# TACKER PRESS

WEEKLY PAPER OF THE WORKERS REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

SATURDAY 15 JUNE 1996

NO.505

PRICE 30p

#### HUNDREDS OF MILLIONS of children under the SEANDA age of 14 years are today at work worldwide, often in the most brutal conditions, a report from the International Labour Organisation has revealed. In the ten to 14 age range alone the figure is 73 million, almost one in seven of that age group, says the ILO.

## Hillingdon protest



Sacked Hillingdon hospital workers picketted the shareholders' meeting of their employers Pall Mall on Friday 7 June. Like the Liverpool dockers they have been in dispute nine months Photo: Ed Hall

#### BY THE EDITOR

a growing proportion of the under the age of ten are not next generation. For example:

> Every day, 35,000 children in the world die from diseases that could be cured by adequate nutrition and the most elementary health provisions, according to United Nations figures.

> ■ By the year 2015 over 160 million children aged six to eleven will be receiving no schooling, one in four of all children then expected to be in the world, according to the World Bank.

#### **Extent**

The extent of child labour is growing rapidly throughout Africa and Latin America, as well as in central and eastern Europe, reports the ILO, which links the trend to growing economic insecurity and more flexible work practices.

This is where the rule of capital has taken humanity at the end of the millennium. The threat to the human race takes on ever more real and sinister meanings.

It is only a united fight by the international working class for a human standard of living for all that can do away with the need for child labour and safeguard the future of humanity against the degradations of capital.

There is no nobler struggle in the world today.

#### Safeguards

But this is only a tiny pro-

portion of those involved, for

reliable statistics for children

available. Nor are there fig-

ures for the millions of chil-

dren working in the home. In

Africa, one in four of children

in the ten to 14 year age group

Many children are com-

pelled to work in unbeliev-

able conditions, such as forced

labour, work with dangerous

chemicals, as well as child

In the colonial and semi-

colonial countries, while child

abour in the cities is on the

ncrease it is even more

widespread in rural areas

where as many as nine out of

ten children have to work in

agricultural or related activi-

The ILO met last week in

Geneva and issued yet more

promises that 'action' would

be taken against this situa-

tion. But the promises are

worthless, and a cruel decep-

are now forced to work.

prostitution.

Even on the ILO's own admission, only 49 countries out of its 173 members have ratified even the most minimum safeguards against the more brutal forms of child exploitation, including the convention that 15 shall be the minimum working age.

This is part of a situation where the capitalist system is iterally crippling and killing

#### JACK WILLIAMSON

IT IS WITH the greatest sadness that Workers Press has to report the death of comrade Jack Williamson last Friday after a ong and courageous struggle against cancer. He was in his mid-50s at the time of his death. During the 1960s and 1970s, Jack had been a leading member of the Socialist Labour League and the Young Socialists, where he was a member of its national committee.

One of his last political activities was to attend the conference called by the Liverpool dockers on 27 April. He later told his family and friends that he was greatly inspired by the dockers' struggle and by the fact that many of his old comrades were still active in the fight of the working class. We send our deepest condolences to Jack's family and his many friends. A fuller tribute will appear in next week's paper.

#### International Trade Unionist Bulletin

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

#### Down with casualisation!

Victory to the sacked Liverpool dockers! Victory to the Hillingdon hospital workers!

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

#### Conference details from:

Conference organiser Kim Hendry, c/o Lambeth Unison, 6a Acre Lane, London SW2 5SG. Tel: 0171-226 9754.

Cheques/ money orders to 'London Support Group'. Send names and addresses and organisations represented.

LAST WEEKEND'S conference called jointly by the International Trade Union Solidarity Campaign and the African Liberation Support Campaign marked an important step forward in the struggle of the working class to rebuild its trade union movement internationally.

The fact that over 80 people from 19 countries were able to come together to examine the common problems they face was in itself a remarkable achievement. The committee that was elected by the conference starts with a firm foundation on which to carry out the next stage of work.

That work is to consciously lead and organise the fight for the rebuilding of the trade union movement as part of the struggle for the reconstruction of the working class movement as a whole. This committee will have to find ways of drawing in the widest possible layers of working people and uniting them in a common fight that can begin to challenge and prepare for the defeat of the capitalist system.

We believe that the conditions for doing this are now present, as in its own way the conference itself confirmed. The collapse of Stalinism has brought about new conditions in which it is possible for the most conscious elements in the workers' movement to come together and work out the strategy and tactics required to lead the working class to victory. The conference was a part of and a stage along the road to the accomplishment of this task.

AS WAS clear from virtually all the contributions, the trade union movement throughout the world is today in a deep crisis. Where unions are not completely illegal, or ruthlessly suppressed, they are increasingly unable to defend their members on even the most basic issues against the mounting attacks of the ruling class.

This situation arises from a structural orisis of world capital that reveals more graphically than ever that capitalism has now definitively reached the end of the road and can only offer the working people of the planet yet more barbarities.

