Workers Press

WEEKLY PAPER OF THE WORKERS REVOLUTIONARY PARTY SATURDAY 2 MARCH 1996 NO.490 PRICE 30p

Workers inspired by JJ Fast Food workers' struggle

EAST LONDON FIGHTS FOR UNION

INSPIRED by the struggle of workers at JJ Fast Food, a determined fight for trade unionism is now underway among textile workers throughout north and east London.

The first blow was struck by 100 Kurdish and Turkish workers who walked out at Jenny's Textiles in Tottenham, north London.

After a five-day strike the workers won:

- Recognition for their union, the Transport and General Workers' Union.
- An end to arbitrary deductions from their pay.
- Proper tea and lunch breaks.
- Clean eating and toilet facilities.
- Overtime payments for work done after 6.30pm.

Victory came after striking workers sat in front of the factory and stopped middlemen collecting goods, and flying pickets were sent to textile factories throughout Tottenham and Hackney. The workers returned victorious but under no illusions. They know that behind small employers like Jenny's stand giant firms such as Marks and Spencers.

BY NICK BAILEY

But the victory at Jenny's can lead to bigger things. Already a textile firm in Hackney has been threatened with strike action and the boss responded by giving his workers the day off!

Those who came together in support of the struggle at JJ Fast Food are now determined to help spread this fight for trade unionism throughout north and east London where wages and conditions are among the worst in London.

■ As we went to press, the situation at JJ Fast Food was still unclear.

Although the workers have won union recognition, many of the strikers are dissatisfied with the terms agreed between the employer and their union the Transport and General Workers' Union.

Many workers believe that in certain respects the contract that has been agreed over their heads between management and union negotiators is in some ways worse than the one before the strike. It is still not certain whether the workers will be willing to return on these terms.

Asylum and Immigration Bill demonstration

March organisers estimated more than 30,000 on the Asylum and Immigration Bill demonstration last Saturday. Many trade union banners were on the demonstration including UNISON, Transport and General Workers' Union, Rolls Royce Bristol, the Inland Revenue workers in London, and many school and teachers' unions

Photo: Marg Nicol

40,000 on protest against Scottish education cuts

BY TERRY BROTHERSTONE

OVER 40,000 people turned out in Edinburgh last weekend in a huge show of strength against the threat to close 40 schools in Scotland and sack large numbers of teachers.

It was one of the biggest rallies in a Scottish city since the famous Glasgow march of 1838 in support of the Chartist movement.

The executive of Scotland's main teachers' union, the EIS, had prepared for a turnout of 5,000. They had only called the demonstration under intense pressure from members at the end of last year when the Tory budget cuts were announced.

There have already been lay-offs at further education colleges and members of STAR (Scottish Teachers Against Redundancy), meeting separately after the rally, were bitter in their criticisms of the EIS leaders' failure to respond decisively.

Speakers pointed out that the union leaders wanted simply an anti-Tory propaganda campaign with nothing done to embarrass Blair's 'New Labour'.

Judith Gillespie, parents' association leader, said that the Edinburgh march was the equivalent of half a million people rallying in London.

Tory attempts to blame cuts on mainly Labour-controlled local authorities cuts little ice, but there are few illusions about Labour.

Writing about the estimated £400 million shortfall in local government finance in last weekend's *Scotland on Sunday*, columnist Kenny Farquharson asked: 'Would things be all that easier under Labour?' Shadow chancellor, Gordon Brown, he pointed out, is committed to fiscal rectitude.

'The images many Labour people will take away from the experience of recent days,' he concluded, 'is that fiscal rectitude hurts the people they were elected to serve, especially the most vulnerable.'

In effect he is predicting a major split in the Labour Party under a Blair government, if not at Westminister then between the national party leadership and many local councillors.

In Scotland at least, education will be a major arena of conflict which will not wait for the arrival of the next Labour government, unless that happens well before the spring of next year.

Workers Press

WEEKLY PAPER OF THE WORKERS REVOLUTIONARY PARTY PO Box 735, London SW8 1YB. Tel: 0171-387 0564 Fax: 0171-387 0569

To all socialist and working-class organisations and individuals and all those fighting the Asylum Bill

CRISIS IN THE LABOUR MOVEMENT

— THE NEED FOR A NEW SOCIALIST PARTY

CONFERENCE:

Saturday 16 March, 11am-5pmConway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1

(Holborn tube) Entrance: £1 (50p concession)

The working class needs its own socialist party — a party that will organise the fight in its own interests. Many people are already organising themselves.

We need to unite, we need to discuss, we need to prepare. That is the purpose of this conference. We propose to discuss the following demands:

- Down with the racist immigration laws! Down with the Asylum and Immigration Bill!
- No restriction on freedom of movement! Defend the right for people to live in any country! ● Amnesty for all unregistered migrants and refugees!
- Down with privatisation! A full and open workers' inquiry into the companies' books!
- No to casual labour! ● Demand permanent jobs for all!
- Down with the anti-trade union laws! Restore trade union rights!
- Down with cuts in social and public services! A full and open workers' inquiry into state finance! ● Down with the Criminal Justice laws! Demand basic democratic rights!
- An injury to one is an injury to all! Build workers' internationalism!

Scott, p2 ★ Labour betrays PTA fight, p3 ★ International dockers' conference, pp4&5 ★ Germany, p7 ★ Spain and Bosnia, p8

Workers Press

Their crisis and ours

HOW LONG can the Tory government last? Even before its near defeat on the findings of the Scott inquiry, some Tory MPs, including Teddy Taylor, were saying that the government could not survive until the autumn. And the sentiments that some expressed openly are undoubtedly being voiced privately by a far greater number.

Sir Richard Scott, one of the most senior judges in the country, has uncovered a story of lying and deceit by ministers before parliament, of one of the senior law officers of the Crown refusing to act despite knowing that innocent people faced jail in connection with the arms trade to Iraq.

Already having only a whisker-thin majority, the government is about to see its parliamentary majority all but wiped out with defeat in a coming by-election, humiliating losses in the coming local government elections and the prospect of even deeper divisions over Europe when prime minister Major attends the European heads of state meeting at next month's inter-governmental conference.

* * * * *

BUT if the government is in crisis this is no thanks to the Labour 'opposition'. The more intense the Tory government's difficulties, the faster Blair and company move to the right.

The press lavished praise on the speech of Robin Cook in the debate on Scott. But what was the substance of this speech? It was that the Tory government had been guilty of deceiving the House of Commons. But in a so-called 'parliamentary democracy' this is routine practice. As Ian Lang pointed out in reply to Cook, it was a previous Labour government that had armed the dictatorship in Argentina, without the full knowledge of parliament.

The nature of this Labour so-called opposition was revealed the very day of the Scott debate when shadow home secretary Jack Straw announced that Labour will now drop its opposition to the Prevention of Terrorism Act. This is the act that by excluding named people from the north of Ireland visiting the mainland sets up a system of de facto internal exile. At the same time the act gives the police powers to detain people without reference to the courts.

For the last 13 years Labour has opposed the renewal of the act when it has come before Parliament. (Not that it organised any real opposition to these draconian measures and in any case it was Labour who first introduced the PTA in 1974.) But now Straw makes clear that if elected a Labour government will retain this measure.

* * * * *

THE Tories are deeply unpopular. Even the slightest campaign by the Labour and trade union leaders could quickly remove it from office. But Labour wouldn't do this under any circumstances. They are terrified this would unleash real forces in the working class that would be turned against them when they come into office.

So the working class faces a dangerous situation. However weak the Tory government, the working class lacks any real leadership against the class enemy. And yet the working class is more than ready to fight, as the struggle of workers at JJ Foods, at Hillingdon hospital and on the Liverpool docks make crystal clear.

The greatest danger is that Blair and company lull the working class into a false sense of security: that things will get better under Labour. They will not. Labour has made clear it will tackle the deepening capitalist crisis from the point of view of the needs of big business. It has said repeatedly that it is the working class who will pay for capitalism's crisis.

That is why we urge everybody to come to the 16 March conference sponsored by Workers Press at which the crisis in the movement will be discussed and the way forward considered.

Letters

WE WELCOME LETTERS
SEND THEM TO: WORKERS PRESS, PO BOX 735, LONDON SW8 1YB
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When the *Bell Curve* tolls

I WAS worried by an aspect of Daniel Robertson's Science Focus (17 February) concerning the relationship between heredity, the conditions of human life and intellectual capability.

His item on *The Bell Curve* implies that the role of genes in human development is a 'dodgy' area, simply because it has been latched onto by the most reaction pseudoscientists.

The topic, and its part in the human 'nature-nurture' contradiction, is the richest scientific source for developing Marxism. An important task of the proposed Science Forum is to open up the most general discussion in plain language.

We carry in our genes 4,000 million years of biological evolution. That itself is a reflection of the continually changing environment, both organic and inorganic, over that immense time, as well as of the wholly inorganic conditions out of which life on our planet emerged. Genes are inseparable from the life of every individual, and that includes human consciousness.

Modern brain studies reveal something along the following lines. During brain growth the information processing cells (neurons) form initially at the brain's core. They are transported throughout the growing brain in an apparently random way. To become established as functional 'atoms' means connection with nerve fibres (axons). Connection is achieved by matching between chemical secretions by both neurons and axons, the secretions being extremely varied and undoubtedly controlled by genes.

Some connections are never made, others are inappropriate for the brain area where they develop and some are not brought into use. In these cases the connections die. Those that are activated survive until senility sets in. This process is not continuous, but ends once the brain and nervous system is fully developed in adults, unlike most parts of the body where cells are replaced throughout life.

'Wiring up' the brain is therefore partly a coded genetic 'plan' carrying an immense history. But the element of chance is involved, partly the near random formation of connections and crucially the intervention of all the myriad aspects of the environment. The last includes direct physical and chemical influences, such as mechanical damage, toxic chemicals or starvation of essential nutrients. Yet a vast amount of influence is wielded by information about the world from the senses via the whole nervous system. Whether a brain-cell connection forms, begins to function or dies unused is therefore a reflection of the whole of living, in the natural and social world, through dialectical interplay of chance and necessity.

This fundamental and essentially dialectical materialist view of brain development must be explored so that the reactionary arguments of *The Bell Curve*'s authors can be properly answered and swept away. Equally important is to demonstrate clearly how the social division of wealth and opportunity under capitalism directly intervenes in human potential at its very roots. This is not an agenda that can be taken forward through formal scientific debate by individual scientists enveloped by bourgeois ideology, but only by their joining forces with the independent movement of the working class.

Steve Drury
Brampton, Cumbria

Hillingdon hospital appendix

THE report of the Hillingdon hospital march on last week's front page was an important addition to the excellent reports Workers Press has carried of the struggles of the Liverpool dockers and JJ Fast Food.

However I think a vital point of the Hillingdon march was omitted from the report and that was the central place of the Women of the Waterfront, the wives and partners of the Liverpool dockers, on the march. Their presence gave a tremendous boost to the day.

It is a moving example of the coming together of these three struggles — the Liverpool dockers, the Hillingdon hospital cleaners and the JJ Fast Food workers — that only a few years ago would have remained separated from each other.

Neil Barnes
London WC1

The Guardian and Ellis Hillman

THE death of Ellis Hillman gave the Guardian the opportunity to sneer at Trotskyism. On 13 February, Illtyd Harrington, who had served with Hillman on the Greater London Council, wrote an obituary in the Guardian which included some apocryphal stories about the early days of the Trotskyist movement in order to discredit their ideas.

