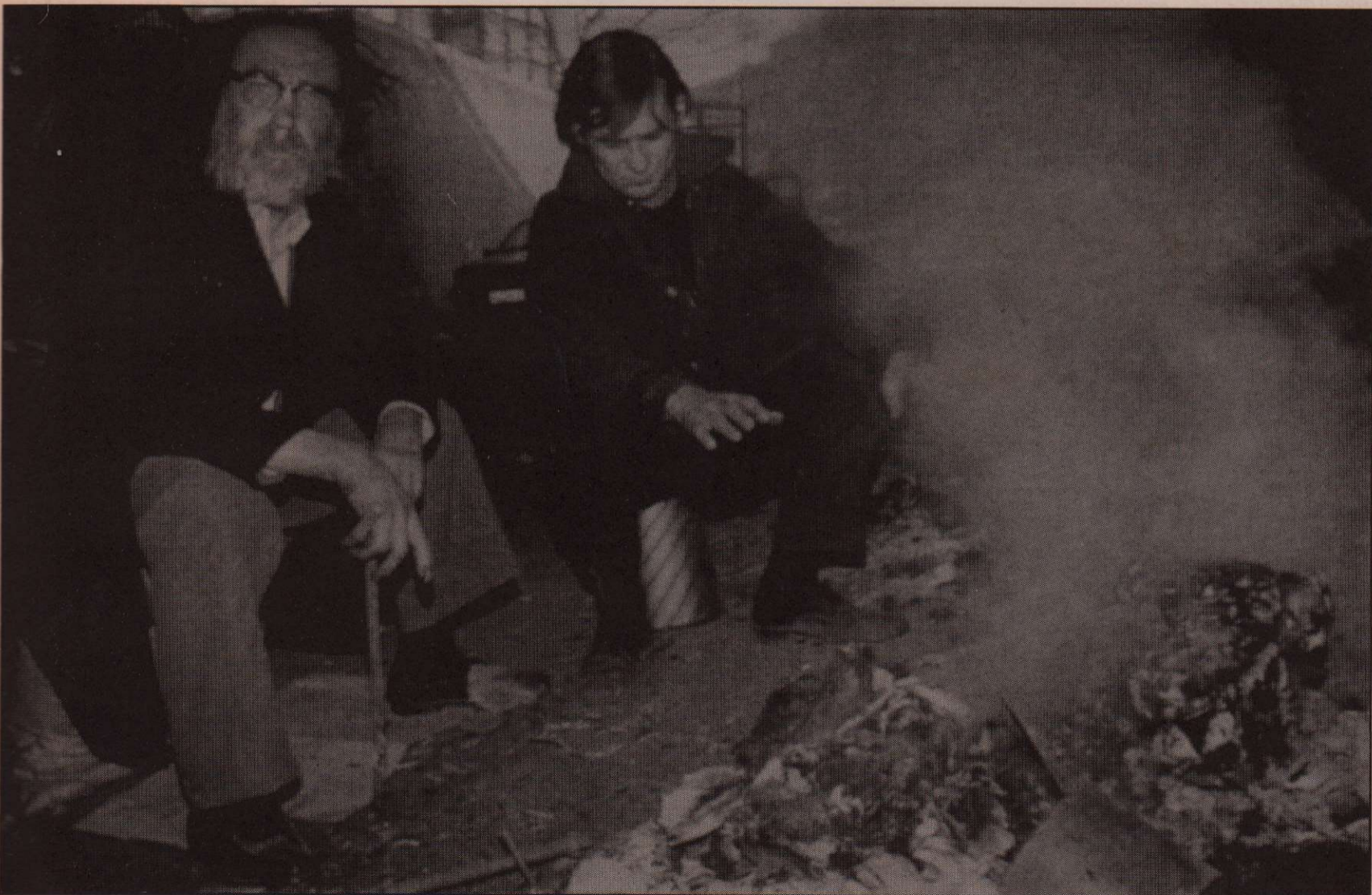
Although the report's author, James McCormick, says that 'Citizens' Service should not become a public works programme nor a means of substituting for paid labour', that is just what it intends.

Yet more local authority workers will be sacked and replaced by young people working for a pittance. Nor will such a scheme remain voluntary: those refusing such 'community service' will undoubtedly have their benefits taken away.

Chairman of the commission Sir Gordon Borrie boasted that his scheme would actually save the Treasury money after five years, when every £100 spent on the scheme would bring extra savings of £25.

No wonder Tory transport secretary John MacGregor said: 'It is now clear that despite the impression the Labour Party were trying to give, they would not find more facilities beyond what we have done ourselves.' In other words, Labour and Tory policies are identical.

At least this helps make clear to the tens of thousands forced to live on the streets, as well as the millions living on state hand-outs, that they can expect nothing from a Labour government.



Major's attack on the homeless has sickened millions: it's blaming the victim not the culprit — the actions and policy of the Tory Party government

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'No More Blood on the Streets' is a booklet on racism by Tower Hamlets Trades Union Council. It is available from Martin Westwood, Tower Hamlets Trades Council, Davenant Centre, 179-181 Whitechapel Road, London E1.
Price £1 plus 25p postage.

TOWER HAMLETS TRADES UNION COUNCIL
No More Blood on the Streets
HOW TO FIGHT FASCISM AND RACISM

£1

South African election appeal

LAST week's Workers Press contained a moving appeal to continue the election fund started for our comrades in the Workers International to Rebuild the Fourth International (South Africa).

The Workers International received more than 5,000 votes in the elections, even though they only stood in Western Cape and Natal. They now want to build on that! They plan to stand in the coming local elections and they need to develop their work in other ways.

Yesterday (Friday 3 June) they were planning to launch their own monthly paper, 'Workers International Press'. We send them our comradely greetings in this venture. On the centre pages of this paper we publish a contribution to the discussion on the future for our party in South Africa.

■ Rush money, made payable to 'Workers International', to: PO Box 735, London SW8 1YB.

The fight against fascism

THE large numbers of young people who turned out in support of the Anti-Nazi League demonstration held in London last weekend is an indication of the widespread revulsion that exists against the British National Party and other fascist groups.

But two things should be pointed out. In the first place, there was a notable absence of trade union banners on the demonstration. The banners that did appear were almost all from local union branches. Secondly, there was an equally notable absence of black people on the demonstration.

It would be easy to criticise the politics of the Socialist Workers Party, the effective organisers of the march. In the manner of the middle-class radical, it has always seen fascism as a 'single-issue' matter.

After abandoning the Anti-Nazi League a decade ago, the SWP has cynically revived the organisation because it thinks there is some political capital to be gained there. At the same time, the SWP has never turned the fight against fascism into the working class; indeed, they have traditionally avoided any sustained fight against the trade union and Labour bureaucracy.

* * * * *

DESPITE the validity of such criticisms, we must identify the main culprits who prevent the development in Britain of a working-class movement against the growing threat of racism and fascism: the official leaderships of the trades unions and the Labour Party.

A striking illustration of where these leaders stand in the fight against racism came last week. Tory Home Secretary Michael Howard, not for the first time playing the racist card, conjured up the vision of hordes of immigrants overrunning Britain should Labour and its allies win a majority in the European parliament.