Capitalism must now impose even more savage conditions on the working class in the colonial and semi-colonial countries. It must drive up even further the rate of exploitation of working people, reducing yet more millions, including particularly children and women workers, to utter destitution and starvation.

At the same time, in the big imperialist countries capitalism is now forced to take back from the working class all the gains it has made over the last five decades and more.

As part of this need, capital now moves from country to country, even continent to continent, opening and closing production facilities in a manner that plays off one group of workers against another. While more and more millions are thrown out of work, with many of them unable to survive, countless others are subject to an ever more inhuman exploitation by capital.

IT IS therefore necessary, as part of the rebuilding of a trade union movement that can effectively organise the whole of the working class for a fight against capital, to work out a programme of action that can unite workers internationally and help overcome the divisions that assist capitalism maintain its rule.

Last weekend's conference took precisely this decision. The committee elected there was charged with producing the draft of such a programme by the end of September.

As the conference made clear, the committee would like the widest possible participation in this work, from those at the conference as well as those not able to be present, from those in the unions as well as from those not in unions.

Correspondence and suggestions about this work should be sent to the ITUSC Organiser, Keith Standring, PO Box 18, Epsom, KT18 7YR, Britain.

## Letters

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

Letters longer than 500 words WILL be cut

#### Iraqi Kudristan

ATTACKING people's freedoms and rights is an indication of emptiness and weakness!

The first day in May, May Day, is an eternal day in the history of the world's working-class struggle. Similar to previous years, May

Day has been widely celebrated this year by workers and toilers across the world.

In Kurdistan, this great day

was celebrated on a wide scale in most cities and towns by several labour and mass organisations.

According to the news we have received from Iraqi Kurdistan, the regressive forces of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) in Dihok attacked those who participated in the celebrations there.

On top of harassing people and tearing leaflets, banners and posters from their hands, these forces arrested the following labour activists: Mohammad

Younis, Azad Mohammed Amin and Khalid Mohammed.

They are still being held by the KDP and their location is unknown.

In condemning this inhuman action, we also demand their immediate release and the end of such actions. We appeal to freedom-loving people to put pressure on the KDP and all those who oppress political freedoms to end these Ba'athist actions. [The Ba'ath party is Saddam Hussein's organisation against which the

KDP is supposed to be fighting!

Let the KDP and all bloom shedding and exploiting force realise that they might be able silence the voices of freedom for while but they can never silene it for good. Their bloody repre sion — the sign of their weakne and emptiness — is about to end Long live May Day!

Committee in support of th workers and toilers' struggle i Kurdistan-Ira PO Box 1032 London SE16 2Z

## Down with casualisation!

## Victory to the sacked Liverpool dockers! Victory to the Hillingdon hospital workers!

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

NINE months ago 500 Liverpool dockers were sacked by Mersey Docks and Harbour Company for refusing to cross a picket line that broke the camel's back'. mounted by young dockers fighting against casualisation.

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

Their fight is not just for themselves and their families, it is for all of us and for future generations.

The dock employers have contracted Drake Port Services and PDP Services to supply casual labour to replace the sacked dockers.

Also in the ninth month of their dispute are the 56 hospital domestic workers at Hillingdon hospital in West London. Over the last 10 years they have been 'taken over' by various agencies but this time it was the 'straw

Pall Mall insisted on a wage cut and all kinds of reduced benefits. These workers, mainly Asian women, went on strike, and when Palll Mall insultingly offered them £1,000 each to sign a contract they refused. Like the dockers they are fighting for all

Agencies like Drake, PDP and Pall Mall are contracted by big companies, banks, insurance companies, the NHS and local councils to supply casual labour on terms depriving workers of the basic rights, wages and conditions which the trade unions fought to achieve over the last 100 years.

These agencies make huge profits: casual workers are paid only half or even less of the sum the agency recieves.

A typical contract for a worker to take a Liverpool docker's job:

pays £4 an hour, with no sick pay, holiday pay or pension rights;

gives no guaranteed hours of work — the casual worker must work when and where the agency decides:

deducts PAYE tax on an emergency basis - the casual worker must make his/her own claim for rightful allowances.

stipulates that if the worker gets a job with any of the agency's rival companies he/she must pay six month's salary to the agency!

The London Support Group will have a conference to decide

how to take forward the fight fo the victory of the sacked Londo dockers and the Hillingdo hospital workers. Their victory our victory!

All workers, trade unio branches, trades councils an shop stewards committees ar invited to take part.

We extend a specia invitation to all thiose who ar forced to take casual work There will be an advice desl and assistance if English is no your first language. All persona information will be strictl confidential.

LONDON SUPPOR GROUP For the Liverpoo Dockers, c/o Lambeth Unison, 6 Acre Lane, London SW2 5SC Conference organiser: Kin Hendry, Telephone: 0181-44 9735.

## Yorkshire Miners' Gala

#### Barnsley, Saturday 15 June

March 10.30am from Churchfields (near town hall) to town centre. Demonstration rally 12 noon in Civic Theatre, Eldon Street.