His (or Ellis's?) most startling invention was that in 1944 the Revolutionary Communist Party 'had apparently procured a few dozen rifles to lead the armed proletarian struggle', 'were compelled to postpone the revolution', were 'offered a police amnesty', but 'managed to get to the wrong police station'.

In the interests of historical truth one would have thought the Guardian would have checked. But since anyone to the left of Blair is suspect, I suppose any stick with which to beat them will do.

I submitted the following letter to the Guardian:

'It was predictable that Ellis Hillman, with his dry sense of humour and his pronounced tendency to embellish all his stories and indulge in gossip, would give Illtyd Harrington a cock-and-bull story which the latter would willingly accept and put into Hillman's obituary (Guardian, 13 February). It is less understandable why the Guardian would print nonsense suitable for 1 April.

'I was one of the founder members of the Revolutionary Communist Party. There was no attempt to lead "an armed proletarian struggle" in 1944 with "a few dozen rifles" at headquarters, nor any "police amnesty".

'This story was hardly likely, since on 5 April 1944 the police raided the Harrow Road headquarters, arrested four leading members of the RCP and charged them with illegally fomenting a strike.

'An illegal cache of arms would have been more than welcomed by a hostile press, and by the police, because this would have prevented their having to release the four Trotskyists when their sentences were subsequently quashed on appeal.'

This short letter was too long for the editor, whose work ensured that the implicit criticism of the Guardian, the words 'illegally' (before 'fomenting a strike'), illegal (before 'cache of arms') and 'hostile' (in reference to the press and police) were all deleted!

However, putting the record straight brings me to the uncritical statements which appeared in Workers Press about Hillman (3 and 10 February).

Yes, he was in the Trotskyist movement for a few years but my memory of him was that his fight against the right wing in the Labour Party was of short duration, if ever. He became a London County councillor (and then a Greater London councillor) not because of the support of the local Labour Party, but because Norwood Labour Party in 1952 was strongly influenced by Ted Knight, Tom Mercer and myself.

We persuaded the left in the party to put him forward for the LCC as one of Norwood's candidates who won the seats.

When we three were expelled by the national executive two years later and the Norwood party was suspended, there was no support for our campaign for reinstatement from our 'Trotskyist' county councillor that I recall. Instead, Ellis found a more tranquil constituency party — Hackney — to accept him as candidate.

I lost touch with him for many years. I never heard of any fight he led in the Labour Party in that time (four decades!). He turned up out of the blues about a year ago to tell me proudly he was mayor of Barnet but 'I am still a Trotskyist'. Surely something of a contradiction?

David Finch
Croydon

Socialist Labour Party

BUILDING a new party of the working class is no easy matter as Arthur Scargill is about to discover.

On the surface it may appear that all the prerequisites for the launch of such a party are already in place. The anger and frustration resulting from a generation of Tory rule coupled with the defection of the traditional party of the working class to the other side of the barricades. It all sounds too good to be true.

In the best of all possible worlds the attacks of the Tories (too numerous to mention), plus the open defection of 'New' Labour would lead automatically a large section of the organised working class plus a majority of the 'socialist intelligentsia' in the direction of forming a new 'socialist' party, obviously not a revolutionary party, but a classic left/centrist organisation.

However, reality is more complex and inscrutable than the most far-sighted of schematists. It appears that a class fed up to the back teeth with incessant Tory attacks will put up with Blair's cynical 'stakeholder' economy, dreamed up by his team of faceless spin-doctors (a thinly disguised 'people's capitalism' à la Thatcher) in order to be rid of the Tory enemy. First things first is the order of the day — and quite right too!

But does this mean that a new initiative for a 'socialist party' is doomed to failure? Quite the opposite, as long as we realise two things:

■ There will be no quick-fix disillusion the day after Blair and Co. take office; and,

■ The essential prerequisite for any socialist regroupment must start from the existing forces, however disillusioned or burnt out, not a willy-nilly search for spectral 'new forces' in the tree-houses around Newbury.

The problem is how to build a new organisation of the class which can express the real needs of the working class and carry the class with it.

We nowhere address this problem (and neither does Arthur Scargill for that matter).

It is no good just to say that the WRP is organising a conference to lead to the formation of a new party without at least outlining how we propose to get from where we are (100-plus members) to a party representing the class as a social force (necessarily tens of thousands of members with a serious implantation in the labour movement — that is what a PARTY is!).

Arthur Scargill and his followers are even worse, an unlaunched party of hand-picked members, and no doubt organisers, with a constitution Blair would give his eye-teeth for. A party open to all socialists as long as they are not likely to disagree with Arthur.

But the likelihood is that the serious elements in the broad movement who want to fight the Tories and have reached beyond the limits of pure trade union consciousness will gravitate towards the 'Socialist Labour Party'.

Scargill estimates 5,000 members within two years. This could be an underestimation, depending on the tempo of the class struggle.

In my opinion, the 'Scargillite' party — despite its obvious stated aim of recreating the best of 'Old Labour' within a very bureaucratic structure — will be a mass of contradictions.

For a start the initial call addressed to all who want to fight for socialism is at odds with the recently promulgated constitution with its barely-disguised list of bans and proscriptions.

The fact is, however, that the constitution can only be understood as Scargill's wish-list of organisations and individuals he is afraid would have a real influence within a more open organisation.

His problem remains to implement to the letter a constitution which has not been voted on by any annual conference.

His attempt to impose a Stalinist-style operation within an organisation of ex-Labour Party members — who in the main will have been through similar machinations at the hands of the Blairites — will be nigh on impossible.

But there will be some sympathy among ordinary workers who will want to be in a serious organisation — not a minefield of warring sectarian groups with their own agendas.

So where does this leave the WRP and its call for a new party? In a sense, we have been pre-empted by Scargill, who has rushed in before we could get our boots on. This is all to the good!

The Socialist Labour Party can become the party of the working class, but this depends very much on us and how we sensitively discuss with those drawn around the SLP and attempt to make it the sort of open organisation that socialists from all backgrounds can work within. One thing is for certain.

It isn't going to disappear and for us to set up an alternative to it will be seen as a sectarian irrelevance by the mass of workers even if they agree with our analysis as against the limited reformist parliamentarian outlook which the SLP will no doubt adopt.

In short, we have to try like hell to get into the SLP as soon as it is officially launched. We must campaign to be allowed in with our opinions intact but without the paraphernalia of a separate party.

We mustn't be a party within the SLP but must seek to win the organisation to our view of socialism, just as Arthur Scargill and his followers will see it as their duty to win the membership to their position.

In essence, we have to do what we do best — fight for a Marxist perspective and internationalism within the columns of its publications and at its conferences. We would of course support SLP candidates in elections, even if we disagreed with standing in every constituency in the coming general election.

Our initial tasks whether we are allowed in or not would be three in number:

■ To fight for a conference to discuss a constitution that reflects the needs of the class for the maximum of discussion before decisions are taken and a review of election tactics.

■ To fight for real internationalism rather than the paper internationalism of 'social democracy'.

■ To begin the discussion on an assessment of the historic role of 'Labourism' rather than sweeping it under the carpet and moving next business.

Mike Howgate

Labour betrays PTA fight

BY JOHN STEELE

TONY BLAIR's 'New Labour' continues to remove any traces of principle that would distinguish it from the Tories.

The latest confirmation that a Blair-led government will ruthlessly attack democratic rights comes in shadow home secretary Jack Straw's statement that Labour will not oppose the renewal of the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA).

It was a Labour government which first introduced the PTA in 1974 but the party has opposed its annual renewal since 1983 because of the Tories extension of its powers — particularly the system of 'internal exile' which excludes northern Irish people from Britain and the detaining of people for up to seven days without being charged.

Labour's position was never more than a token opposition which would have been ditched as soon as they were in office and Straw is quick to use the recent IRA bombs in London as an excuse to abandon it now.

The Labour leadership sits easily on the bandwagon of hypocritical moral outrage that has followed the IRA bombs.

Murder

It was a Labour government that first sent the British army on to the streets of Belfast and Derry and the Labour leaders have consistently supported all the acts of murder and torture carried out by these forces.

Straw and Blair are more concerned at being able to deflect the Tories' charge of 'being soft on law and order' than of defending the democratic rights of Irish people.

Their hypocrisy is the same as those political, trade union and church leaders who spoke at the large 'peace' demonstrations which have been taking place throughout Ireland.

These demonstrations reflect the real desire of a people to live a life of **human** relations free from the fear of the car bomb and assassinations, and without the terror and harrassment from armed troops. But there is a difference between the working class genuinely seeking peace and the moralists who piously condemn the IRA but who do nothing to challenge the repressive laws with which Britain is forced to maintain its outdated rule in Ireland.

Peace

The movement for peace cannot succeed unless it confronts the implementation of the PTA and demands its removal.

This cannot be done by the methods of the IRA but neither can it be done by any movement that turns its back on the brutal oppression which flows from the partition of Ireland.

Irish Republican Socialist statement

The Irish Republican Socialist Party has strongly criticised the Labour party's intention to support the retention of the notorious Prevention of Terrorism Act. In a statement Derry Ard Comhairle (national committee) member Ciaran McLaughlin said:

THE claim that this support for the PTA stands to show the IRA that 'terrorism' will not succeed, is rubbish and is not borne out by facts.

The PTA is a piece of blatantly racist legislation. Since its inception it has never been shown to have any effect on curbing the activities of Republican guerrillas. It has been used for intimidating, framing and terrorising Irish people living in, or travelling through, Britain.

It is a disgusting spectacle to see a spokesperson for a supposedly 'socialist' party supporting the continued use of legislation aimed at curbing human rights and abusing civil liberties. Jack Straw's revealing comment indicates just how quickly the 'party of Labour' has degenerated under Tony Blair.

The British working class, and Irish people in particular, should remember this at the next election.

Hillingdon dispute: Who are Pall Mall?

BY ANTON MOCTONIAN

WHEN it comes to treating staff unfairly, Pall Mall is in a class of its own, according to a UNISON public service union pamphlet.

Pall Mall is a company that has grown fat in the rat-eat-rat world of Compulsory Competitive Tendering of local services. In CCT, companies compete with each other to undercut their workers' wages. When Pall Mall took over the cleaning contract at Hillingdon hospital from another private company, they proceeded to cut overtime, holiday pay and London weighting.

Pall Mall did this by holding a gun to the head of the women workers: they sent letters to their home addresses telling them that if they didn't sign new contracts they would be sacked.

This was the third time the women had faced this situation, since 1986, and had had their pay cut by private contractors.

Pall Mall has more than 10,000 employees in Britain. In 1994, they had a turnover of £71 million with a £2.2 million profit.

They also own part of the larger Davis Service Group which has a £322 million turnover and profits of £2.5 million.

Exploitation

Their brutal exploitation of their workforce was revealed by an investigation that showed average pay levels of £5,139 a year. This is contrasted starkly with that of its six highest paid directors who earned a cool £315,305 between them.

The minimal protection of the Transfer of Undertakings Protection of Employees (TUPE) legislation is clearly a barrier to these companies. The Davis Service Group stated its opposition to these laws in its 1994 annual report.

In 1994, the industry had hoped that the government would succeed in its effort to have contracting out excluded from TUPE.