How did the Labour leaders react to this racist outburst? Far from defending the right of workers to move freely from country to country to seek work wherever they can, Jack Straw, co-ordinator of Labour's European election campaign, bent over backwards to stress that immigration into Britain would remain a 'national' question and that the present racist immigration laws would remain intact under Labour.

These same Labour leaders have not only remained silent on the question of Bosnia — where the Serbian regime is daily carrying out a policy of fascist 'ethnic cleansing' — they have sided with the pro-Serbian position of the Tory government.

* * * * *

THAT the labour leaders cannot even begin to lead a fight against fascism and racism is no accident. The trade union and Labour bureaucracy is itself a product of imperialism, a reflection of the most privileged layers in the working class who gained certain benefits from the exploitation by millions of workers throughout the world by British imperialism.

Fascism arises out of the contradictions of capitalism in its epoch of decay. It issues not out of any 'irrationalism', not out of the 'policies' of any government, but out of the unemployment, out of an insoluble housing crisis, and out of the desperation that capitalism inflicts on millions of people, especially young people, even in the so-called 'rich' countries.

Fascism can be fought only through the mobilisation of the working class on a socialist programme that will tackle the problem of fascism at its root: the control of the world's human and material resources by a tiny number of financial and industrial monopolies.

That fight is inseparable from the fight against the existing leadership of the working-class movement.

Letters

Campaign to start for the disabled

TORY minister for the disabled Nicholas Scott has admitted that he misled the House of Commons over the government's recent blocking of the Civil Rights (Disabled Persons) Bill, a private member's bill. Disabled people took direct action near parliament on 18 May, to protest against the government, by chaining themselves to buses and even lying in the road after abandoning their wheelchairs.

Those disabled people who do not work — and the only work reserved for the disabled is as car park attendants and lift operators — mostly have to survive on social-security benefits. A further attack on disabled people will come through the new incapacity benefit, with its revised assessment of who is

and is not capable of work. This is simply a ploy by the government to save around £1.2 billion on the present bill for invalidity benefit.

People will be judged under the new medical test on whether they can walk or not — which could especially affect the mentally ill — and how many limbs they can use. The judges will generally be looking for any excuse to strike them off the new benefit.

The scuppering of the bill that would have guaranteed civil rights for disabled people is part of the Tory government's all-round attack on working people, the unemployed and the sick.

In Dundee a campaign is to be started around exemption from the medical test for the new incapacity benefit. This is to be taken up by those suffering from mental illness, and a petition is to be started as the first step in the fight against this hated government.

Ken Singer
Dundee



Disabled people taking direct action near parliament on 18 May

Class struggle in the US

I HAVE just returned from a seven weeks' research trip to America. My lasting impression is of the strikes that I saw in New York, Durham in North Carolina, and Los Angeles of transport workers, teachers, and hospital workers. It was good to discover that the class struggle has not been extirpated in the land where post-modern and 'end-of-history' propaganda was pioneered just a few years ago.

But I also discovered a very important and hitherto neglected archive in an American university dealing with European, and particularly German, socialists' resistance to fascism between 1933 and 1945.

Although I worked in this archive for three days without unearthing anything of real significance, and despite a distinguished American historian's comment that there was 'nothing of interest' in the archive I was working in, I then discovered great riches. These included hitherto unknown letters written by Victor Serge between 1945 and 1947, Ignazio Silone, James T. Farrell, and many others.

While I intend to write something about this archival discovery for Workers Press later, I cannot refrain from saying that [Labour Party leaders] Clem Attlee and Nye Bevan do not emerge in a good light from the struggle to assist anti-fascist socialists after World War II.

I have been catching up on what has been happening in 'Great' Britain during the last couple of months; and I am rather preoccupied with the important archive that I have found in America. But I must respond to 'John Fordun'/Terry Brotherstone's friendly comments on Jim Young and the (crucial) Scottish question ('Lessons of the recent past', Workers Press, 2 April).

I have explained my Marxist attitude to the Scottish question in several places in recent years, including the 'Journal of Contemporary History', and I want to get on with my book on the history of socialist martyrs. By contrast, Terry has restricted himself to negative criticism of those of us who happen to

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believe that the struggle for Scottish national autonomy (in a context of workers' control) is part of the struggle for socialist internationalism.

Meanwhile I am simply puzzled by Terry's challenge to my view (Letters, 12 March) that Linda Colley's 'Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837' is a 'deeply reactionary book'. But perhaps Terry would endorse the theme of a recent Socialist Workers Organisation (SWO) meeting in New York on 'Class struggle or identity politics'. (Incidentally, they ought to have read Leon Trotsky's collection of comments on the Jewish question in the late 1930s, signposting the abandonment of his previous hostility to Yiddish and a national home for Jews.)

What the SWO really meant was 'Class struggle versus identity politics'. Unsurprisingly, few African-Americans seem to attend their meetings.

It is, moreover, very surprising that Terry, who is usually rigorous towards questions of theoretical clarity, should even doubt the reactionary intent of an historian who muddies the theoretical waters by using phrases such as 'the working and middling classes'.

I am completing a 15,000-word critique of Colley's book; and I am helping to organise a meeting of the John Maclean Society in Glasgow on 11 June, on 'Socialism, the Scottish identity and Linda Colley'. I hope Terry will come along and clarify his somewhat unclear attitude to the Scottish national question.

James D. Young
Falkirk

Prescott's revealing gaffe

WAS I the only one to notice on the TV news last week that Labour frontbencher John Prescott waved down a taxi outside the party's Walworth Road headquarters in south London and then, seeing that television cameras were on him, ran for an oncoming bus?

This shows that this man takes the public for prats, that he has no sense, and that he is just mealy-mouthed.

Harry Coombes
London SW4

Workers Press £3,000 Monthly Fund

HAVING made the monthly fund figure last week, can we sit back and survey what we've achieved with a sense of smug satisfaction?

Of course we can't! While our financial problems do not match those of Chancellor of the Exchequer Kenneth Clarke and Treasury chief secretary Michael Portillo, it sometimes feels like we're catching up with the public debt of approaching £50 billion and counting. Now the government's response on behalf of capitalism is to hit out at the working class and oppressed and slash public spending.

Hence Prime Minister John Major's vicious attack on the homeless, many of whom are forced to beg to keep body and soul together. How dare that scoundrel Major say that the homeless don't need to beg and can live off the measly benefits that his government has consistently cut back, particularly those for the young.

Although I didn't hear any quote from Major that the homeless were 'sponging', that was clearly what he meant. He might well draw back from that direct accusation (not that he has much principle in this respect), given that he is a political representative of a class — the bourgeoisie — that makes money out of the

work of others — the working class — often in near-slave conditions, particularly in the semi-colonial countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America.

But, back to our financial problems. Unlike the government, we can't — and shouldn't — hit out at anyone, except the ruling class, and cutting Workers Press spending means a reduction in the work we can do: on ex-Yugoslavia, Russia and Ukraine, South Africa.