Chair: National Union of Mineworkers' vice-president Frank Cave. Speakers: Barnsley Mayor, councillor Clarrie Wroe (to give civic welcome); Fire Brigades' Union general secretary Ken Cameron, and; Ken Livingstone MP.

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

Workers Press — May/June lectures

#### MARXISM AND THE HISTORY OF THE BRITISH **WORKING-CLASS MOVEMENT**

Some lessons for today

By Geoff Pilling, Workers Press editorial board

Lucas Arms, Gray's Inn Road, London. Thursday 20 June, 7.30pm.

Nearest tube King's Cross.

Here is your chance to come for national, founded in 1889. The the final lecture in Geoff Pilling's excellent series on Marxism and the history of the **British Labour movement:** 

4. Frederick Engels and the foundations of the Second International

The origins of the Second Inter-

role of the struggle for mass trade unionism in its formation. The entry of new forces into new

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

Wolfe Tone Society

#### James Connolly/ Bobby Sands

Annual commemoration Sunday 16 June, 1pm Camden Irish

Centre, 50-52 Camden Square, London NW1

Mitchel McLaughlain (Sinn Fein), Tony Benn MP, Kurdish representative, Indian Workers Association, Basque representative Workshops, rally, video, social until late

Creche and food all day

Join the 3.30-6pm weekly pickets of Drake International, 96 High Holborn, WC1.

Two dockers are in London to raise funds and publicise the dispute. Tel: 0171-387 4771 (ask for Liverpool dockers).

■ Next Liverpool community march for the dockers, Saturday 29 June. Tel: 0956 138 496. Support group meetings first and third Thursdays every

month. Lucas Arms, 245A Gray's Inn Road, London WC1.

#### Leicester Support Group for Liverpool **Dockers**

First meeting Thursday 20 June, 7.30pm

Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate. Leicester

Phone: 0116-270 7730

#### Liverpool benefit Sunday 16 June, 7.30pm

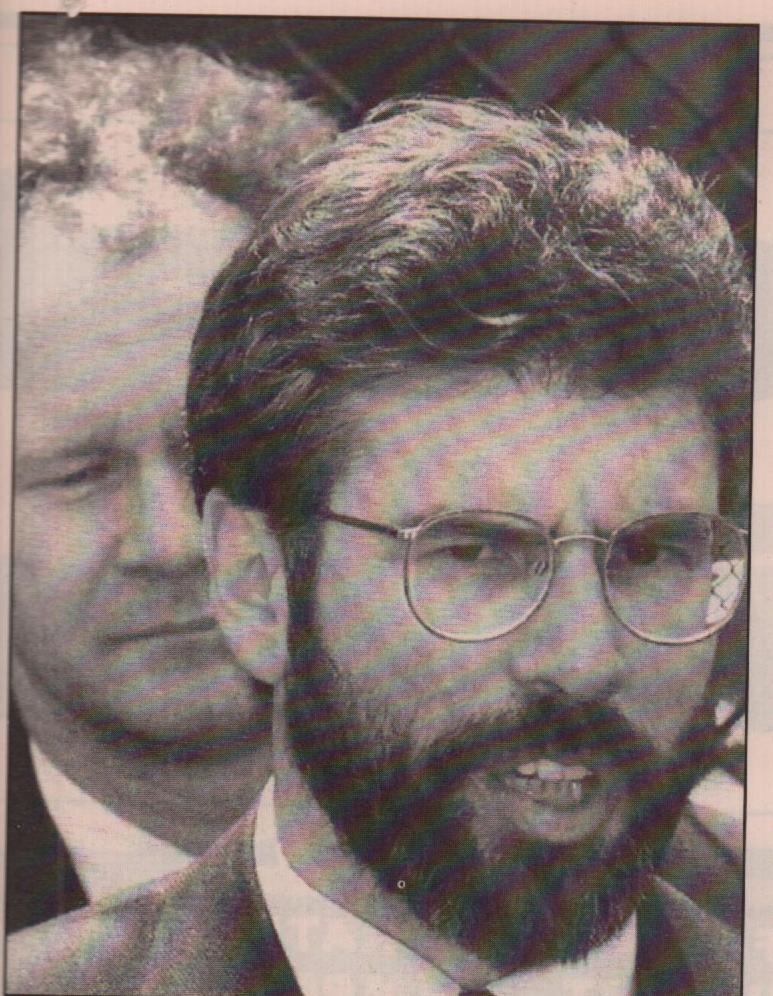
Trade Union and Unemployed Resource Centre, Hardman Street, LIVERPOOL

Ken Loach's film Riff Raff

Ken Loach will be there to take part in the discussion. Admission £3.50 (unwaged £2)

#### Cable Street Commemoration Committee

Organising meeting, Monday 17 June, 7pm. Davenant Centre, 179/181 Whitechapel Road, London E1.