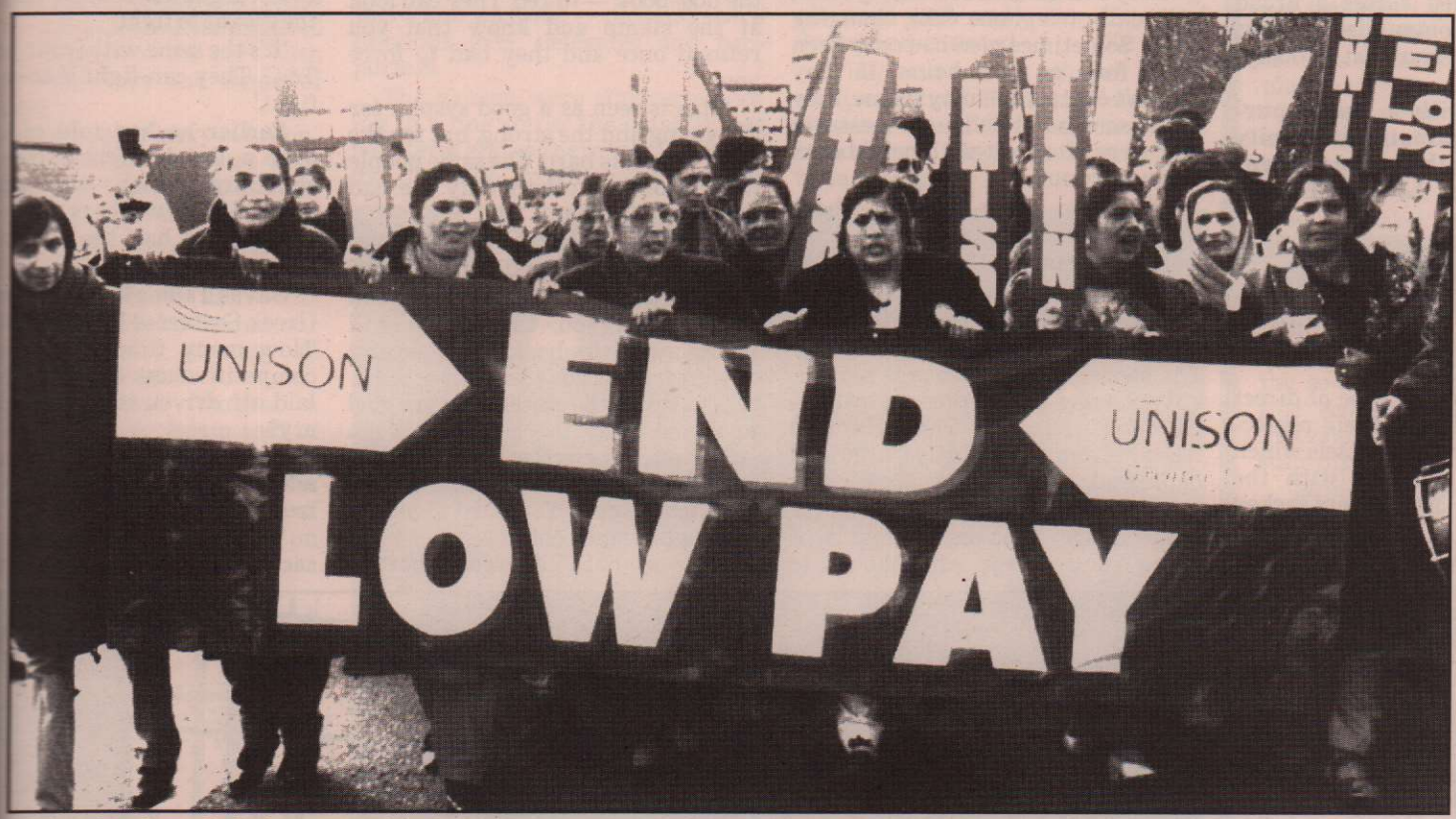
Davis has a reputation for attacking terms and conditions and staff levels within months of taking over a contract.

In East Kilbride hospital, a local union official reported, staff who took home a measly £103 a week were being bullied into allowing further cuts in their conditions by these contractors. This followed a dispute in which porters at the hospital were told they would not be paid rises due to them from the 1996 pay award unless they agreed new contracts.

At Orsett and St Andrews hospital in Essex, Pall Mall won the contract in October 1993. Soon after letters were sent to employees 'inviting' them to sign new contracts with cuts in pay and hours. These cuts involved getting rid of the London and attendance allowances. This meant wage cuts of £15 a week. UNISON estimated the cuts to be around 20 per cent, imposed on workers who were already poorly paid. The company backed down under threats of industrial tribunals.

The women at Hillingdon hospital are making an important stand against an employer who deserves to be taught a lesson. It is the duty of every trade unionist to assist this fight in every way they can.

Hillingdon hospital workers are at the forefront of the battle against the worst aspects of CCT in the NHS.



Hillingdon hospital cleaners with their supporters on a mass demonstration on Saturday 17 February

NOTICE TO VACATE

TO THE OCCUPIERS

WHEREAS the Secretary of State for Transport is entitled to possession of pasture land between the Lambourn Road and Mill Stream to the south of the River Lambourn, either side of the road to Bagnor, Newbury, Berkshire (excluding the private means of access to the trout farm) (otherwise known as plots 9/4B, 9/4C, 9/4D, 9/4Q and part of plot 9/4 of The Winchester - Preston Trunk Road (A34) (Newbury Bypass) Compulsory Purchase Order (No SE14) 1993)("the Land")

AND WHEREAS you have entered into possession of the Land without the licence or consent of the Secretary of State for Transport or any of his servants or agents

YOU ARE HEREBY REQUIRED to vacate the Land within 48 hours from the date on which this notice is served.

DATED this 20th day of February 1996

Signed.....
G P RAINBOW

ON BEHALF OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRANSPORT

SERVED this 21st day of February 1996

THIS is the notice posted last week by the police on all trees in the Bagnor Lane Cambridge Camp in Newbury. Those protesting against the construction of the Newbury by-pass were waiting for legal proceedings to start against them.

Asylum bill on road to police state

BY JOHN PETERS

BRITAIN is heading for a police state said a delegate to the lectuerers' union NATFHE's further and adult conference last weekend.

Successfully moving a resolution against the Asylum Bill, Chris Powell of the Inner London Region said: 'The measures proposed will have an impact on lecturers who would have to act as unofficial immigration officers. It is a filthy piece of racist legislation by a government on the skids,' he added. Powell pointed out that the Labour Party was opposed to any major changes in the bill.

'They are hoping that the Tories will push it through so that they are not associated with the defence of immigrants as a pre-election issue,' he declared.

Vote NO to new AEEU rules!

BY AN INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

OPPOSITION to the new rule book for the AEEU engineering union has been very difficult to organise. The struggle on the new rules is about who controls the union, and on whose behalf — the members or the employers (through the trade union bureaucratic élite).

The members want and need a democratic structure where they control the union, its policies, its resources, and their full-time officials in the interests of those members.

This is one side of the struggle of the working class to reconstruct itself as a class, which must reappropriate its defensive organisations to defend itself

But there has been a national advert against the new rules, placed in the Daily Mirror by shop stewards committees at British Aerospace, GEC, Rolls Royce, Lucas Aerospace, Hurel Dubois, Potterton Myson and AIT, supported by a number of district committees.

This opposition is supported up and down the country by shop stewards, activists, district committees (to be abolished), aided (covertly) by full-time officials.

Voting started on 19 February and will end on 14 March. The joint executive council of the two unions under the process of merger into the AEEU, the AEU and the EETPU, need a YES vote to complete amalgamation and become one union.

But the new rule book was not subject to consultation with the

time officials, although they were briefed three weeks ago, and instructed to campaign for a YES vote.

The Broad Left's Engineering Gazette Group has not even met to discuss the implications of the new rules, which comes as no surprise since the three 'lefts' on the executive — D. Hall (newly elected president), J. Airlie (Scotland) and R. Butler (London) — voted unanimously with the electricians' EETPU and the AEU right wing.

Criticisms

Roger Butler even answered criticisms of the new rules from an AEU activist in the Morning Star (17 February). Butler wrote: 'I have no hesitation in recom-

campaign and vote to accept the new rule book.'

It must not be forgotten that it was Airlee and Butler who made it possible to amalgamate with the EETPU by voting unanimously with the AEU right wing in 1991. At that time, at a national meeting in Preston, Airlie, then chair of the Engineering Gazette Group, ruled out of order a proposal to 'lobby the AEU national committee, and hold a national campaign against the amalgamation', after a disputed vote.

The result was no Engineering Gazette campaign and a large vote for amalgamation.

To avoid having to stand for election, Airlie has signed to retire at 60 in return for an undisclosed severance package, involving cash and pensions ben-

SE London WRP

Lectures on Marxism

Six: *Political economy (2)*

Monday 25 March, 8pm

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Inside left

Blood money

ESIDES catering for cognoscenti of ies, state conspiracies and things M government would rather we did ot know about, Stephen Dorrill's *obster* magazine often throws light n matters of wider concern.

Examining the arms for Iraq business from an angle the Scott Inquiry dn't pursue, the latest issue (no.30) otes Gerald James, former managg director of Astra Holdings: 'The eals went on because people were etting so much commission on them. Scott looked at how the deals were nanced, he would get far more of the ory.'

Lobster traces the interwoven reers of people like Astra's 'mystery an' Stephan Kock, and Sir John uckney, ex-MI5, chairman of Crown gents and its offshoot International ilitary Supplies (IMS) from 1974-85, eputy-chair of Midland, and vicehair of Tube Investments when it ld Matrix Churchill to the Iraqis.

Considering that the millions the stening bank' lent Saddam Hussein ere recouped from our taxes, I don't e why the manager was bothered bout my little overdraft!

Special agent

LSO in *Lobster*, Julian Putkowski, ho researched the BBC series 'The onocled Mutineer', has been uncovring how British Army department 2' fought Bolshevism in Britain ter World War I. He follows field ent Pte R. Gray who spied on mutious soldiers and subversives around e country, sometimes by ingenious ethods.

Corporal J. Swinburn of the milary police in Glasgow takes up the ory: 'On the afternoon of the 28th stant I was on special duty in plain othes accompanied by L/Cpl Magan, also in plain clothes, on Glasgow reen.

'I there saw a man who is known to e as Mr R.Gray, a special enquiry ent from GHQ, Great Britain. He as accompanied by a female who as engaged in telling fortunes for oney. They were displaying a chart hich read "Gypsy Gray, from Great armouth, the World's Greatest haracter Delineator, Let me tell you hat your face reveals, Character om face, 6d."'

Corporal Swinburn called over o civil police constables. Gray and s lady accomplice were sent packg, and Scottish Command wrote to HQ asking why it was sending such nateurs into Glasgow, which ready had an intelligence network ying on its civilians.

In Abertillery, Gray heard George ardy lecture on 'Class war in the nited States'; but was given the slip hen he tried to follow the old 'Wobly' (Industrial Workers of the World ember) to Pontypool. 'I found the orkers extremely "clannish" and d to be very guarded so as not to ouse suspicion.'