In Britain we have attempted to build unity between the various struggles around government cuts — against unemployment, against the closing of public and health services, against wage cuts, against

attacks on health and safety, against longer hours, etc. Major's outburst is only the latest of a long line of attacks on the most vulnerable members of the working class. We have constantly stressed that this situation demands a political uniting of the forces opposing the cuts, the building of a new party of the working class. These cuts are not simply a British affair — they are occurring in different ways, in different proportions, across the world.

Our expenditure — on Workers Press, the WRP, and the Workers International to Rebuild the Fourth International — is interlinked in our fight to rebuild working-class internationalism,

to rebuild the conscious international party of the working class, the Fourth International.

Mike Cooke

Rush money, payable to 'Workers Press', to: PO Box 735, London SW8 1YB.

Coming soon

Construction Safety Campaign Diary
TUESDAY 14 JUNE St Pancras coroner's court, Camley Street, London NW1 (tel. 071-387 4884), 9.30am. Inquest into death of John McLaughlin (45), killed when roof collapsed in January. Christopher Nelson (48) was severely injured. They were working on extension to car showroom in Finchley Road.
WEDNESDAY 15 JUNE St Pancras coroner's court, Camley Street, Lon-

don NW1 (tel. 071-387 4884), 9am. Inquest into death of Tony Fishendon (27), killed in August 1992 while carrying a scaffold pole near a railway line; a passing train caused the electric current to arc to the pole. Family's solicitor requested that BR director for safety be put in the dock, but coroner refused. Judicial review has returned case to coroner. DPP turned down manslaughter investigation. Inquest may be interrupted by challenges from family solicitor.

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Government suffers a safety setback

HEALTH and safety campaigners gained a victory last week after the government backed down over its attempted major blow at safety and trade union rights.

Announcing the results of a review of existing law, employment minister Michael Forsyth said there would be 'no changes... to the 1974 Health and Safety at Work Act [H&SAWA]', at a press conference on 24 May attended by members of the Construction Safety Campaign (CSC).

CSC supporters lobbied parliament on 28 April, and have

attended the government's Health & Safety Executive (HSE) regional public consultation meetings. Without the sustained work of the CSC, the Relatives' Support Group, the

Hazards Movement and others, it is clear that substantial damage would have been done to existing health and safety law.

But the CSC believes the government may try to impose changes underhand, by using recommendation 9 of the review, which proposes a programme of consultation over the next three years in order to remove 'outdated' legislation.

Reduced

Attacks have already been made on the European Union's safety directives on reduced hours at work and on con-

struction management design.

So, obstacles have been successfully put in the government's way, but beware! It is still hell-bent on destroying the few health and safety laws workers do have.

Injury

As reason for the review decision, Forsyth said that 'Given the toll of death, injury at work, few argue that [the H&SAWA] imposes inappropriate burdens on business'.

The main findings of the review were as follows:

■ the system of regulation of safety law is both relevant and necessary;

■ there is little evidence, despite the costs of compliance, that the system as a whole is unduly burdensome for business;

■ small firms, or the self-employed, will not be exempted from the H&SAWA; and

■ section 1.2 of the Act, which concerns the general responsibility of employers for workers' safety and allows for the recognition of trade union safety representatives, will remain in place.

BY A SAFETY CORRESPONDENT

Racist mob claims another victim

AN Asian 17-year-old was kicked and stabbed last Monday by a group of ten white young men on a main road in Poplar, east London.

Shah Mohomad Ruhul Alam underwent ten hours of intensive surgery and was still in a critical condition last Tuesday at the Royal London hospital in Whitechapel.

Stabbed

Police said that Alam was stabbed three times and a friend was hit over the head with a heavy instrument — possibly a baseball bat or a bottle.

Three young men have been arrested for the attack. But, Stephen Lawrence, the black young man killed a year ago by another racist mob, has still not had justice.

Charges against two young men, 16 and 17, in connection with the killing were later dropped by the Crown Prosecution Service.

Swanky prices in Bradford

IT'S cheaper to live in swanky Kensington, west London, than to live on some housing estates.

A survey by the children's charity Barnado's has shown that a typical basket of goods bought at a local shop on the Allerton estate, near Bradford, where 70 per cent of the residents are on benefits, cost over 13 per cent more than at a similar shop in Kensington.

Cheaper

Barnado's priced goods from a range of 17 brand names, including six baby items, at small shops on 12 estates. All had some goods that could be bought cheaper in Kensington. But in Cardiff and Bradford, the costs were higher overall.

But, it's not the shop owners to blame. Manny Patel, the owner of the Bradford shop, explained: 'It's almost impossible to do deals with the manufacturers.'

A rare offer to him was from Cadbury's of 'five bars for £1 — save 25p'; and Sunblest bread was reduced to 49p from 75p.

Tories plan to slash housing benefit

THE Tory government is planning to cut the housing-benefit budget by encouraging a further increase in rents to market levels and then not providing full compensation to those on income support.

This measure is aimed at forcing the unemployed and the poor into 'more appropriate accommodation'. It will certainly increase the number of homeless on the streets of Britain.

Introduced in 1982, the housing-benefit budget has doubled in the past six years and now adds up to 2 per cent of government spending. It rose by £2,903 million in 1992 to approximately £9 billion, to cover payments for private rent allowances.

Rising

Figures recently released by the minister for housing and planning, Sir George Young, show that private rents are rising at three to five times the rate of inflation.

Though house prices fell by 1.8 per cent in 1990, 2.1 per cent in 1991, and 4.6 per cent in 1992, fair rents rose by 16.8 per cent, 10.8 per cent, and 13.3 per cent in the same three years.

Under new legislation planned for next year, the minister will give private landlords a much bigger part to play in housing homeless families.

'It is ridiculous that while house prices are dropping, rents are soaring', commented John Spellar, Labour MP for Warley West. 'This shows how the private rented market is being rigged.'

[Social security secretary] Mr Lilley says he is going to target housing benefit fraud, but the real scandal is the way money is being shovelled into the pockets of private landlords.'



A homeless person on a London bench. The Tories' latest planned attack on housing benefit is bound to increase the number of homeless on the streets
Photo: Marg Nicol

Many London hostels to close

MORE than 20 London hostels for the homeless, housing 880 people, are facing closure in the next few weeks. So are 750 one-bedroom flats used as temporary shelters and rented on short-term leases.

But only 800 new places are likely to be available this year.

Change

The closing of hostels and flats results from a change in the government's 'Rough Sleepers Initiative', launched four years ago.

Instead of providing tempor-

homeless in London, the government is now spending £86 million on 3,500 permanent one-bedroom homes. But most of them won't be ready for occupation for another two years.

Ede House in Hackney, which had 90 beds, was shut down in March. Closure of MacNaughten House, King's Cross, which has 150 residents aged from 19 to 79, is imminent. Nevern Mansions in Earls Court, which has 92 places, is scheduled to close in June.

According to the housing charity Shelter, there are often fewer than ten beds available

spokesperson said: 'Direct access hostels are being closed before permanent hostels have come on stream. The situation has been dire in the last couple of weeks.'

Rough

'Falling Out', a report published last Tuesday by the homeless charity Crisis revealed that one single homeless person in four has served in the armed forces, and that a high proportion of them are sleeping rough.

About 70 per cent of ex-servicemen, the report adds, have

lems and more than a third have been to prison. More than a third of those interviewed for the survey had never had a settled home after returning to civilian life. The government is blamed for doing too little to ease the transition from forces life to Civvy Street.