Sinn Fein leaders Martin McGuinness and Gerry Adams demonstrate outside the Stormont talks

# Sinn Fein's impotence

BY JOHN STEELE

FROM mass revolt which challenged and shook every aspect of British rule in Ireland to impotent gestures for the benefit of the media at the gates of Stormont. This is the sorry development of the nationalist uprising of the last 28 years under the leadership of Sinn Fein.

The commitment to a 'deal' brokered and managed by the Washington, London, and Dublin governments has beheaded this uprising and channelled it into a six-county electoral process which poses no threat to partition but, instead, represents major dangers to the working class.

The latest, farcical stage of this 'peace process' began this week. Sinn Fein representatives turned up for the meeting of all the political parties which won seats at the recent election knowing they would be turned away because the IRA had not called a new ceasefire.

Any serious political party that believed its involvement in

this type of meeting was crucial to future developments - and for a number of years Sinn Fein has made it its primary goal would not have meekly accepted this contempt for its vote.

But, under the Adams leadership, Sinn Fein has consciously turned away from mobilising its support in mass actions. They got over 116,000 votes, representing 15.47 per cent, but they have reduced that support to token stunts for the photographers at the gates of Stormont.

Adams has already accepted the conditions for participation in these talks as laid down by former US senator George Mitchell. These conditions include 'agreement to abide by the terms of any agreement reached in all-party negotiations' and the 'total disarmament of all paramilitary organisations'.

He has nowhere else to go but to try and persuade the IRA to renew its ceasefire so that he can continue his attempt to find an accomodation with the representatives of British imperialism — or as he put it when referring to Trimble and Paisley, the lead-

Shipping chaos from

ers of Ulster Unionism, to 'reach out the hand of friendship to our opponents'!

No doubt the path to this friendship at the all-party talks will be smoothed by the pay — all delegates will receive a daily rate of £100 and their parties an allowance of £300 a day, plus a research grant of up to £6,000 a quarter.

#### Crucial

At this crucial point in the conflict in the north of Ireland every concession to Unionism made by those who won the struggle for the leadership of the nationalist working class strengthens the forces of reaction and reinforces the divisions between Protestant and Catholic workers.

The elections for the all-party talks and the 110-member forum had nothing to do with democracy. It was an unprincipled act by any party claiming to be socialist to take part when parties such as the Irish Republican Socialist Party were excluded from the Tories 'approved list'.

Such questions of principle

obviously are not allowed to interfere in the activities of Militant Labour who were the largest single component in the Labour Coalition which stood in all 18 constituencies with a position on partition which was essentially unionist.

They have now compounded their opportunism and lack of principle by claiming (Militant, 7 June) that their 6,425 votes (which they forget to mention counts for a measly 0.85 per cent) was a 'remarkable victory'!

This 'victory' is claimed because their total vote was the tenth highest and won two seats in an electoral system designed to ensure that the small loyalist parties with links to paramilitary groups would not be left out. Militant Labour do not see the support for Sinn Fein or the conflict of the past 28 years as being part of the fight for socialism.

Only a party which has turned its back on the struggles and sacrifices of tens of thousands of youth against the state terror and injustices of British rule could misrepresent a 0.85 per cent vote as a victory.

#### Preparing for office

#### Labour to crack down on claimants

IN THEIR LATEST bid to out-Tory the government, Labour has announced it will carry out a systematic crackdown on social security claimants in an effort to eliminate what it asserts is widespread fraud in the system.

Labour pledges that every person claiming social security or housing benefit will be visited at least once a year. More money will be spent on extra officials to make such visits.

Chris Smith, shadow social security secretary and supposed left' in the party, said that 4 million house visits would be made in the first year of a Labour government compared with the present 800,000. Labour also promised that new measures would be taken to detect fraud by using National Insurance num-

Members of the party accused smith and the leadership of ndulging in growing 'social uthoritarianism', drawing ittention to home office spokesperson Jack Straw's recent proosals to enforce curfews against oung children and his earlier all to drive beggars off the treets.

Naturally Smith says nothing bout the enormous fraud caried out by businesses against the nland Revenue, nor the even aster sums made by City sharks

through 'insider dealing' and other fraudulent practices.

As usual, Labour intends that the poorest and most disadvantaged in society should be made to pay for a mounting social cri-

#### Blair retreats on workers' rights

LABOUR is retreating on its previous pledge to give workers the right to appeal against unfair dis-

Until recently party leaders had promised to give workers such rights 'from day one' of their employment, but they are now talking about this right coming into play only after being sixth months in a job.

Speaking to the GMB general union's conference last week, deputy Labour Party leader John Prescott cut out a reference to awarding rights from the first day of employment.

GMB leader John Edmonds said he was strongly opposed to any watering down of Labour's commitment.

'It would mean that employers like Burger King would start using five-month contracts and if the statutory period was a month they would come down to three weeks,' he said.

Edmonds said that the earlier policy had not been rescinded and that the arguments in its favour were 'overwhelming'.

## solidarity with Liverpool dockers!

#### BY DOT GIBSON

SHIPPING companies caused havoc and risked a major catastrophe on the Mersey on Saturday 8 June when they attempted to take their giant vessels into the port of Liverpool without the aid of tug boats.