In Leeds, Gray attended a 'Hands f Russia' meeting, met a mysterious ssian, and heard comments about abs in the rail strike. He reported wdy behaviour by 'females of an desirable type', soldiers and civiln hooligans in Chapeltown (even in ose days!); but discovered the vernment's National Propaganda mphlets were proving useful:

'Upwards of 2,000 have been used waste paper in a fried-fish shop in wer Headrow, Leeds. In my presce, a customer jokingly enquired if e proprietor was getting paid for stributing the leaflets, the answer as — "no, we got them amongst her stuff from a wholesale wasteper merchant".'

Charlie Pottins

***Lobster*, £2 from S. Dorrill, 135 hool Street, Netherthong, Holmth, West Yorkshire HD7 2YB**

International dockers' conference

'Victory is ha — but

Last week Workers Press reported on the opening sessions of the international dockworkers' conference called in support of the 500 sacked Liverpool port workers. DOT GIBSON reports on the whole six-day meeting

'WHEN Thatcher and the Mersey Docks and Harbour Company started this they did not know what would evolve. They started something and we're going to finish it.

'When your delegates turned up in Australia, I asked myself why? We've sent messages of support, we've sent money, what do they want? Those two magnificent ambassadors of yours never left a stone unturned. From an ordinary dispute it became a worldwide political dispute. It has become the starting stone of what we must do — coming back and fighting back.'

This is what **Jim Donovan**, Joint National Secretary of the Maritime Union of Australia, said in the closing session of the international conference of dockworkers called by the 500 sacked Liverpool dockers shop stewards' committee from 17 to 23 February.

And what a week it was! The 53 delegates from 15 countries were either dockers' union organisers or working dockers. Their political background varied across a broad spectrum: ex-Communist Party, Social Democrat, Anarchist, Trotskyist, Syndicalist....

They came with a single purpose: to co-ordinate solidarity actions aimed at the reinstatement of the 500 sacked Liverpool dockers.

Decisions

By the end of the week, with no fuss or bother, they had unanimously taken decisions to:

■ 'Carry out every type of direct and indirect action in their respective ports ... against all vessels which continue to do business with the employers of the 500 dockers sacked in Liverpool.'

■ 'Provide [the Liverpool dockers] with material aid, and also to do their best to convince dockers and portworkers' unions not represented here to help provide such aid.'

■ Set up an international commission consisting of one delegate from North America, one from Australia/New Zealand, one from Britain/Ireland and two from the rest of Europe. The first meeting of this commission will take place in August and it will organise a further international conference of dockworkers.

Michel Murray, president of the SCFP [Canadian dockworkers], saying that this 'is a sort of beginning of dockers' solidarity around the world,' reminded delegates that the last conference like this was in Detroit in 1947.

'Fifty years is too long to wait for this type of conference,' he said.

Last week the dockers were making up for lost time. Not a moment was wasted to exchange views, experiences, addresses, photographs, mementoes, jokes and to speak of their internationalism over and over again, and with more and more strength and conviction as the days passed.

'This is only the beginning of the struggles for workers here in Liverpool and workers all over the world,' said docker **Arturo DeRosa** from Salerno, Italy.

'It is only with material solidarity in action that we can face a ruling class that is international,' stated **Nick Georgiou**, docker from the port of Piraeus, Greece.

'It was 22 years ago in Portugal that we had a revolution,' said 36-year-old **Antonio Reis** from the FNSTP. 'From then until this week there was never anything so close to my heart. We sang then and we sing now: Victory is hard to get but it is ours!'

There was a standing ovation for **Doreen McNally** who spoke for Women of the Waterfront. Every working docker knew from bitter experience the truth of her words:

'In 1989, Mersey Docks and Harbour Company began a programme of demoralisation of the workforce. Their aim was to return to the cheap casual labour of Victorian times.

'The men were constantly threatened with dismissal if they didn't agree to sign various contracts, accepting disgraceful working conditions.

'They intruded in our family lives, with daily telephone calls, changing shifts. Sometimes men had only been home four or five hours. If they couldn't contact them by phone, they would send hand-delivered messages that were often left with neighbours if you were out.

'The men were quizzed about their whereabouts, as though they were accountable 24 hours a day.

'Social lives came to a halt, because arrangements were constantly being cancelled due to pressure of work. The men suffered noticeable personality changes commented on by family and friends. They became irritable and were always tired and depressed.

'Continuous 12 to 14 hour shifts, daily changes from days to nights, or being rung in the early hours to come into work, or twilight shifts, upsetting their body clocks and general health and their families struggling with the knock-on effects this has on family life...

'On 28 September 1995, when these men refused to cross the picket line, their partners were right there with them — ecstatic that finally, after six years of being held to ransom, they were making a stand for justice.'

Nobody understood this better than docker **Roger Van Doninck** from Antwerp, Belgium. He explained:

'Here is my dog-book (dockers' tally book). I got my first one 22 years ago. Then there were 14,000 dockers in Antwerp and now there are 7,000.

'In Antwerp every day the docker must get his job. The foreman chooses his people — we are still in another century. You can refuse the job and then you are given ten minutes to negotiate. When you don't agree, maybe for several reasons, you are still forced to do that job.

'Then there is a special stamp for the dog-book — in red. They can look at the stamp and know that you refused once and they had to force you.

'This is seen as a good system for the young and the strong, but for the older ones it is hard. The same people have a job and others only the bad jobs.

'Every half year they take the ones that work less and when they explain that you are no good and they punish you, the docker will throw away the book. Then several of your friends go.

'They hate the system and are glad to throw away the book. But I am going to tell them: this book must not be thrown away, it was fought for by your forefathers. You must give it to those who come behind you.

'This is what I have learnt here in Liverpool. That is what I am going to say when I get back.'

Jorg Wessels, ÖTV member and working docker from Hamburg, said: 'They tell us things will be better if there is a private owner. There were 13,000 dockers and now there are only 6,500. The owners want us to work harder. We are run by computers — there are computers on the cranes and other equipment. Then the older workers get fed up and leave.'

Heard

He was representing his union branch, and said: 'When I heard about this there was no doubt that I had to come even with my own money,' but he thought 'why a whole week?'

In the final session of the conference when the delegates joined the dockers' mass meeting, he told the Liverpool dockers: 'I know what I am going to do. I have a lot to take home. They [his union] will probably say that it is not official, but you know these arguments. They can fight if they want to fight.

'It's the same with [your union] the T&G. They can fight if they want to fight.'

Earlier he had told of the fight over a Dutch tugboat company in Hamburg which was employing unemployed workers from eastern Germany at half the normal rate of pay.

Savas Tsiboglou, Secretary of the Greek Seafarers Union PEMEN said: 'How many times in the name of competitiveness have workers been laid off, driven to the social periphery?

'Taken away are the gains of decades for the working class and the working people.

'Today we are discussing the 500 sacked Liverpool dockers who dared

Women of the Waterfront, dockers and others participated in the six-day international dockers'

ard to get it's ours!'

to raise their stature and say "No" to the sacking of 80 fellow dockers.

'Tomorrow we will be discussing for hundreds, perhaps even thousands of sacked dockers in Greece with privatisation that is being pushed forward in our country's ports.'

Gianni Doza, a docker from Genoa, Italy, explained that attacks on wages and conditions began in 1984. There was a drastic reduction in the workforce from 20,000 to 5,000. The union leaders signed an agreement, but in Genoa the dockers would not agree and continued to strike for three months.

Again in 1989 when the union agreed the abolition of the dockers' own control over labour, leading to casualisation, they went on strike.

'There was no solidarity with us, not even from the city itself. The mass media presented the struggle of the port workers as old and outdated practices!'

Finally, after a year's struggle in the absence of a fight by their own union, and with the aim of maintaining their unity, the dockers of Genoa set up a co-operative and managed to get control of part of the port with their own machinery and means of distribution.

'It was only a temporary solution,' said Gianni. 'So even though we were forced down this road, we do not feel it is possible to continue to be the bosses of the port.

'Our intention is to sell our quota in the port of Genoa. We know that today it is impossible to defend our conditions without a strategy to unite all dock workers.'

Francisco Ramos Vargos a docker from Tenerife, Spain told of the attempt of the government to privatise the ports in 1980. There was an 18-month strike. The daughter of a Las Palmas docker was killed on the picket line.

'She ceased to be the daughter of the individual docker. She became the daughter of all the dockers in Spain,' he said.

He reminded the Liverpool dockers of their solidarity action during that strike when they refused to unload fruit from Spain and it rotted on the dock. That was one of the actions that enabled them to win the strike.

Mick Fenn, sacked Tilbury docker, and barrister **Damien Brown** presented a report about the anti-trade-union laws.

These 'Thatcher' laws are repeated in most countries and the attitude of the conference was best summed up by **Gerry Quigley**, docker from Derry, when he said: 'The law is there to be obeyed, but we have a greater obligation to the working class.'

Everybody agreed that the most memorable day was when they went down to the dock gates.

Arriving at the Seaforth Container Base was an experience none of us will ever forget. The women and a large crowd of dockers were there, and we came — pickets from a previous gate, delegates and supporters.

The women were singing, standing in a line across the gates. It was half-term and so there were children too. The two groups went towards each other clapping and as they met clasped each other with tears in their eyes.

When the delegates approached, clapping, and were met by the crying, laughing, clapping crowd of dockers and their families it seemed that everybody was bursting.

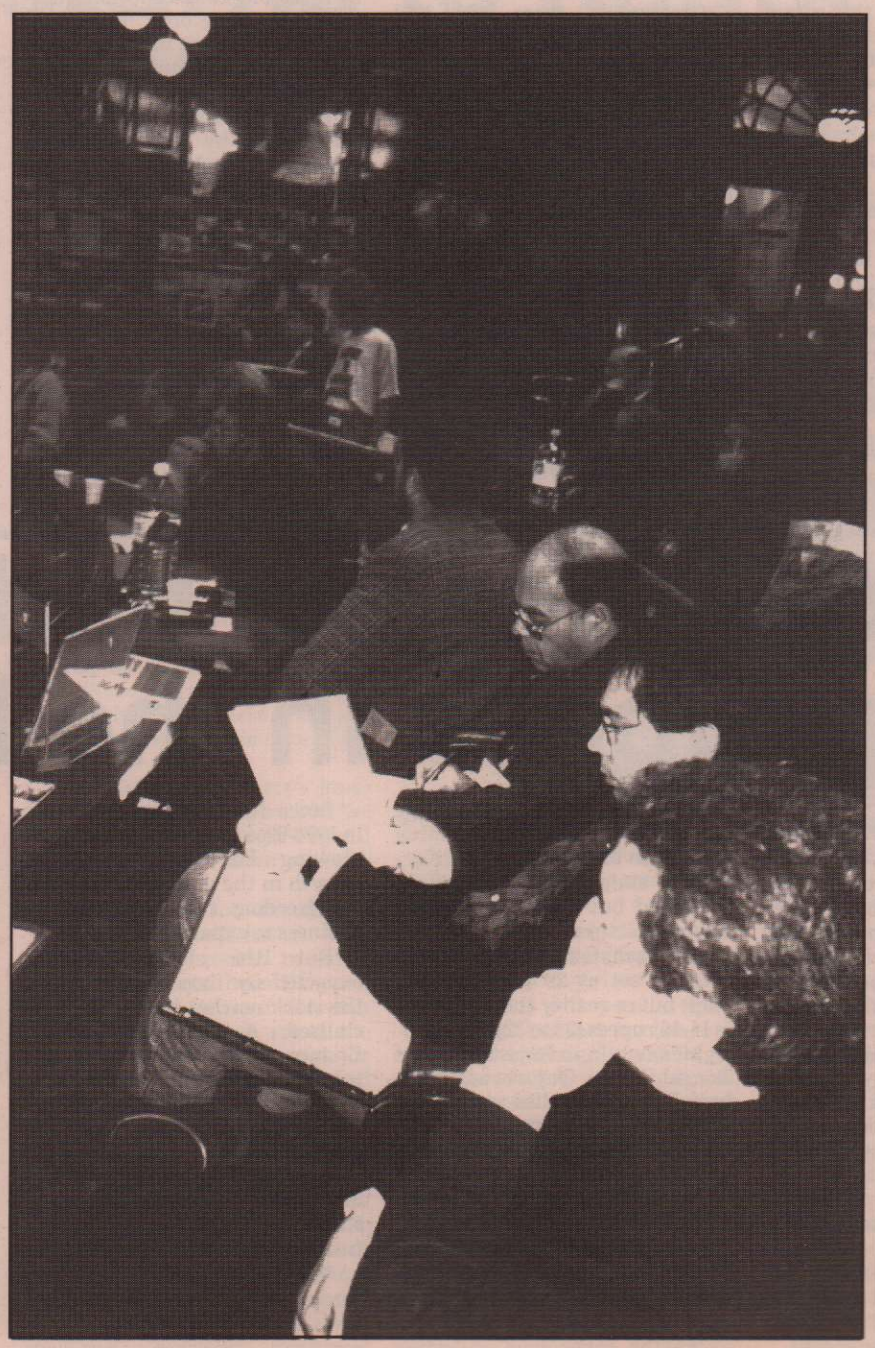
We all held hands in a great circle in front of the dock gate, singing and moving rhythmically together — smiling at each other across the circle and to our neighbours on each side. Nobody could speak without crying. It seemed that time had stopped.