Crisis director Mark Scothern forecast that the number of ex-soldiers on the streets would grow as the government implements the 17,000 redundancies started two years ago as part of the defence cuts.

A Ministry of Defence spokesperson said the criticisms in the report were 'unfair'.

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Inside left

Chaps and maps

AN old joke had a young Soviet historian expressing doubt about the official interpretation of a particular episode in history.

'Now then, comrade Popov,' a senior colleague advised, 'just remember. It's not our job to interpret history, but to change it.'

But now latter-day Stalinists in the New Communist Party (NCP) want to change geography as well. According to the NCP's Georg Heinrich, 'Bosnian Muslim "premier" Haris Silajdich has publicly thrown out the latest peace plan negotiated in Geneva. And his rejection of the deal . . . coincided with a fresh offensive by Muslim forces against the town of Tuzla' ('Behind Bosnia', 'New Worker', 20 May). Funny, when I and others on the last Workers Aid for Bosnia convoy were in Tuzla in April we were told the miners' brigades of the Bosnian army were defending their town against Serb Chetnik (nationalist) forces.

As well as Muslims, the Bosnian army includes Croats and Serbs. For Stalinist Heinrich, as for much of the bourgeois media, neither they nor the workers of towns like Tuzla exist. 'Ethnic integration only really existed in the capital, Sarajevo,' Heinrich assures us.

This Stalinist writer complains that under the UN-sponsored Vance-Owen 'peace plan': 'Not one recognised bauxite, lead, zinc, salt or iron concern — the basic industries of the republic — would have remained in Bosnian Serb hands.'

Elsewhere, 'New Worker' has argued that Serb nationalists are entitled to more land because they are in the countryside, whereas the Muslims are in the towns. Now it seems they must not only have the real estate, but the assets too — providing they can ethnically cleanse the workforce.

If you ask me, it's time the labour movement was *ethically* cleansed of the kind of politics represented by 'New Worker'. Meanwhile, let's hope the Chetnik commanders have to rely on map-readers like those of the NCP!

Road to amnesia

LAST year the first Workers Aid convoy blockaded the headquarters of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) in Zagreb, the Croatian capital, demanding the opening of the northern route to Tuzla, in north-east Bosnia.

A young Australian who'd made a video was surprised when Alan Thornett, a supporter of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International (USec), suggested cutting out the bits at the UN HQ. Thornett had earlier advised against being 'obsessed with Tuzla'. So had French USec member Catherine Samary, who was opposed to Workers Aid focusing criticism on the UN.

But in Zagreb with the convoy, USec supporter Mick Woods had condemned UNPROFOR's blockade of the northern route. He proposed that 'the convoy reiterates its determination to open the aid route across the Breko corridor', while seeking to use other routes. Woods and comrades later left the main convoy and reached Tuzla via the southern route, and USec, having split Workers Aid, has lived off that.

Now in 'Socialist Outlook' (14 May), paper of the USec supporters, Bill Peters condemns Workers Aid's 'impossible campaign to "open the northern route to Tuzla"'. The Breko corridor is 'the most sensitive bit of territory under Serb control', he warns. 'The idea that the route could be opened by an aid convoy was at best cranky, at worst a call for UN intervention.'

I don't believe Bill Peters is a pen-name for Lord Owen. My advice to Mick Woods is 'watch your back', politically speaking.

Charlie Pottins

The 'new' South Africa cannot destroy apartheid

24 reasons why South Africa

FROM far and wide we in South Africa are being told that we are now living in a democratic country. Taking a lead in this are the United Nations, the Organisation of African Unity, bourgeois governments and the African National Congress (ANC) and South African Communist Party (SACP).

South Africa is now democratic, they say — but the truth is that the counting of votes was fraudulent. South Africa is now democratic, they say — yet the apartheid criminals, such as former president F.W. de Klerk, Inkatha leader Buthelezi, former foreign minister Pik Botha and others, still hold the highest political offices in the country.

The truth is that the apartheid security forces are still intact, that apartheid's 'Die Stem' is still one of the dual national anthems, and that numerous other vestiges of apartheid have been carried over into the 'new' South Africa. Yet we are supposed to believe that South Africa is now democratic.

They are keen to place the stamp of democracy on any country where the population as a whole has the franchise; the rest they are

'Under the guise of "democracy" the masses were robbed of a full victory over apartheid.'

not bothered about. This is bourgeois hypocrisy at its worst.

The oppressed masses have struggled long and hard and have sacrificed much to obtain their democratic rights. This has always meant the franchise plus the complete destruction of the apartheid state and all that it has stood for.

But under the guise of 'democracy' the masses were robbed of a full victory over apartheid. In fact, this so-called democratic South Africa was ushered in amidst wholesale electoral fraud, and those who laid down the constitutional principles for the 'new' South Africa were totally unelected individuals, many of whom were apartheid reactionaries.

South Africa will not be democratic unless the vestiges of apartheid are resolved by:

■ Guaranteed security of the electoral process, with the elimination of fraud.

■ Kicking out of the government the apartheid politicians, including those in Inkatha and the Freedom Front.

■ Bringing down the governments in the Western Cape, which is led by the National Party, and KwaZulu/Natal, which is Inkathaled.

■ Dismissing the top apartheid civil servants responsible for implementing apartheid policies.

■ Dismantling the apartheid security forces.

■ Dismantling apartheid parties such as the National Party, the Democratic Party, and Inkatha and other bantustan parties.

■ Disbanding the conscript Citizens' Force.

■ Disarming the right-wing and Inkatha, and confiscating all their weapons.

■ Ending golden handshakes to apartheid officials, and reclaiming money already handed out to them.

■ Destroying apartheid monuments, and changing the apartheid names of streets and buildings.

■ Rejecting 'Die Stem' as a national anthem and denouncing it as an oppressive apartheid relic.

■ Not giving amnesty to apartheid criminals, and revoking all amnesties granted.

■ Revolutionary justice for those responsible for crimes against the masses under apartheid.

■ A genuinely democratic constituent assembly drawing up a constitution that is not bound by restrictive principles imposed by unelected individuals behind the backs of the masses.

■ Total rejection of a Volkstaat [separate Afrikaner state].

■ Scrapping the national debt built up under apartheid.

■ Cutting the pay of parliamentarians and ministers to the average wage of a skilled worker.

■ Nationalisation of bourgeois, apartheid papers such as the 'Burger', 'Argus', and 'Cape Times'.

■ Saying no to federalism — for a centralised, united state.

■ Returning the land to those who were robbed of it under colonialism and apartheid. All peasants to get full ownership and control over their plots of land and assistance from the state.

■ Ending all discrimination against women.

■ Providing adequate care for children, the aged and the infirm.

■ Removing privileges gained through apartheid.

■ Abolishing racism, ethnicism, tribalism and monarchism.