There were no tug boats for 12 hours because the crews were so incensed by the intimidatory actions of the police special support group towards the men, women and children on the sacked dockers' picket that they decided to act in solidarity.

The Atlantic Container Limited (ACL) ship went through unaided but when the Canmar Line ship 'Canmar Conquest' attempted to follow suit it started drifting towards the sandbanks.

The captain put out a 'May Day' call and contacted a tugboat company not affected by the strike, but the crews would not cross the Liverpool picket.

'Canmar Conquest' was forced to drop anchor in the middle of the estuary in the path of the oncoming oil ship heading for the power station. There were then two giants marooned in the mouth of the Mersey.

The cost to shipping compa-

nies and the Mersey Docks and Harbour Company of a 12-hour delay in unloading the cargo can be measured in millions of pounds. They will take any risks!

The loss of that money means more to them than the lives of the people of Merseyside.

Cut-throat competition with other European ports is driving their frantic efforts to run the port on cheap casual labour.

As docks shop steward Mike Carden told the House of Commons Education and employment Sub-Committee inquiry on 21

#### **Powerful**

'They (MDHC) control everything that goes into that port and in that powerful position they can decide that the whole of Birkenhead is casual and then more of the port of Liverpool is casualised.'

But the dockers are building solidarity links around the world with dockers facing the same struggle against privatisation and casualisation.

Under the headline 'We Will Win!' a statement published in the latest issue of Dockers Charter (see advert for details of how to get your copy) signed by Jimmy Nolan, chairman, and

Jimmy Davies, secretary, of the Merseyside Port Shop Stewards Committee says:

"A total boycott of the port of Liverpool is gradually being put into place. This boycott will diminish the financial position of the company and will inevitably lead to our reinstatement.'

JOIN THE 500 SACKED MERSEYSIDE DOCKERS AT THE NATIONAL DEMONSTRA-TION, MARCH AND RALLY IN LIVERPOOL ON SATURDAY 29 JUNE.

Assemble 11.30am, MERTLE PARADE, LIVERPOOL.

Main speaker Tony Benn MP.

National demonstration

#### Support 500 sacked Liverpool dockers!

Saturday 29 June, 11.30am, Myrtle Parade, Liverpool

## DOCKERS CHARIER LATEST ISSUE OUT NOW!

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

## Police raid Sri Lankan socialist party HQ

RMED police officers raided the olombo headquarters of the SSP, the Nava Sama Samaja Vew Socialist) Party, section of e United Secretariat of the ourth International (USec) in ri Lanka, on 1 June, while the rty central committee was in ssion.

About 30 police armed with tomatic rifles, grenades and b-machine guns broke into the ilding, saying that they suscted illegal activities. The real ason for the attack is that the SSP is the key organisation pporting the electricity works' strike which commenced on May and resulted in a total ur-day blackout.

The strike was called by the vement to safeguard the eleccity board from privatisation. e whole 14,000-strong workforce went on strike demanding the government give up its plan to privatise the Ceylon Electricity Board.

This is the second time the government has tried to intimidate the NSSP within a month, the first being a police attack on the May Day demonstration.

President Chandrika Kumaratunga, addressing a press briefing, vowed on Friday 31 May that she would resort to any means 'short of killing' to get the workers back to work. She declared the strike illegal and ordered mass arrests of strikers.

Within hours of her threat, unidentified gunmen shot at the main telecom union leader J.B.P. Dissanayaka. He escaped unhurt, but it was clear that the attack was aimed at intimidating other public sector trade unions which

have expressed solidarity with the striking electricity workers.

Dissanayaka is also a leader of the public sector trade union movement opposing privatisation. Several leading members of the NSSP have also received death threats.

There have been attempts by pro-government sinhala (Sri Lanka's ethinic majority) forces, including some members of parliament to rouse chauvinism among the masses by staging anti-strike demonstrations depicting strikers as a hindrance to the war effort against Tamil separatist forces.

Major General Anuruddha Ratwatte, a maternal uncle of the president, is both the deputy defence minister and minister for power and energy.

These acts of intimidation are

likely to deter workers, or many of them at least, from carrying on their strike action.

The NSSP is calling a campaign against state terrorism, war and privatisation.

The NSSP appeals to all socialists and trade unionists to write or fax Sri Lanka's president: to protest and condemn the

raid against the NSSP headquarters; to protest and condemn all forms of intimidation against the

lic sector workers in general. Please write or fax: The President of Sri Lanka, H.E. Chandrika Kumaratunga, Presidential Secretariat, Colombo 01, Sri Lanka.

electricity workers and the pub-

Copies to the NSSP. Fax (941)

Fax (941) 333 703.