Fight

Shop steward **Kevin Robinson** announced that some of the delegates would speak and he talked about the international fight against imperialism and how internationalism was being rebuilt in the working class.

Each of the delegates spoke of their emotions, the generosity of the Liverpool workers, their determination to fight and to stay in the struggle until each and every Liverpool docker is reinstated.

'They will not be allowed to get away with this!' 'Things will never be the same again!' 'Internationalism is here to stay!' 'They will never be able to part us again!'



conference in Liverpool

City Lights

Praying for miracle

NO sooner had the news that Germany's unemployment rate is soaring and on official figures has already broken the 4 million barrier (the true figure is nearer 6 million) than it was revealed that a huge hole is being knocked into the national pension kitty by early retirement.

But this is not the end of the sorry saga. The respected German Economics Institute reports that the economy is not simply stagnating but actually moving into recession. And the Bundesbank then revealed that German industry's investment abroad is soaring as never before.

Last year alone it more than doubled, jumping from DM24 billion to DM52 billion. Big business's response to the government's promise of an 'economic recovery' could not be clearer. The torrent of documents from Bonn promising to halve unemployment by the end of the century, to phase out early retirement, to take young people off the dole, to stimulate business with tax concessions and provide capital for small- and medium-size business has fooled nobody.

Not surprisingly, since these promises go along with assurances that state debt is to be slashed to meet the Maastricht requirements on which a single European currency depends.

No wonder German industry is voting with its feet and shifting its capital abroad on a massive scale, attracted by much lower wage levels and greater labour flexibility found beyond the country's boundaries.

The current catchwords in Bonn are 'flexibility' and 'flexibilisation'. Chancellor Kohl is desperately invoking the vision of a renaissance for German capital parallel to the postwar boom, and, more absurdly, to the industrial surge that took place under Bismarck in the 1870s.

The government's role in bringing about this new miracle? To deregulate, get rid of red tape and create the conditions for flexibility in the labour market so a new generation of capitalist risk-takers can come forward.

Not least ironic is that German industrialisation in the last century was carried out not in the context of the so-called 'free market', 'supply-side' economics so beloved by Lady Thatcher, but under considerable state direction.

'Millions of people who are prepared to compete with us for a third or a tenth of our wages are virtually sitting alongside us at the wage bargaining table. We've become world champions in exporting jobs,' moans Chancellor Kohl.

Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel echoes these sentiments: 'Globalisation means unprecedented worldwide competition for products, labour costs, and locations.'

But despite the rhetoric about 'flexibilisation', the strength of the German working class has thus far prevented any decisive steps down this deregulation road. German employers are rightly concerned they have not been able to make rapid enough progress to deregulation that their competitors in Europe have achieved.

A recent report by Julian Morgan, 'Structural Changes in European Labour Markets', in the current issue of the journal of the National Institute of Economic Research, says that while there has been some increase in labour-market 'flexibility' since unification (reflected in the growth of self-employment, part-time working and temporary jobs) progress has not been anywhere near as rapid as in Britain, Italy or Spain.

The result is that wages in Germany are 'less responsive' to heavy unemployment than in other European countries.

For instance, opposition from the unions has so far halted the introduction of more flexible shopping hours. Most German shops are closed on Sunday and Saturday afternoon and there is little late-night trading. Employers in the building industry have not yet been able to do away with the minimum wage.

The government has recently introduced legislation to enforce such a minimum on the country's building sites in an effort to drive away British and Portuguese workers who have become increasingly important in the country's construction industry. Hardly a sign of 'flexibilisation'!

Issue failure

STILL on Germany, the country's bond market was thrown into confusion last week by the unusually low bidding for a DM10 billion issue of five year government paper (the Bundesobligationen, or Bobl).

The issue matures in November 2000 and the poor response showed that many private investors were nervous because of uncertainty about the date of introduction, or even the possibility, of a common currency.

If monetary union starts on time, which seems less and less likely, investors in the issue will be paid in Euros; if not they will get their money in Deutschmarks. Uncertainty about the common European currency has grown in recent weeks.

On the one hand, the central bank stresses that stability is all-important and delay would be better than the introduction of a weak currency that failed. On the other, politicians, notably Chancellor Helmut Kohl and Finance Minister Theo Waigel, insist the common currency must start on schedule.

'Conflicting comments send a tremendously confusing signal to the client base,' says Robert Hammond, director of DM bond products at Barclays de Zoete West in London. He says that the comparative failure of the Bobl marks 'a watershed'.

It is clear that the growing crisis surrounding a common currency for Europe is beginning to have significant repercussions on the German government's own finances.

Pensions scandal

MORE than 3 million people have been wrongly advised to opt out of the State Earnings Related Pension Scheme (Serps) to switch into private schemes. Those affected are people earning less than £10,000 a year, women aged over 40 and men aged over 45. These are among the findings of research out last week.

The reason is that the rebate on National Insurance contributions — paid into their private plans as compensation for giving up entitlement to Serps — would not be big enough to produce a larger income in retirement after insurance companies' often exorbitant costs are deducted.

In the late 1980s the Tory government financed an expensive advertising drive aiming to persuade people to switch into private schemes. The suggestion that this was motivated by the large donations that the financial institutions concerned make to the Tory Party contains not a scintilla of truth.

Crime pays better

CRIME not only pays. In the United States it pays better than entry-level jobs. This is the conclusion of research carried out by a Harvard University economist.

Richard Freeman finds that young people in the north-eastern city of Boston can make about 25 per cent more an hour from crime — or about $10 an hour — than they can earn from a first job.

Freeman's novel, if quite absurd, answer to the problem? Employers should be allowed to raise wages by an appropriate amount and get the money back from the government!

Threadneedle

PERSONAL COLUMN

Photographs that lie

EVER since the camera was invented, in 1840 or thereabouts, the art and craft of photography has been used, artfully and craftily, for forgery.

The Stalinists, those compulsive rewriters of history, were fond of doctoring photographs, either to cut out this or that individual whom it was no longer in the best interests of the Soviet Union to portray, or to give some parvenu politburo member a fictitiously illustrious past.

Trotsky was airbrushed out of more than one photograph; Stalin was miraculously moved closer to Lenin after the latter's death; Malenkov, as Stalin's putative successor in 1952, was in his turn miraculously moved closer to Stalin.

Beria, soon after his downfall in 1953, was spirited out of several photographs — and subscribers to the *Great Soviet Encylopaedia* were asked to remove with a sharp knife the page containing an illustrated article on Beria and replace it with a page, thoughtfully provided, on the Bering Straits.

This forging of historical photographs in the USSR was often done rather clumsily, with glaring discrepancies of scale that tended to give the game away.

The French Communist Party wasn't slow to emulate its Moscow mentors. After the expulsion from the party of André Marty, one-time leader of a French naval mutiny, readers of the next edition of *Fils du peuple*, the autobiography of party chief Maurice Thorez, looked in vain for Marty's face in a photograph that had been used in previous editions.

Mao Tse-tung's wife suffered the same fate when she, too, became a non-person.

But the practice of photographic forgery hasn't been confined to the Stalinists. Not long ago a German journalist got his friends to dress up in Ku-Klux-Klan outfits and pose for his camera; and some years ago the 'dole queue' in the Tories' 'Labour isn't working' poster turned out to consist of actors hired for the photograph.

Simon Burgess tells me that the *National Geographic* magazine, finding a picture of the pyramids too wide for its cover, simply moved two pyramids together by eliminating the ground between them; and that a mother and child, touchingly portrayed with Robin Cook in the backdrop behind the platform at a Labour Party conference some years ago, turned out to be professional actors.

We owe to the Transport and General Workers' Union a still more glaring example. The story of something that happened just after Bill Morris had become president of that union was told by Charlie Pottins in Workers Press (17 June 1995):

'To help the union recruit more women, smiling women union staff had been photographed for a publicity leaflet.

'They were upset when a copy of the leaflet was returned, to find that two women who happened to be black were not in the picture, while a third woman's face had been lightened.

'The women complained to Bill Morris, who took it up with the union's publicity department, and was told a batch of leaflets for the Northern Ireland region had been altered by request.'

AND now Ford has taken a leaf out of the TGWU's book by superimposing white faces on the bodies of five of the black workers at its Dagenham plant.

The photograph of 24 of the Dagenham workers, taken in 1991, was doctored by Ford's advertising agency, Ogilvy & Mather, for use in Poland. The lying negative, produced by computer technology, found its way to Ford 18 months ago for use on the front cover of a brochure.

When they compared this brochure with the 1991 poster, displayed throughout the plant until last week, the workers were outraged.

Patricia Marques saw herself wearing the same T-shirt and trousers but with a face that had aged 20 years and turned white. She commented:

'What a cheek they had after they had asked us to do the campaign in the first place. I felt humiliated and really angry. ... They had changed my face, for God's sake. What on earth did they think they were doing?'

Douglas Sinclair, who has worked for Ford for 30 years, said: 'My body was there, dressed in my overalls. The rings on my fingers were still there. But next thing I knew I had glasses on and a white face.'

Keith Thomas said: 'They wanted me in the picture when they wanted to show the mix of ethnic groups in Ford's workforce but suddenly I wasn't good enough for them. ... It's a sign of just what Ford thinks of us all, and people are angry.'

Hundreds of Ford workers downed tools for three hours, and a full-scale strike was on the cards when the TGWU (who else?) started negotiations.

A fortnight later the workers reluctantly accepted an apology and £1,500 compensation for those whose faces hadn't fitted.

A 'genuine administrative error', Ford called it. 'There was absolutely no racial motive', claimed Rich Van Leeuwen, managing director of Ford Credit.