These are 24 reasons why South Africa is not democratic. Why did the ANC and SACP compromise on the people's democratic demands? Why are the imperialists and their lackeys trying to sell these rotten

As part of the discussion on the future of South Africa, we publish this contribution from ETTIENNE LANDMAN, who is a member of the Workers International to Rebuild the Fourth International (South

Africa). He explains why apartheid has not been destroyed, the creation of the 'new' South Africa, whose government has not destroyed many apartheid crimes. The Workers Inter-



Mandela (top left) says that South Africa is now democratic — yet apartheid crimes

compromises to us as democracy?

In order to answer these questions, it is necessary to look a little more closely into capitalism's development, and into the roles played by the ANC and the SACP.

Capitalism and democracy in South Africa

IN OUR country capital did not develop organically as in Europe, but was imposed by imperialism. The capitalist system had no real benefit for the indigenous population, and from the outset it brutally attacked them by forcing them off of their land.

Gradually, a local South African (white) capitalist class consolidated itself and took over the reins of government as part of a deal with imperialism. This local capitalist class widened the repression against the masses, and consolidated its dictatorship through apartheid, which reserved demo-



cratic rights for the white minority.

The development of capitalism in Europe was accompanied by wide sections of the population achieving democratic rights. But in South Africa it was accompanied by the indigenous population being robbed of their means of support and their freedom.

The masses did not benefit in any way from capitalism and today are worse off than their ancestors were. There is only one group amongst the indigenous population that has benefited from capitalism, namely the rising black petty-bourgeoisie (middle class). As in other former colonial countries, this group mobilised the masses behind it in bourgeois-nationalist movements, the main one being the ANC, which focuses on the struggle for democratic rights.

In South Africa this meant first the complete destruction of the apartheid state and all it stood for. The ANC, in alliance with the Stalinist SACP, has now won power, yet it sold out its historic mandate when it compromised with apart-

South Africa is not democratic

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Africa) stood two candidates in the recent elections — in the Western Cape and Natal/KwaZulu, polling over 5,000 votes — on a platform of the need to build a revolutionary workers' party

Whilst the economy has been slowly strangled by the monopolies, the working class has been marching forward in wave after wave of struggle. Today the capitalist system survives only by attacking the living standards of the working class through retrenchments (factory closures, 'rationalisation', etc.), high prices, and attacks on social services.

Under these conditions the attack on democratic rights has a twofold purpose. It facilitates the economic attacks on the working class, and it aims to curb that class's independent political activity. Even in the imperialist countries the democratic rights of the working class are under attack. This is the broader context for the inability of the ANC-led government to grant the masses full democratic rights.

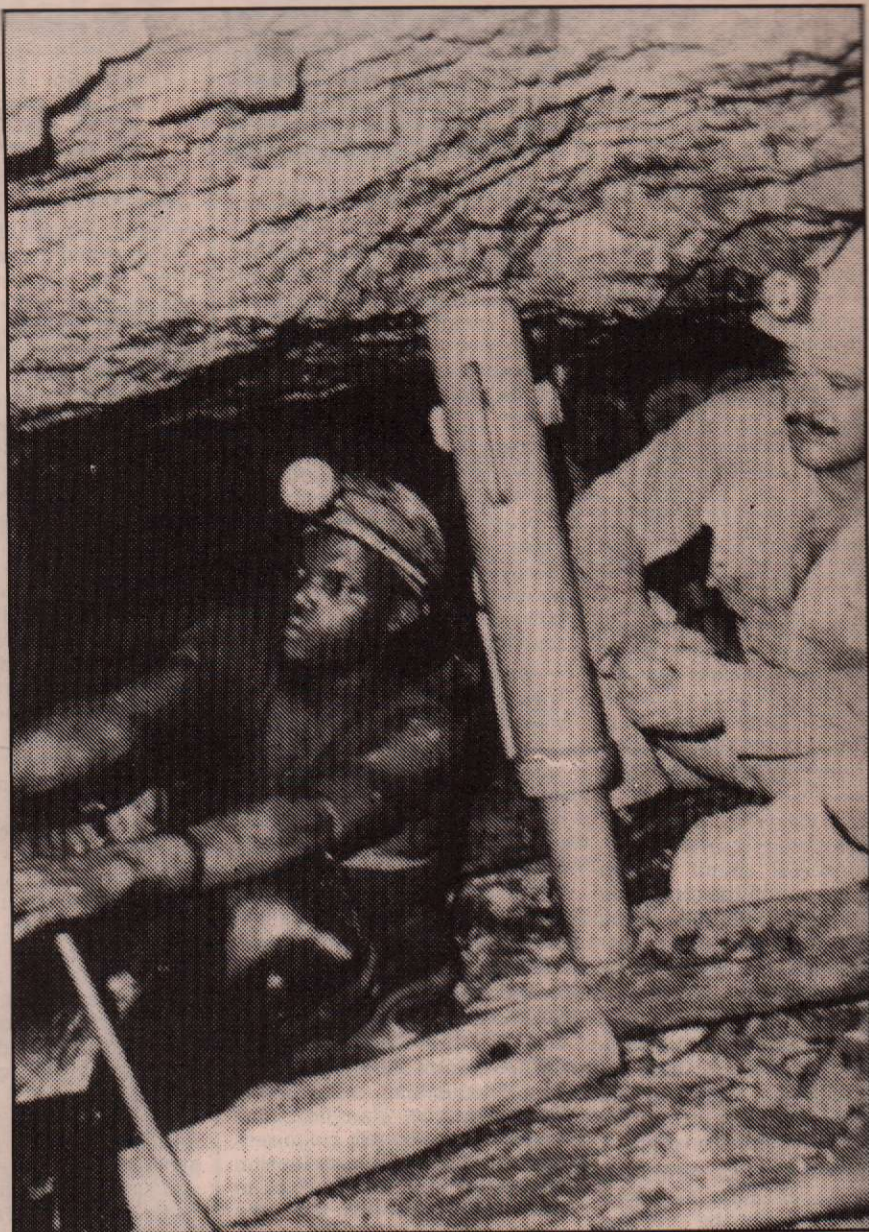
The role of the ANC and SACP

THE African National Congress is a bourgeois-nationalist movement. Such movements sprang up in countries that were colonised by imperialism. In essence these movements were led by the educated oppressed petty-bourgeoisie (lawyers, doctors, teachers, etc.) and the up-and-coming oppressed capitalists.

At no time did these movements have an independent economic policy, turning either to imperialism or to Stalinism or flirting with both. The ANC placed itself in the Moscow-led Stalinist camp, mainly as a result of the pressure of the working class, which still saw the Soviet Union as a socialist state. One result of this alliance with Stalinism was the links between the ANC and SACP, the local arm of Moscow.

Following the collapse of Stalinism in the Soviet Union and eastern Europe, the ANC and SACP openly embraced imperialism, extolling the virtues of the 'free market'. They have now committed themselves to protecting the interests of imperialism against the working class, and find many apartheid institutions, politicians and measures helpful in this task.

The SACP was known for being the Communist Party most loyal to Moscow. Stalinism emerged in Russia around Joseph Stalin. It is based on the coming to power of a new elite — the state and party officials (bureaucracy). The source of the bureaucracy's wealth was the nationalised means of production, which it exploited and plundered for its own selfish gain. In order to protect its wealth and pri-



Mines must be nationalised with no compensation

vileges, the bureaucracy imposed a regime of violence and terror on the working class and used all of its might to prevent, mislead and head genuine revolutionary struggles elsewhere in the world.