#### WORKERS PRESS IS THE PAPER OF THE **WORKERS REVOLUTIONARY PARTY**

British section of the Workers International (to Rebuild the Fourth International) Please send me information about the WRP Name Address

Trade union (if any) ...... Age (if under 21) ...... Send to: PO Box 735, London SW8 1YB

### Inside left

#### Inder a black flag

FERRING to the late Albert Meltzer this column recently, I should have entioned his articles on the 'Hidden story of the Trots in Spain', in Black g (October-November 1989). 'Innted "history" would have been a tter title. Meltzer's whoppers were mmented upon in Revolutionary story's special issue (Volume 4 Nos The Spanish Civil War — The ew from the Left').

Meltzer accused the international otskyist movement of 'arguing that Spanish workers did not need ns'. But Trotsky insisted in discusn, articles and interviews that the vement must support arms for ain (see The Spanish Revolution 31-39), Pathfinder).

Marxist political refugees fought in ain. Some died in action against the cists, or perished in the torture cells the GPU. Meltzer sneered: 'the rump the German and mid-European otskyist intelligentsia buzzed und the POUM like flies, taking no t in its militia but offering their paganda services.'

With a bow to the Stalinist lie that -wing opponents were a 'fascist th column', Meltzer also gave a nod Goebbels' line that all communists re the same, speculating: '... were the its in Spain working for Stalin, not ler? It was not beyond Stalin's cynin, and without their active co-option he could not have framed the UM.

Meltzer claimed Ramon Mercader, GPU agent who assassinated Trot-, had been a member of the Spanish tskyists. This echoes Stalinist disinmation, as peddled for instance by Campbell in the Daily Worker (23 just 1940): 'The various Trotskyite s throughout the world waged fratdal war against each other and the ent attack on Trotsky may well

n Black Flag (207) this year, writon 'Why ex-Kings are dangerous', tzer rambled about the Duke of idsor, then asked himself 'Was tsky a traitor?': 'It seems every antiinist including anarchists thought trials a frame-up, but I personally ays suspected what they were judgwas not Trotsky but Stalin.'

e been an incident in that war.'

laiming that Trotsky believed the iet revolution 'could be spread ad by armed intervention', but opposed to revolution in the let Union, Meltzer argued that the ider of the Red Army and the rth International could have plotwith Nazi Germany.

his is the long-discredited lie of the cow Trials. Hitler applauded the Iting butchery of communists and eking of the Red Army. Bitter as differences were between anars and Trotskyists, their blood was

gled at the hands of Stalin's GPU in n, and they tried to unite in fter 1956, and all that has been

ned in the workers' movement, few among those whose politics stem Stalinism believe the old lies. a self-styled 'anarchist' recycles siding with the executioners, es me wonder — was there a hidnistory to Albert Meltzer?

#### hose freedom?

GET Tory laws and media poly! Living Marxism (June) has ied a real menace to liberty — liband lefties. Norris McWhirter's dom Association identified simi-

le magazine accuses intellectuals sed to Serb nationalist propaa of 'burning books' (metaphori-It didn't mind the real thing, Karadzic's incendiary shells oyed Sarajevo's priceless national ry. Living Marxism also cons Edinburgh students who boyd lectures by a self-proclaimed tific racialist'. The Socialist Sci-Forum has sent a message of soliw to the students.

**Charlie Pottins** 

#### International workers' conference

# 'Workers al have con



Some of the delegates at last weekend's international workers' conference organised by the IT

Last weekend the International Trade Union Solidarity Campaign and the African Liberation Support Campaign held their international workers' conference in London, Britain. Attending the conference were 83 delegates from 19 countries. Reports were given from 14 countries and more than 20 speakers took part in the wide-ranging discussion.

We publish on pages 4 and 5 this week the report from ITUSC organiser KEITH STANDRING. The main document 'The tasks of the trade union movement today', a resolution to reconvene in December and a summary of proceedings appear on page 6.

Some material arising from the conference is printed on other pages. We hope to give fuller details and analysis in future weeks.

#### The past

OVER the past decades the structural crisis of capitalism has continued. Due to the laws of uneven development, the extent and pace of this deterioration has been different in various times and places and has taken different forms.

Throughout this century social democracy has enabled the capitalist class to rule through class compromise and certain concessions, based of course on the wealth of imperialism, namely finance capital's domination of world economy and the super-exploitation of colonial and ex-colonial peoples.

The message of social democracy was that by 'consensus' politics and reforms capitalism could be made to work in the interests of working people.

Today, indeed since the early 1970s, the conditions for ruling through this method of reformist compromise are finished. Capitalism's structural crisis demands not only that there be no more reforms, but that the gains won in the past must be reversed.

The structural crisis of capitalism inevitably propels workers into struggles to defend everything they have and have ever won. These struggles embrace workers in all countries. This necessity of struggle coincides with the collapse of Stalin-

Stalinism has done enormous damage to the workers' movement and the cause of socialism. Its theories of 'socialism in one country' and 'peaceful coexistence' with capitalism cut off the workers in the USSR and eastern Europe from the international working class. It also gave workers outside those countries the impression that socialism existed there.