I HOPE this appalling story receives wide circulation in Germany — where there is a Ford-owned plant employing a large number of Turkish 'guest workers' — and I hope in particular that it comes to the attention of Alexander Gallus, author of a review article in the 1994 issue of the *Jahrbuch Extremismus & Demokratie*, edited by Uwe Backes and Eckhard Jesse (Bonn, Bouvier Verlag).

Herr Gallus, who denies that racism is a product of capitalism and that it is fanned by politicians, has this to say about my pamphlet *Aspects of British Black History* (I am grateful to Bob Archer for the translation):

'Unfortunately [Fryer's] thoughts turn out to be thoroughly politically, not to say ideologically, motivated. Polemic predominates. The villain for him is *the* white European capitalist. The author paints a black-and-white picture in the truest sense of the word, except that in this case "black" can be replaced by "good". The book is full of simplified causal relationships such as: "As India became poor and hungry, Britain became richer than ever before" (p.21).

'Fryer is not even able to distinguish the concept of race from that of racism. Thus he sees the assignment of the individual to a race or ethnic group as in itself a political act. . . . The author emphasises the racist character of the whole of British society, and particularly the state and police, with particular verve.'

This publication's two editors teach political science at the Chemnitz-Zwickau Technical University.

Teachers of political science who publish an accusation that an author is 'thoroughly politically, not to say ideologically, motivated' should examine their own role as capitalism's hired prize-fighters.

Peter Fryer

Nazi spotlights

The labour historian RAY CHALLINOR takes up two recent issues surrounding fascism

Surprising surprise of *The Times*

THE Russian authorities have decided to reveal the contents of Hitler's bunker in Berlin, where he met his end in 1945. Among the contents was a small collection of books.

'The most surprising [according to *The Times*, 6 January] is a copy of *Ourselves and Germany* by Lord Londonderry, bearing the author's inscription: "To the Fuhrer with my best wishes and the most serious hopes for the best and most long lasting mutual understanding between our two countries".'

Why 'most surprising'? For those who know about Lord Londonderry will know he was a long-time admirer of 'the Fuhrer'.

County Durham's biggest coalowner, cabinet minister and one-time Tory treasurer, Lord Londonderry gained notoriety as Britain's representative at the League of Nations' world disarmament conference in 1933.

Londonderry maintained that bomber aircraft were indispensable to the United Kingdom to deal with dissident tribesmen (the grandfathers of today's 'Afghan freedom fighters') on India's north-west frontier.

About this time, Londonderry became enamoured of Hitler. Nazi Germany was doing many things he wanted to achieve in Britain — smashing the trade unions, eliminating political dissent, building unity around a Leader.

Londonderry paid several visits to his kindred spirit in Berlin as the Fuhrer's honoured guest. Hitler's friendly letter commending Londonderry's *Ourselves and Germany* was published in the Penguin edition.

Many in the ruling class agreed with Londonderry: knock the teeth out of the hunger marchers, cut unemployment benefit, destroy working-class organisations even if this meant abandoning principles of tolerance and parliamentary democracy.

And there was a second question for Britain's rulers. They lived in a world of hungry capitalist wolves.

War was sure to come. Britain, an aged animal well into decline, could only survive the impending war by selecting the right partner. Should there be an Anglo-German, an Anglo-American, or, even, an Anglo-Russian alliance?

Both before and during World War II, many important and influential British politicians would choose the swastika rather than the stars and stripes.

The establishment has tried to conceal this embarrasing upper-class division. For those who fought and those who lost loved ones in World War II, it would be intolerable to hear that some of the High and Mighty were actually fascist supporters. So the documents have been suppressed.

But with the Cold War's end, the opening of files elsewhere, have exposed the inadequacy of Britain's official disclosure.

It is only now that the media has had to admit, very reluctantly, the close links between the Nazis and the Duke of Windsor.

But none have gone so far as to admit that the British government sought to secure exemption from war-time restriction for the pro-Nazi Duke and former monarch. Nor have they admitted that the US authorities refused to grant the Duke and Duchess this right, and regarded them as individuals with enemy associations.

But while Londonderry continued to make millions out of his coalmines and the Duke was receiving his fat salary as Governor-General of the Bahamas, many genuine German anti-fascists languished in jail on British soil, many on the Isle of Man.

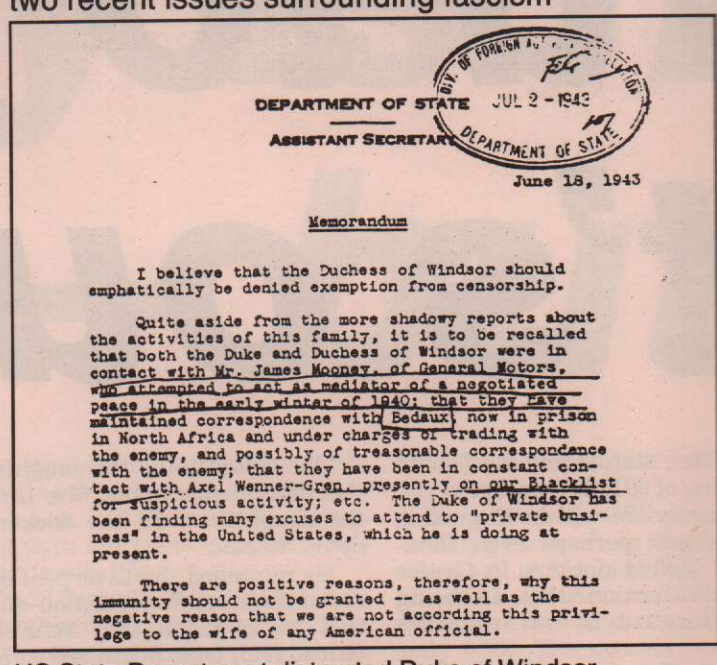
Those imprisoned and their British anti-fascist friends sought their release and raised a nation-wide clamour.

The government appointed 'three wise men', chaired by Lord Swindon, to give a thin veneer of judicial impartiality. In fact, they were all members of the intelligence services, part of the government's repressive apparatus.

This sort of behaviour has been repeated more recently. 'Three wise men' were appointed *to investigate the imprisonment of 50 hapless Iraqis and Palestinians when the Gulf War broke out.* Those locked up were manifestly anti-Saddam Hussein.

Meanwhile, those who had supplied Saddam with 'non-lethal' defence equipment ...

Lord Londonderry with Hitler



DEPARTMENT OF STATE

ASSISTANT SECRETARY

DIV. OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS — JUL 2 - 1943 — DEPARTMENT OF STATE

June 18, 1943

Memorandum

I believe that the Duchess of Windsor should emphatically be denied exemption from censorship.

Quite aside from the more shadowy reports about the activities of this family, it is to be recalled that both the Duke and Duchess of Windsor were in contact with Mr. James Mooney, of General Motors, who attempted to act as mediator of a negotiated peace in the early winter of 1940; that they have maintained correspondence with Bedaux, now in prison in North Africa and under charges of trading with the enemy, and possibly of treasonable correspondence with the enemy; that they have been in constant contact with Axel Wenner-Gren, presently on our Blacklist for suspicious activity; etc. The Duke of Windsor has been finding many excuses to attend to "private business" in the United States, which he is doing at present.

There are positive reasons, therefore, why this immunity should not be granted -- as well as the negative reason that we are not according this privilege to the wife of any American official.

US State Department distrusted Duke of Windsor

Fascism and social democracy

'RALPH is thoughtful and low-key. He has voted Tory all his life but thinks he will support Tony Blair's New Labour next time. He does not seem the sort of man to waste his life on an enterprise with a past but no future.'

This quote from the *Independent on Sunday*'s 24 December 1995 colour supplement ('Still following the Leader') comes from an article dealing with the annual reunion of what might be called the Oswald Mosley admirers' fan club.

The author of the article, Francis Beckett, is the son of John Beckett, one of the main spokesmen of the National Union Fascists. *The journalist had obtained access to this 'select' gathering because of his pedigree.*

This Mosleyite support for New Labour raises another question not commonly raised, in 'common' decency, in the struggle between the left and right wings of social democracy.

In the 1950s the Labour leaders, led by Hugh Gaitskell, sought to defend capitalism. They argued massive reforms could be made, as in Sweden, without any fundamental change to society.

Anthony Crosland put forward this view in his book, *The Future of Socialism*, which became the bible for the Labour right wing. He argued a Labour government should aim to move in the direction of Stockholm — with high levels of welfare, low unemployment, first-rate housing — things the Swedish social democrats had introduced. But nobody mentioned the other side of the coin.

In World War II, Sweden, with the social democrats the major party in a coalition government had supplied the German war effort with essential supplies.

Without Swedish iron ore Hitler wouldn't have been able to rampage through Europe. During the agonising siege of Leningrad Finnish troops — sent by another government where the social democrats predominated — fought alongside the Wehrmacht.

In Denmark, a social-democratic government, in office when German troops invaded, continued in place and just obeyed Hitler's orders.

Labourism has completely assimilated itself to capitalism, and is prepared to adapt itself to whatever the ruling class requires.

The German social-democrat leader Gustav Noske happily allowed a group of reactionary officers — the Freicorps — to unleash a reign of terror in 1919. Many on the left were murdered, including former members of Noske's own party, the Communist leaders Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg.

While he was quite happy to see the death of Germany's two greatest 20th-century socialists, he also had no qualms when Hitler took over. He lived quite peacefully and harmoniously throughtout the 12 years of Nazi rule.

Noske shuffled off this mortal coil in 1946.

Gold under the bed safer than rupees in the bank?

From PETER GIBSON in India

ARE the books being cooked? Are the figures produced by the New Delhi government showing a 6.3 per cent overall growth rate for the current year true? Or are these figures preparation for the coming election?

Dr D.M. Nanjundappa, an economist and deputy chair of the state planning board in Karnataka state, questioned the government figures in a speech in Bangalore.

Dr Nanjundappa pointed to the agricultural sector as one example. Over recent years this area had been decelerating but suddenly, in 1994-95, it shot up to 4.6 per cent, while it was only being projected to be 3 per cent.

cies, said Dr Nanjundappa. Wage rates in this sector are declining overall. In Maharashtra and Karnataka states these rates have increased but this did not show the true picture.

In Karnataka the minimum wage is set at 29 rupees a day (60p) but in reality the going rate is 14-16 rupees (28 to 32p).

Meanwhile, in Rajasthan, West Bengal, Assam, Gujurat and Madhya Pradesh studies show that wage rates are falling.

Agriculture contributes 33 per cent to India's GDP and sustains 68 per cent of the population.

The New Delhi government's finance minister, Dr Monmoham Singh, has admitted there is discrimination against those who work the land.

At the other end of India's

Since deregulation of markets in 1991-92, a great deal of trumpet blowing has gone on about growth in the money market and the freedom this has given to business to expand and grow.

But the hefty margins expected by those operating on the stock market have not materialised. A large number of finance companies have resorted to cutting pay and lay-offs.

C. Jayaram, Kotak Securities' managing director, has said: 'The downfall in the capital market is the reason for the bad performance of the [finance] industry.' Kotak is one of India's leading finance companies.

'The capital markets are going through one of the worst times ever, and any financial service company, whether they are

have to face a very rough time.'

How very true! The monetary value of capital issues which made it to the primary market during the six months April to September 1995 has dropped 44 per cent compared to 1994.