In consequence the historic role of the SACP has been to undermine the independent struggle of the working class, under the guise of 'socialist' policies, and to direct it into bourgeois reformist channels. The first step was to sacrifice the working class's organisational independence on the altar of bourgeois nationalism.

Today the SACP is playing the leading role in tying the working class to the rotten compromise with apartheid. SACP leaders have no

What is the way forward?

WORKERS must not have any illusions that the new government is their government, and must continue to fight for the complete destruction of apartheid and for the overthrow of capitalism.

To make this fight effective, the working class must build unity with its class brothers and sisters in the rural areas, and must unite behind it the peasantry, the lower middle class and all those fighting for democratic rights. But, most important of all, the working class needs its own revolutionary party, one solidly based on Marxism. The Workers International to Rebuild the Fourth International puts forward a programme of democratic, transitional and socialist demands for discussion amongst all workers and fighters for democratic rights.

To the 24 democratic demands listed above, we add the demand for the franchise to be lowered to the age of 16, and the following:

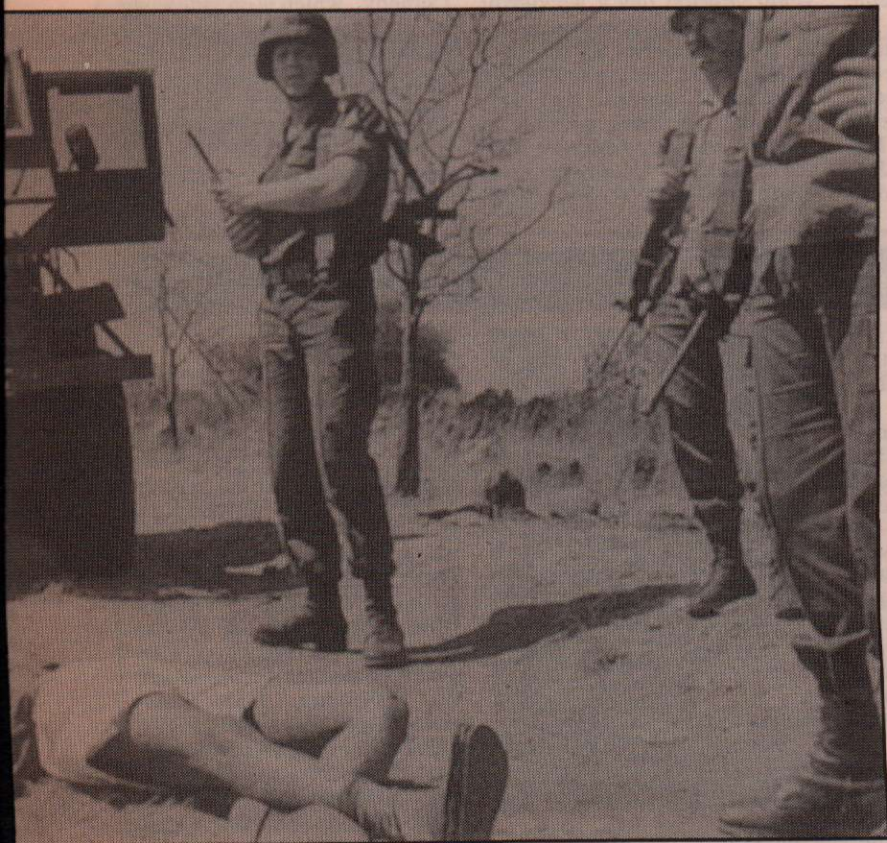
- Nationalisation of the mines, factories, other big businesses and capitalist farms without compensation and under the control of those who work in them.
- For the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of a workers' government.
- Jobs for all or a living unemployment benefit.
- A living wage for all workers.
- End retrenchments (factory closures, 'rationalisation', etc.).
- Adequate housing for all.
- Free and adequate health care.
- Living pensions and other social allowances.
- Adequate state care for the elderly and the infirm.
- Subsidies on rent, electricity and all basic foods.
- Cheap, adequate and safe transport.
- Peasants and small businesses to be given cheap credit and other forms of state support.
- The right to strike.
- The scrapping of VAT.
- Sound environmental policies.
- Proper care for all children.
- Creation of conditions under which young people can develop into skilled and cultured adults.

'Workers must not have any illusions that the new government is their government, and must continue to fight for the complete destruction of apartheid and for the overthrow of capitalism.'

problem with serving in the same cabinet as henchmen of the working class such as De Klerk, Kriel and Buthelezi.

The SACP leaders are also not ashamed of supporting the maintenance of the apartheid security forces, which have drenched the townships with the blood of the oppressed.

In their alliance, the nationalism of the African National Congress and the Stalinism of the South African Communist Party combine to form a bloc to save capitalism against the independent struggle of the working class. In return they have been rewarded with positions of power and lucrative posts. Already the first clashes between the ANC-led government and the working class are brewing.



Minister De Klerk (left) still holds office and the security forces are still intact

heid. Thus even the ANC is incapable of granting to the masses their full democratic rights.

The working class

SOUTH AFRICA has a large, powerful and militant working class. In the early days of oppression, when the petty-bourgeois ANC was still sending deputations to Britain's queen, the working class began to put its stamp on political events.

Workers spontaneously combined the struggle for democratic rights with the struggle for jobs, houses, education, a living wage, and so on. The working class time and time again embarked on powerful independent struggles, and in the process built powerful trades unions and community structures and readily embraced socialism.

This strength and independence of mind of the working class is the biggest threat to the capitalist system. The biggest task of the new 'government of national unity' is to

control this working class, to weaken its political capabilities. By keeping in place crucial elements of the apartheid state — for instance the defence force — the ANC and SACP are retaining mechanisms for the control of the working class.

The decline of capitalism

THE African National Congress is coming to power at a time when capitalism is not progressive, but rather in decline. This creates economic limitations for the system as a whole.

Capitalism — in the age of imperialism — is incapable of granting democratic rights to the masses (see Workers Press last week, 'SA elections 1994 — the great fraud'). Since the imperialist phase was reached in the early 1900s, capitalism's crises have intensified greatly. The system as a whole has been sliding downhill, racked by world wars, civil wars and revolutions.

5 years since the Tiananmen tragedy

It is five years since the massacre in Tiananmen Square, Beijing, when many students and workers — demanding freedom of speech and of movement, freedom from political police persecution, and an end to corruption — died at the hands of Chinese government troops. ED BARBOR gives a diary of events that led up to the terrible action on 3-4 June 1989

Tiananmen Square, 1989

22 April: Funeral of Hu Yaobang, leader of the Chinese Communist Party who was expelled in 1987 for supporting students' demands for democratisation — 70,000 demonstrate for democracy. Students and workers have formed autonomous organisations and elected delegates. Demonstration called by students to commemorate the 4 May movement of 1919 against Japanese and European imperialism.

27 April: Demonstration by 500,000 calling for democracy and an end to inflation. Next day the government opens a three-day dialogue with students, but two-thirds of delegates are from the official students' union, which is controlled by the Communist Party (CCP).