For years, the Stalinist parties of the world were able to present themselves as the inheritors of the Russian Revolution of 1917, continuing the struggle for socialism inside the workers' movement, the heirs of Lenin, leader of the Russian Revolution. As such they attracted many of the most class conscious workers.

This is no longer the case, for their pretensions were blown sky high by the millions of workers in the Soviet Union and eastern Europe who took up the struggles against the corrupt and reactionary Stalinist bureaucracy.

Stalin's heirs not only sold the industries and enterprises nationalised after the Russian Revolution, but themselves aspire to be the new bourgeoisie. It is essential for the way forward to understand that Stalinism's collapse is positive, removing as it does the main barrier between the working class and Marxism, and removing capitalism's main support.

The subsequent collapse of social democracy and its re-emergence as an overt political mouthpiece for capitalism was the inevitable consequence of the collapse of Stalinism. This all creates a favourable situation for the reconstruction of the class movement of the proletariat, at the centre of which is the reconstruction of its internationalism.

The Workers International to Rebuild the Fourth International was formed in 1990 as a result of these momentous changes in the class struggle. Its founding conference initiated an international workers' conference in London in April 1991 at which the International

Trade Union Solidarity Campaign was formed.

The founding conference of the ITUSC adopted three important principles upon which to conduct its work:

trade unions independent of the state and employers;

workers' democracy within the trade unions;

workers' internationalism. On the basis of the above consid-

erations the ITUSC resolved: 1 to continue the fight for the renewal of the trade union movement in every country;

2 to co-ordinate its forces to discuss and agree on the best political way forward to a society in which workers will control their own production and their own lives - in short, socialism;

3 to publish a journal for the organisation of its activities and common campaigns, extending the discussion and fight for clarification on basic questions internationally.

#### The present

SINCE its founding conference in April 1991, the ITUSC has fought to produce a bulletin, to maintain contact and mobilise solidarity with workers and their struggles in many countries.

The ITUSC met the African Liberation Support Campaign in the campaign to bring aid to the victims of the Rwandan massacres.

ALISC is what its name says: an organisation of support for African liberation struggles, and this includes the struggles of workers for independent, democratic trade unions.

This was particularly so in the Nigerian Campaign for Independent Unions, and especially over the imprisonment of the oilworkers' leaders; also in defence of ITUSC leader Bongani Mkhungo when he was attacked by Congress of South African Trade Unions' stewards at that organisation's tenth anniversary rally in Durban, South Africa, while distributing a leaflet calling for the trade unions to build their independence and break with the Government of National Unity.

It seemed only natural that we should have this conference at the end of the ALISC Africa month celebrations in London.

If this report is about the ITUSC, its activities and proposals that in no way implies that ALISC's campaigning is limited to its membership of the ITUSC. I would say the same about the Iranian Refugee Workers'

# over the world mon interests'



JSC and ALISC

Association which is also part of the ITUSC.

Since autumn 1995 the ITUSC has had an organiser on a full-time basis — this will continue.

From 1991 to the present day our call has remained simple and direct and based on the three founding principles referred to above. It is increasingly plain that one or more of these principles is at the heart of every struggle, wherever in the world workers are engaged in struggle.

There are many examples, some of which will be included in specific resolutions at this conference, but let me mention the year-long campaign of the Federation of Garment Workers of Bangladesh.

Here, thousands of workers — mainly women and girls with an average age of no more than 14 — produce 95 per cent of that country's export trade working in sweatshops with no day off a week. The leaders of the federation have given confidence to thousands of these workers in this intense and heroic campaign.

We were inspired by the portworkers' international conference in Liverpool in February, and by the delegations of sacked dockers who have campaigned in many countries for support for their fight for reinstatement and against casualisation. At the conference the dockers discovered that in each country they were suffering the same attacks and that because of a lack of an international organisation their fight had been limited within national boundaries even though they are all facing the same shipping companies.

One of the main responsibilities of the ITUSC is to ensure that workers in one country are not left to fight alone, and this is especially true of those countries where workers are imprisoned, tortured and killed for their principled fight for basic rights.

For all these reasons this international workers' conference is of great importance as a step forward in the development of an international leadership.

We know from the struggles in Liverpool, South Africa and Mexico that the fight is not only for the organisational independence of the trade unions, but also for the political and ideological independence of the working class. It is in the course of this struggle that we must resolve the crisis of working-class leader-ship.

The right of all workers to combine in democratic trade unions, independent of the state, is fundamental. The right to work, the right to strike, the right to asylum and

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

Capital operates globally through multi-national companies, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the United Nations.

Through brutal colonisation and super-exploitation — using worker to undercut worker — capital seeks to create divisions in the working class, using war, nationalism, unemployment, racism, religion, the break-up of communities and control of the media and production to attack us.

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

Millions of workers in the socalled 'Third World' have never even had the luxury of these conditions. Workers doing the same work are entitled to the same wages and conditions in every country. An injury to one is an injury to all!