Few finance houses are prepared to disclose the size of their losses, but they are not filling staff vacancies and are laying people off.

A better judgement of the real state of the economy in India is the sharp increase in gold smuggling between India and the Gulf states.

When there is doubt about the rupee's stability, when all the signs are that the government is 'cooking the books', then gold under the mattress, no matter how little, seems a safer bet than

Germany

Shareholders take over from 'stakeholders'

BY BOB ARCHER

LOTS of us in Britain are just getting our heads around the idea of 'stakeholder' democracy. The idea got publicity from a chapter in Will Hutton's enormously popular book *The State We're in.*

In chapter 12 ('Stakeholder Capitalism') Hutton evokes J.M. Keynes's 'socialisation of investment' and says: 'Thus the great challenge of the 20th century, after the experience of both state socialism and of unfettered free markets, is to create a new financial architecture in which private decisions produce a less degenerate capitalism....

'The financial system, in short, needs to be comprehensively republicanised' (page 298).

Tony Blair then picked the idea up to try and provide a fig-leaf for his frank embrace of free-market theories in all their Thatcherite strength.

Hutton's support for 'stakeholder' capitalism comes from his admiration of the German system of government planning based on close class collaboration between trade unions, the employers and economic planners. This is the so-called 'social market economy'. Scarcely had Hutton worked up enthusiasm for the idea than real conditions of capitalism started to make it untenable in Germany.

An economics section editorial in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* of Friday 23 February 1996 should give Will Hutton pause for thought. Entitled 'An eye on the stock market', it says:

'The internationalisation of capital markets confronts German businesses with an Anglo-Saxon management concept: orientation to shareholder value.

'This means the leadership of a business aiming its activities principally at increasing the value of its shares in the interests of its owners. This concept contrasts with that of "stakeholder" policy usual in Germany which aims at balancing the interests of shareholders, employees, banks, local communities and others.'

The editorial gives an incisive thumbnail sketch of the growth of this trend in the United States, the role of hostile take-overs and the effect on company management. The editorial concedes that this approach makes drastic rationalisation at the expense of workers a lot easier in the US than it is in Germany, but asserts, without much foundation, that workers benefit in the long run from the creation of jobs.

It ends with the worrying thought: 'The international investment public will force the German economy to come to terms with this concept. The fresh wind that this brings is no bad thing in view of many encrusted structures.'

The lead article in the main section of the same edition of the *Frankfurter Allgemeine* deals with the apparent 'low profile' adopted by the leader of the Social Democratic Party of Germany, Oskar Lafontaine.

A few weeks ago in a letter to the *Guardian*, Tony Benn cautiously welcomed Lafontaine's reselection as leader of the SPD as a sign of a revival in social-democratic politics.

The *Frankfurter Allgemeine* has this to say: 'When Lafontaine took over the leadership in a coup, he impressed the delegates at the Mannheim party conference with his promise to proclaim social-democratic aims again after the Scharping era.

'In first place he mentioned the party's restructuring on ecological lines and the SPD's long traditions of pacifism.

'The conference was delighted because for a moment it seemed once again possible to be left-wing and successful, that there was an end to the torment of giving up well-loved convictions without losing sight of power.

'Sobriety has now stepped in. There can no longer be any talk of firm, principled leadership from Lafontaine.'

Of course, certain business circles in Germany have been saying this for a long time. The change is happening now, and it is this that is reflected in the editorials in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine* and Lafontaine's 'low profile'.

The paper hints that the SPD leader is preparing to join a coalition with conservative parties to push through drastic changes in the economy and society.

The SPD in Berlin are way out in front. Faced with a massive deficit in city finances, the SPD have joined a coalition which will cut expenditure to the bone with no regard for 'sacred cows'.

Blair will do exactly the same in Britain.

Nobody should be beguiled by Hutton's talk of 'republicanising' a degenerate capitalism. The task is to end it.

Shipbuilding giant heads for the rocks

BY PETER JEFFRIES

THE German government's ten-point action plan aimed at halving the current 4 million unemployment level is looking like a sick joke after the decision of the country's largest shipbuilder, Bremer Vulkan, to file for protection from creditors.

The move threatens 22,500 jobs in both west and east Germany and 2,000 workers spontaneously downed tools on hearing the news.

The announcement came only a few days before a report, based on a survey of 25,000 companies, from the German federation of chambers of industry and commerce which warns the economy will do little better than stagnate over the coming year.

The federation said that unemployment was set to rise by 500,000 or more by the year end.

Bremer Vulkan's move — a final effort to stave off bankruptcy — was made after the company announced DM1 billion losses for last year. Only a few weeks ago it was assuring bankers that its losses would be restricted to DM200 million. After a week of round-the-clock talks with the Bonn government and European Union officials the company said no money was available for a rescue bid.

Company bosses said that with admitted debts of DM1.4 billion they needed a minimum of DM2.5 billion to stay in business. Many bankers said that the debts were undoubtedly far higher.

And although its order book looks healthy, many contracts have been taken at loss-making prices in an attempt to beat fierce international competition.

Suspicion

Bremer Vulkan is also under investigation by EU commissioners on suspicion of having diverted some DM600 million worth of EU funds meant for restructuring its east German operations to help prop up the west German parent company.

The closure of Bremer Vulkan would be a crippling blow to the towns of Bremen and Bremerhaven where it is the biggest employer and where more than one in eight is out of work.

The proposal by financiers that the best way out for the company would be to close its operations in the west but keep its modernised yards open in eastern Germany has been met by a storm of protest in Bremen where joblessness would rise to 20 per cent.

Many of the company's losses are blamed on the considerable cost of modernising its yards in the former GDR, but Bremer Vulkan is also facing ferocious competition from Korean firms who have broken into the traditional German domain of container ships.

Korea now has 37 per cent of the world market in such ships against a German share of 18 per cent. Korea plans to increase its capacity by 50 per cent by the end of the century and China and Poland are flooding the market with competitively priced bids.

The Finns and Italians, the strongest competitors of Germany in the passenger liner market, have benefited from currency devaluations which make it even harder for German firms to match their bids in a shrinking market.

Past returns to haunt Czech prospects

BY CHARLIE POTTINS

THE Czech Republic's chances of making it in capitalist Europe have been overcast by a political ghost from 50 years ago — the issue of deportation of up to 3 million ethnic Germans after World War II.

'The expulsion was an injustice that cannot be justified by any laws and treaties,' insists German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel.

The German government is refusing to agree compensation for Czech victims of Nazism until the Czech Republic rescinds legislation under which Germans were deported and their assets seized. The Czech government fears claims for property restitution from the families of those expelled.

The US State Department has stepped in to back Vaclav Havel's government, stressing that 'transfer' of the Sudeten Germans was endorsed by the wartime Allies at their Potsdam conference, and this postwar settlement cannot be undone.

The British and Russian governments take a similar view. But Bonn's antagonism could block Czech chances in the vital European Union market.

Ethnic Germans lived in Prague and Brno and the Czech western borderlands for centuries. Around the turn of the century their presence was used as an argument against Czech national independence.

Used

Later, Hitler used the Sudeten Germans as a pretext for his territorial claims, with the help of a Sudeten Nazi fuhrer Konrad Henlein (much as Serbia's Milosevic has used Dr Karadzic's Serb nationalists as a cover to invade British and French governments sanctioned German invasion.

In 1943, exiled Czech president Edward Benes obtained Stalin's backing to 'transfer' Germans after the war, and make the post-war Czechoslovakia a 'national and Slav state'.

Forgotten

Germans who had opposed the Nazis, in resistance or in exile, were to be exempt. But this distinction was soon forgotten.

'The new republic shall be a better republic, more socially just,' General Svoboda told officers in 1945. 'In it there shall be no room for Germans and Magyars.'

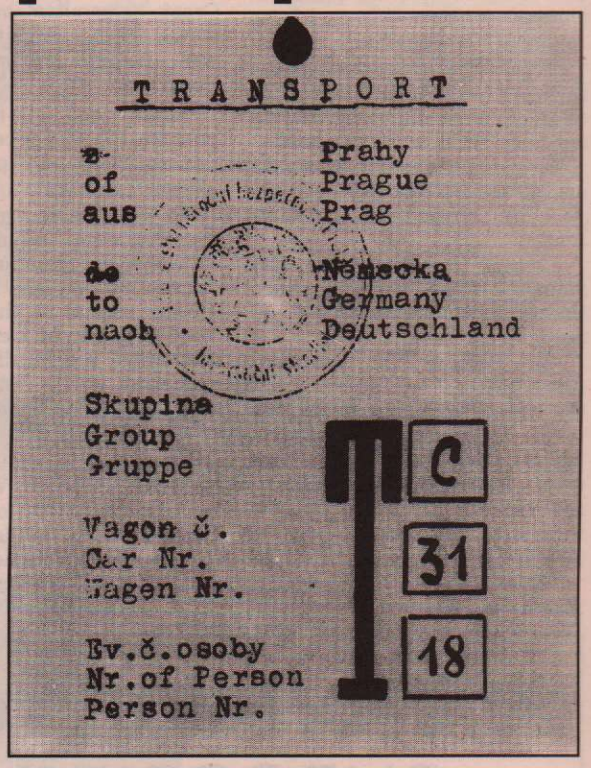
'The whole German nation is responsible for Lidice,' declared the newspaper **Mlada Fronta** (Lidice was a Czech village whose entire male population was massacred by the Nazis). And after the Potsdam agreement *Prace* had the headline **'Victory for our viewpoint. We get rid of all Germans.'**

The Communist Party's *Rude Pravo* agreed: 'Away with the Germans from our lands! We shall clean our border with an iron hand.'

As historian Jon Bloomfield writes: 'Those anti-fascist Germans who had worked in partisan groups in northern Bohemia were ignored; pre-war German communists who had spent the war in concentration camps or abroad often returned to find themselves ineligible for party membership....

'The unity of the nation and Slav peoples had become more important to the KSC [Czech Communist Party, CP] than the unity of workers irrespective of nationality' (*Passive Revolution; politics and the Czechoslovak Working Class, 1945-48*, p.63).

'The alternative, that of putting on trial those accused of



First Ukraine troops occupying Prague in 1945 and (right) a travel voucher of an expelled German

remainder of the German population alone, was not considered,' Bloomfield observes.

'KSC policy actually encouraged nationalistic ideas among the Czech working class.'

This went with popular frontism. Anger against fascism, and desire for a change, which might have threatened Czech business, was diverted into nationalism; the middle class was able to take German jobs, farms and shops; and national unity was emphasised between Czechs, Slovaks, and of course, the big Slav brother from the East.

There were protests. Writing on behalf of Sudeten trade unionists, Wenzel Jaksch said they had opposed the Munich agreement as much as the Czechs.

Sudeten Germans were handed over to Hitler against their will. More than 20,000 were immediately thrown into concentration camps.'

Jaksch and his colleagues reminded the British and French governments of their moral responsibility.

Point

That point was taken up by H.N. Brailsford: 'If the case for expelling this German population rests on the attitude it adopted before Munich, what figure will the British government cut in history if it consents to this act of vengeance?'

Brailsford pointed out that although Slovakia's wartime fas-

no one had suggested punishing the entire population. It was Pan-Slavism, he argued (*Left News*, July 1945).