4 May: Demonstration of 100,000 students and many more workers. Their protest is against bribery, not against the government itself. The feeling is to encourage reform of CCP not to confront it.

13 May: Hunger strike of 1,000 students begins. Soviet president Mikhail Gorbachev due to visit on 15 May.

17 May: More than a million people are on streets around Tiananmen Square. The mobilisation spreads to 21 cities.

18 May: Students decide to end their hunger strike shortly before the prime minister, Li Peng, gives orders for military suppression of the movement. The 38th and 39th armies refuse to carry out this repression and the students decide to con-



Crowds milling around burnt-out tanks in the aftermath of the massacre

tinue their strike and occupation of Tiananmen Square.

19 May: Martial law declared.

22 May: Army column moves towards Tiananmen Square; 100 officials, including seven army chiefs, make a public statement that they are opposed to repression. They are supported by two commissioners of the Beijing police and 30 members of the People's Congress, who demand an extraordinary session. The illusions of the demonstrators about the CCP and police are quickly vanishing.

26 May: Party leader Deng Xiaoping, in Hunan, discusses with army chiefs and is able to unify the majority under his leadership. The army in Beijing accepts the

implementation of martial law and thereby is united with the other seven military regional leaderships.

27 May: Army occupies the main steel processing plant in Beijing; its workers had promised to march with the students on Sunday 28 May.

28 May: Demonstration of only 50,000.

3-4 June: Tiananmen Square is attacked by the army. Estimates of casualties vary from 200 to 7,000.

6 June: Rumours of clashes between 27th and 38th armies circulate. Only nine of the 27 district committees of the CCP have made declarations in support of Deng Xiaoping.

AUT lifts Bosnia campaign

I'M very grateful for the opportunity to speak to you on behalf of the Scottish TUC's appeal for emergency food aid for the coal miners of Tuzla in northern Bosnia. I do so as a member of the Scottish TUC general council.

We have heard in December from Terry Brotherstone about the plight of the multi-ethnic community in Tuzla. Let me bring you up to date, based on a report by Bill Speirs, STUC deputy general-secretary, who visited Bosnia and Croatia in April.

Siege

Although a UN-designated 'safe haven', Tuzla has been intermittently under siege for over a year. Some 26,000 of its pre-war population have left, and almost 60,000 people displaced from elsewhere have come in.

Food shortages, lack of fuel and power, lack of medicines, and the constant threat of shelling have combined to create a high level of tension. Things are further complicated because only those characterised as refugees or displaced persons are entitled to UN food aid, which as the months go by leads to further tension between refugees and the local population.

It is as I say a multi-ethnic

The campaign in the workers' movement to get aid to the mining town of Tuzla, north-eastern Bosnia, received a boost when £900 was collected at the Association of University Teachers' council meeting last month, in support of the Scottish TUC's appeal. This money was topped up to £1,500 from the union's funds.

An appeal for funds was made by

community and, in the last elections before Bosnia-Herzegovina declared independence, Tuzla was the only region that elected a majority of candidates from those operating on a non-ethnic basis.

Trade union contacts have been difficult and the STUC delegation in April was the first official trade union delegation to make it to Tuzla since the beginning of the conflict.

I would like to read from the moving report by Bill Speirs on the STUC meeting with the Tuzla miners:

'The room in the Tuzla miners' union headquarters was small — the main meeting-room was crowded with women looking for some help, any help, in obtaining food.

'At first the room size didn't

matter, since there were only four union representatives there to meet us. As the discussion went on, however, the room gradually filled up, and it crossed my mind that Bosnian punctuality left something to be desired. Then I realised that these men had all walked from their pit villages to meet us — some came as far as 20 kilometres.

Harrowing

'The story they had to tell was harrowing. There were 13,000 coal miners in Tuzla region, employed in three deep mines and four opencast sites. With their families they comprise a population of 60,000. Only 25 per cent are working, and their only payment is one small can of meat or fish (sup-

plied by the UN) per shift — divided among 12 of them, plus 5 kilos of flour per month.

'Those who aren't working get nothing (unless they are in the army) as they aren't refugees. The only reason the working miners get some food is because the coal they produce is vital to maintain some output from Tuzla's power station.

'Their President said that miners were proud people and had never asked for help before — but their families were hungry now; they had many shortages, but the urgent need was for oil, flour, milk and sugar.

'In 1984 they had donated a day's wages to the striking British miners — if the workers of Britain could help them now it would never, ever, be forgotten.'

David Bleiman, the AUT's Scottish and North-East regional organiser, at the meeting in Weston-super-Mare, Avon, on 19-21 May.

Here we reprint extracts from Bleiman's appeal. In it he refers to a resolution calling for AUT support for the Workers Aid for Bosnia campaign, which was made by Terry Brotherstone at the union's council last December.

Bronwen Handyside reports

Two nations



No money, no TV

TV LICENCE inspectors have been instructed to target single mothers, according to last week's 'Independent on Sunday' — because they could be intimidated into opening the door, and intimidated into paying.

Those that can't pay end up like Sheila Gordon, a young, single mother taken to court for the £200 owed for her television licence. Her partner had died in a car crash six months before the licence inspectors called, and she was living on benefits.

When the magistrates ordered her to pay or face a prison sentence, Sheila asked for two hours' grace while a relative rushed the money to the court. This was refused and she was jailed for 14 days.

Her two children, one aged four and a baby of nine months, were taken into care — British justice in this case very economically claiming three victims for the price of one.

One wonders a little what the single mother of two children is supposed to do if she cannot plonk them in front of the TV from time to time — but right is right. If you can't pay for the licence, then you can't watch the telly.

Human dust

THE wife of Alan Clark, former defence minister, took in her stride last week the news of his infidelities with the wife and two daughters of a judge.

But she was a little miffed at their low social standing, saying 'Quite frankly, if you bed people that I call "below-stairs class" they go to the papers don't they?'

Ex-Etonian and ladies' man Alan is the son of Lord Clark, the writer of a famous book and presenter of a TV series on Western civilisation. Not much civilisation seems to have rubbed off on Alan, who in his recently released diaries refers to the 'delightful globes' of a shop assistant in Folkestone — and you can bet your bottom dollar he wasn't talking about light bulbs.

He was also attracted to Lady Thatcher's 'very small feet and attractive ankles'.

When he was a defence minister, Clark was involved in a rumpus when he referred to some immigrants' country of origin as 'bongo-bongo land'. He has named his dog Eva Braun, after Hitler's mistress.

The Clarks live in Saltwood Castle in Kent on a personal fortune estimated at £40 million. They even occasionally live there together. You can bet they — or most likely someone else does it for them — pay their TV licence on the knocker. But wouldn't the world be a far better place to live in if they, and not Sheila Gordon, were flung in the nick and the key thrown away for ever?

The Tory whipper

TERRY DICKS, Tory MP for Hayes and Harlington, who supported the flogging of a British man in a Qatar jail last month, had had two all-expenses-paid trips financed by the emirate last year.

Dicks said that the British public would support the imposing of 50 lashes on computer

technician Gavin Sherrard-Smith, who was alleged to have sold alcohol to a Muslim police officer.

His remarks were published in 'Gulf News', the region's leading English-language newspaper, and the sentence was carried out one week later.