But the British Communist Party fully backed the 'all Germans are guilty' line, and mass deportation. Like Stalin's treatment of the Chechens it was a precedent for Stalinist acceptance of 'ethnic cleansing' as a policy in Bosnia more recently.

Although the Czech policy did not go as far as Serb nationalism has done in deliberate genocide, forced 'transfer' did cause thousands of deaths.

During the Cold War in the 1950s the displaced Sudeten Germans, mostly settled in Bavaria, became a base for right-wing revanchism and the ruling Chris-

lar rallies demanding their lands back.

Why the German government should revive this issue now is another matter.

It may owe something to rivalry between German, British and American commercial interests in Central Europe, although bullying the Czech Republic at this stage can only push it closer to Germany's rivals.

Germany's opposition social democrats and liberals have attacked Chancellor Kohl's policy, and say the reparations and Sudeten issues should be kept separate. But it is possible that German capitalism's own crisis is persuading Kohl's government to adopt a more aggressive chauvinist stance, and summons up some

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SPANISH ELECTION CRISIS

SPAIN goes to the polls on 3 March due to a deep political crisis rocking the whole of Spanish society.

The Spanish Socialist Party (PSOE) have been in office since 1982. Opinion polls forecast a defeat for the PSOE and a relative majority for the bourgeois Partido Populaire (PP). This comes not from any supposed popularity of the 'popular' party, but rather from the corrosion of the PSOE and the growing desire by the ruling class to rule directly instead of through the Socialist Party.

From JONAS NILSSON
Barcelona, Spain

In the name of the European Union and the Maastricht treaty. the government has imposed a number of anti-reforms, slashing social security and striking against working conditions, all in the name of a 'strong Spain in a unified Europe'.

A major part of the public sector is in the process of privatisation, the purchasing power of workers has been radically reduced and unemployment has doubled since 1982.

About 90 per cent of all new job contracts are fixed-term — these have become known as 'rubbish' or 'garbage' contracts in the workers' movement. Fixed-term contracts are part of the drive to avoid severance payments.

Employers' contributions to social security have been reduced.

Cynically, after having been the driving force behind all these attacks, the PSOE now tries to present itself as the protector of the 'welfare state'.

But this is not likely to mobilise sufficient votes for it to continue in government.

The PSOE's so-called Labour Reform was imposed two years ago by parliamentary decree, ignoring opposition from the trade unions who only called very limited action against it.

This anti-reform constituted a profound blow against the workers' movement, although it would be false to describe it as a qualitative change in the relationship of class forces.

The government chose its moment for this act against the working-class. The workers' movement is going through a process of reorientation.

The social-democratic PSOE completely lacks a working-class profile. The old Stalinist party, the PCE, is desperately looking for a new identity and has lost its control over the trade union Workers' Commissions.

The opposition to its left is reduced to two minor organisations, the PRT (section of the International Workers' League/ Fourth International, LIT/CI) and the POR.

Ever since the Labour Reform, the bourgeoisie has recovered its political aggressiveness. But this shouldn't be confused with any economic strength or recovery on their part.

All the political parties are competing in offering gifts to the employers to convince them to make the necessary recovery.

Instead of offering an alternative programme, the tactics of the influential sectors of the ruling class has been to weaken the PSOE by exposing a series of corruption scandals in the state and local governments.

Trials

Even the GAL affair — state terrorism against the Basque-nationalist ETA movement with several trials now being brought against former PSOE ministers and those responsible for state security — must be seen in the light of this reactionary offensive and not as any 'democratic' move.

Repression against the Basque people continues and is stoking up a general social explosion there.

The PSOE and its government have prepared the conditions for a right-wing successor. With the pure bourgeois and imperialist policy of the PSOE, workers are correctly incapable of identifying themselves with it and can't distinguish between it and the PP.

The bourgeois PP is making the maximum profit from the lack of a left alternative. The PCE-controlled United Left (IU) electoral coalition is expected to strengthen its position in parliament.

The IU has included a number of progressive and necessary measures in its programme — such as the reduction of work time to 35 hours a week, a fifth week's holiday a year, prohibition of overtime, full compensation for the unemployed, etc.

But the IU programme has serious difficulty in convincing workers because of its general acceptance of bourgeois power and its European project.

The vanguard of the workers' movement has the important responsibility of avoiding this possible break from its 13-year support for the PSOE ending up in a victory for the PP.

The POR proposes, for the first time in its history, a vote for the United Left. It rejects the PRT proposition for a workers' alliance to take forward the unity and mobilisation of the working-class movement and to create a revolutionary alternative.

Spanish Socialist government leader González

'Hitler' mob violence in Mostar

BY CHARLIE POTTINS

IN 1943, Yugoslav partisans entered a three-cornered war raging in Herzegovina.

Croat Ustashe fascists, whose savagery even shocked their Nazi masters, were intent on wiping out Jews, Serbs, and communists.

Serb-nationalist Chetniks armed by Britain concentrated on killing communists and Muslims.

Caught between the two, young Muslims in Mostar joined the partisans to fight fascism and national oppression.

On Tuesday, 20 February, Adolf Hitler's face appeared on the streets of Mostar; worn as a mask by a young swastika-badged thug among the Croat mob that attacked Muslims returning to the western half of their city. 'Fascism is good!', he shouted.

Hans Koschnick, the former mayor of Bremen whom the European Union appointed mayor of Mostar pending re-unification, handed in his resignation last week, warning that Croat extremists were out to wreck any agreement. Koschnick was attacked last month by a lynch mob.

Mostar used to be about 34 per cent Muslim, 33 per cent Croat, 19 per cent Serb and 12 per cent registered 'Yugoslav'.

In 1993, encouraged by Croatia's President Tudjman, and the Vance-Owen plan for partition, Croat nationalists proclaimed Mostar capital of their breakaway 'Republic of Herzeg-Bosna', and drove the Muslims into an east bank ghetto between Croat and Serb lines. They shelled it for nearly a year.

In March 1994, Bosnia accepted a Washington-engineered federation with the 'Herzeg-Bosna' statelet. European Union officials came to Mostar with $200 million for reconstruction, mostly benefitting the Croat-held west. A 'Memorandum of Understanding' committed Muslims and Croats to a joint police force, full freedom of movement, and re-unification of the city. Mostar remained divided.

Shortly after the Dayton 'peace' agreement, providing for limited freedom of movement in Mostar, 17-year-old Alen Mustovic, son of a Croat mother and Muslim father, saw in the New Year by taking his friends for a drive, past Croat HVO checkpoints into west Mostar.

As they passed the plush Ero Hotel where European Union officials were housed, Croat police shot up the car.

With a bullet lodged between his shoulder blades, but unaware it had also grazed his aorta, Alen drove his three friends back to safety in East Mostar, then slumped over his steering wheel and died — first victim of the false hopes raised at Dayton.

Mostar's Croat police chief called the young Bosnian a 'terrorist'. Croat police fired on two patrolling Bosnian policemen, badly wounding them. Muslims shot and killed a Croat policeman.

The Croat HVO fired RPGs at a Bosnian army camp. The flare-up was dampened down by a week of rainstorms, a Spanish UN armoured patrol, and warnings from German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel and President Clinton.

On 7 February, Hans Koschnik announced the creation of a multi-ethnic ward in central Mostar. A Croat-nationalist mob stormed the Hotel Ero, burned the EU flag and threatened to hang Koschnik, who went into hiding. A 180-strong European Union police team was helpless.

'In the end someone made Milosevic responsible for all Serbs,' said Koschnik's deputy. 'In the end someone must make Tudjman responsible for all Croats.'

Bosnian and Croat presidents agreed in Rome on a compromise reducing the area of Mostar's mixed central district.

Bosnian President Izetbegovic would not accept the resignation of east Mostar's mayor Safet Orucevic over this.

'The situation in Mostar was on the verge of clashes. We almost had war,' Izetbegovic said.

The barriers and checkpoints dividing the city were to come down on 20 February.

Braving torrential rains and the hostile mob, several hundred Muslims crossed into west Mostar. They had to show identification papers — in violation of the Rome agreement. Promised joint police patrols did not materialise.

Some Muslim youths who tried to drive into west Mostar were attacked by the Croat mob. Their car crashed into a tree. As they tried to flee, Croat police arrested them, claiming Muslims may only cross town on foot. Muhammed Sacirbey blamed mob violence on encouragement from the government in Zagreb.

Reactionary

Some of the extremely reactionary forces stiffening 'Herzeg-Bosna"s resistance to integration were illustrated by Mike O'Connor of the *New York Times*, reporting from western Herzegovina:

'The photograph of Ante Pavelic, leader of the wartime, pro-Nazi Croatian state, is proudly displayed in the home of two Catholic priests. They explained that people who think the Ustashe regime was guilty of genocide have been duped by anti-Croatian propaganda.

'The priests described their opposition to the Bosnian peace agreement as part of the Croats' historic effort to defend Christianity against Islam,to protect the West from the East. "The Muslims have a holy war with us," Mario said. "We cannot accept the Dayton agreement. No. No. No."' (*New York Times*, 13 February).

In Mostar, 47-year old Emina Pajic just wants to go home. 'The Croats burned down my flat and drove me away. Still, I could live with them again, with those who are decent,' she says.

'I'm afraid, I'm very much afraid. But my heart is leading my head,' said 24-year-old Semir one of those who dared to cross on 20 February. 'This is our town also.'

Senir, one of thousands driven from their homes by the HVO three years ago, stood in the driving rain gazing up at his former apartment: 'I feel like I'm in a pastry shop, but I have no money and I'm very hungry.'

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Pat Buchanan — 'blindly reactionary'

US Republican presidential hopeful Pat Buchanan is combining populist attacks on big business with appeals to racism and religious bigotry, confident that rival candidates with no answer to America's crisis will borrow his 'Fortress America' policies rather than beat him.

Blaming growing US unemployment on 'free trade' agreements, Buchanan won the Republican primary in New Hampshire, where he denounced 'huge corporations anxious to shut down American factories', and urged 'stand up for the working men and women whose jobs are threatened'.

In Arizona he promised to put a big fence along the Mexican border to keep out immigrants, and upheld the individual's right to bear firearms.

Buchanan's defence of Nazi war criminals and reputed anti-Semitism — though he denies it — have attracted an embarassing message of solidarity from Russian rightist Vladimir Zhirinovsky. In the South his campaign was endorsed by former Ku Klux Klan chief David Duke and other racists.

Yet the Republican hopeful is no outsider. He served in Nixon's White House and as Ronald Reagan's director of communications. Comparing him with White Citizens' Councils in Mississippi, former Reagan press secretary Larry Speakes said: 'That's not to say that Pat was a racist, just that he was so blindly reactionary.'

Rejecting Buchanan's pretence that he cares for workers, AFL-CIO president John Sweeney points to the Republican's record opposing the minimum wage, workplace safety, and laws against replacing striking workers.

'Buchanan is a racist, he's anti-Semitic, he bashes women's rights along with labour and immigrants, and he's a believer in supply-side economics. We are none of those things,' Sweeney told the unions' Bal Harbour, Florida convention.

But the unions themselves have resorted to flag-waving, and appeals to bosses to 'Keep jobs in the USA', and this is the mood that Buchanan is counting upon.

Wrapping trade war in the flag, turning worker against worker, and preparing 'Fortress America' for real war, Buchanan's turn to social demagogy marks a dangerous turn in US politics.

To beat it, the unions must be broken from the capitalist parties, and made to fight for real independent working-class politics.