Mr Dicks said later: 'I am satisfied that the judicial system in Qatar was operated in a perfectly proper way, and the punishment fitted the crime.'

The most charitable interpretation we can put on his position is that, like many members of the English upper classes, he regards being flogged in the nature of a big treat.

Care for the jobless

THE United Nations' annual 'World Labour Report' this year said that long-term prospects for the unemployed in rich and poor countries are going to get worse, and it urged governments to strengthen the safety net for the jobless.

A glance at the papers shows 5,000 teachers in England and Wales are at risk of being sacked because of cash cuts to schools, and that up to 50,000 jobs could go with the Post Office's imminent privatisation.

What are the government's plans in this grim unemployment situation?

Papers leaked to Labour MP Alan Milburn show that they propose to institute random 'short, sharp shock' interviews to claimants signing on in nine English towns. They will be subjected to interrogation on their efforts to find work, and those who 'fail' will have benefits stopped immediately.

The government says this is to encourage people to have a 'sustained effort' to find work.

The gravy train

BUT those who have jobs that involve sacking other people from their jobs are doing OK. The heads of the three main quangos instrumental in the rail privatisation are being paid in total nearly £350,000 a year.

Franchising director Roger Salmon is paid £100,000 for a four-day week; John Swift, the regulator, gets £125,000 for five days; and former BP boss Bob Horton, who runs the track authority, Railtrack, gets £121,000 for a three-day week.

Plus ça change...

IMMEDIATELY following John Major's attack on beggars last Friday, a report was released showing that a quarter of the homeless are ex-soldiers. Newspapers were quick to point out that the Vagrancy Act was introduced to crack down on the thousands of soldiers — many with missing limbs — reduced to penury after their return from fighting in the Napoleonic wars.

I am told by another informant that sailors who fought the Spanish Armada were deliberately starved to death at sea by thrifty captains, because they received their pay only when they set foot back on shore.

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

New Socialist Party government is one of crisis SHARP SWING TO LEFT IN HUNGARY

THE election results in Hungary mark a sharp swing to the left amongst the working class. The election has brought into office a government of the Hungarian Socialist Party (HSP), which from day one will be a government of crisis.

The HSP won over 50 per cent of the popular vote and nearly 209 seats out of a possible 386 in the new parliament. This was a far bigger victory than the HSP leadership expected, and a result that has raised considerable anxiety amongst the party leaders — who rightly fear that the masses will immediately start placing demands on the new regime.

That is why the HSP, although numerically strong enough to form a government on its own, is angling to draw the opposition Alliance of Free Democrats into a coalition.

Party chairman Gyuda Horn, widely expected to become prime minister in the new government, said:

'We want to make a decision this week about who we can negotiate with.'

'We have an absolute majority but we still continue to think of a coalition. Our natural part-

BY PETER JEFFRIES

ner can be the Alliance of Free Democrats.'

Horn also stressed that his government would be looking west, to Germany in particular, for economic support.

Insisting

The Alliance — which polled under a fifth of the total vote — has responded to these overtures by insisting that if it does join a coalition with the HSP it will do so only if it is given significant portfolios.

The result shows in the most graphic manner the deep disillusionment amongst working people with the results that were expected to accompany the restoration of the so-called 'market economy', that is, capitalism.

In a distorted way, the election result is an indication that the working class rejects the whole process of capitalist restoration and is determined to hold on to the gains it won after the end of World War II, and to win back those gains that have been lost.

There is a deep contradiction at the heart of the election result.

Many workers — opposing the restoration of capitalism — voted for the HSP. But by doing so they have elected a 'Socialist' government that stands for exactly this restoration.

The election result is not significant for Hungary alone. There have been similar swings to the left in Poland, Slovenia, Romania and Lithuania, representing the same rejection by the working people of the consequences of attempted capitalist restoration.

For the working class the big battles lie ahead. The new government has no policies to deal with the crisis. After having promised to restore welfare benefits to the millions living at or below the poverty line, it is already making moves to draw the trades unions into a 'so-

cial contract' to hold down workers' living standards.

Even on official figures inflation is now running at 12 per cent a year and rising, with over one in five workers without a job.

The new government is one subordinated to the dictat of the International Monetary Fund — which demands intensified attacks on the living standards and rights of the Hungarian workers.

The election result is a vindication of the position adopted by the Hungarian Socialist League (HSL), Hungarian section of the

Workers International to build the Fourth International.

The HSL has consistently warned that there could be no restoration of capitalism in eastern Europe, and that any attempt to bring about such restoration would mean a sharp intensification of the class struggle.

The HSL called for the restoration of a Socialist Party government not because it agreed with policies of the HSP, but because it would create better conditions for the fight of the working class and therefore the fight for socialism.

'Most favoured' human rights abuser!

FIVE years after the most brutal suppression of the Tiananmen Square protest in 1989, the US has renewed the Most Favoured Nation (MFN) trading status to China, despite misguided hopes of liberals that Democrat President Bill Clinton would be moved not to by human rights abuses.

In May 1989, hundreds of thousands of young workers and students gathered in the square to protest against the Chinese Communist Party government. On 3 and 4 June 1989, the army moved in to brutally massacre the demonstrators. In the months that followed thousands of dissidents were rounded up.

Human Rights Watch has documented the cases of 500 of those imprisoned in the 1989 crackdown. More than 200 of these are still in jail. Only 29 of these cases were previously known to human rights groups. Many were killed in the crackdown.

This year there has been a growth of dissident activity and the 'Economist' magazine has said the 'authorities fear a repeat of the 1989 protests' (21 May).

It went on to report that one labour activist said: 'China is releasing the people the United States thinks are important and arresting those who are the real threat.'

MFN status means that Chinese imports to the US have tariffs of a tenth of a fifth of those charged without it.

A World Bank study indicated that revoking MFN would slash trade between the countries by 42 per cent. Trade with the US accounts for 11 per cent of Chinese exports. Imports from the US to China account for 200,000 jobs in America.

China's United Nations representative Wang Guangya warned the world bourgeoisie that suppression of dissent was in its interests by saying that if China eased up the situation would become very unstable and 'everyone would be sorry' ('Economist', 12 March).

Reports of rural unrest are causing concern as 100 million Chinese displaced from land or state-owned factories wander around the country trying to eke out a living.



Tiananmen Square, 1989: 'Root out corruption'

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Appeal from striking miners

THE miners of Karaganda in Kazakhstan have been on strike since 18 May. The strike has been organised by the Independent Miners Union of Karaganda, to demand that a tariff agreement be signed which will provide reasonable working conditions and pay.

The average monthly pay of a Karaganda miner is 3,000 tenge. On the black market \$1 is

equivalent to between 60 and 70 tenge (pay is therefore roughly £30).

On 28 May, 21 miners stayed down the pit and of these seven are on hunger strike.

Four miners — at the '50 years of the October Revolution' mine — have been on hunger strike since 20 May.

The miners intend to stand firm to the end. The mine admin-

istration has taken them to court.

The strike organisers can be contacted on: 010-7-3212 57 70 (Fax).

V. Myasni

Please inform Dave Temple of any messages you send, at Tr Union Printing Services (091-0299). Also contact Dave for further information.

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