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

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

the nationalist, pro-capital social-democratic trade unions and political parties in the West;

the policies of 'socialism in one country' and 'peaceful coexistence with capital' carried out by the now collapsed bureaucratic regimes in the former USSR and eastern Europe;

regimes which have taken office in the so-called independent one-time colonial countries and are administering the IMF/World Bank Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) to the detriment of workers and peasants.

For these reasons, despite its enormous crisis, capital has continued to rule the world. We have been brought to the point where the future of humanity itself is threatened. The 'market' dominates every aspect of our lives.

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

The ITUSC currently operates on a very informal basis. Meetings have been irregular, infrequent and usually in London.

After irregular publication of an ITUSC bulletin between 1991 and 1995, it is significant that we have succeeded in publishing it regularly each month since the beginning of 1996. This is a considerable achievement given sparse resources.

We now need to do much more to expand our readership, subscribers and range of reports, and we need to achieve our aim to produce it in different languages if we are to make the bulletin an organiser in the sense described by Lenin — i.e. the organ, voice and supporter of the workers' movement internationally. I shall make some proposals later in this report, which seek to promote such developments.

We already have a shared E-mail address, however, in recognition of the value of good communications to rebuilding the workers' movement internationally, we shall shortly launch our own Worldwide Web site and E-mail address through Labournet.

This will enable details of the work of the ITUSC to be accessed throughout the world and enable the ITUSC to access information useful to the workers' struggles wherever they occur.

In this period which is favourable to the promotion of our principles and objectives, any sober assessment of the ITUSC would conclude that despite the enormity of our enterprise, we have a solid basis for developing our potential.

It is indeed possible, with the improvements proposed later in this report, that the ITUSC can, as an integral part of the workers' movement, fulfil its potential and make major advances in the important tasks and areas of work it has set itself.

#### The future

THE outcome of this conference should be the establishment of real links towards an international and internationalist association of organised workers and the communities.

It brings us together, people of various political persuasions, but with the universal understanding that the class struggle is as alive as ever it was, and that together we have a world to win — for socialism.

I make the following proposals, which are designed to consolidate, improve and develop our organisation and equip it to effectively implement the policies and programme which will be determined by this conference:

1 The ITUSC committee should comprise representatives from those organisations sharing its aims and objectives.

There are limitations on holding frequent meetings of the committee outside Britain. To overcome this, each of the workers' refugee organisations based in Britain that are part of the ITUSC can have corresponding secretaries to keep in touch with workers' in their countries of origin.

Each such organisation should be invited to submit regular reports, say two or three per year, on developments in their country, in addition to any emergency reports to which priority will be given.

2 The International Trade

Unionist Bulletin should have an editorial board consisting of members each designated by an associated organisation.

Each member of this board should be responsible for monitoring events in their home country and providing written reports, news, views, photos, etc., for publication in the bulletin.

The editorial board members will also be responsible for promoting sales and new subscriptions among their community, trade unions, trades councils, and other organisations.

The editorial board and ITUSC committee should jointly explore translation of the bulletin into different languages.

The ITUSC committee should seek to form ITUSC branches in every country and region of the world.

Comrades, including myself, are available to visit localities in Britain and other parts of the world to assist in establishing an ITUSC organisation where our local contacts can provide evidence that such potential exists.

The ITUSC committee should initiate fund-raising activities on a regular basis.

We would have had a larger conference, with more countries represented, had we had sufficient funds in time to cover the purchase of air tickets.

Since our work embraces the whole working class, it necessarily includes the very poorest in the world. They should not be precluded from participation in our activities by lack of finance.

#### Conclusion

COMRADES, these organisational proposals are to develop a more effective weapon to pursue the policies and programme we determine at this conference.

I have sought to avoid proposals of a purely political nature, since that's the prerogative of the conference. Clearly as good workers, we aim to use the best tools for the job. If we need to fashion a more appropriate tool for the work you decide to undertake, we must amend the proposals.

This conference can and must mark a decisive stage in mobilising workers internationally. We need to consolidate our gains and construct an international force which unites all workers' struggles worldwide. We must overcome the divisions and isolation in the workers' movement promoted by imperialism and its agents.

Workers all over the world have common interests and should have a common political-industrial organisation. Capital is destroying the productive forces, the environment and humanity. The choice is between socialism and barbarism. I commend this report in the firm conviction that this conference will choose the former.

That speech was made in February 1956, at a closed session of the Soviet Communist Party's 20th Congress. Fraternal delegates from other Communist Parties were excluded, some being sent to visit various while factories Moscow Khrushchev was speaking.

Harry Pollitt, then general secretary of the British Communist Party, told friends afterwards that he had been packed off to tour a 'rubber-goods factory' while the closed session took place.

The so-called 'secret speech' didn't stay secret for long. Within days copies were circulating among foreign journalists in Moscow, and the CIA soon got its hands on a copy, the substance of which it leaked in Bonn in the following month; the complete text followed from the US State Department on 3 June.

One of those Moscow-based journalists was Sam Russell of the London Daily Worker, who lost no time in telephoning full details to his paper - not for publication but as a private memo to the British CP's political committee.

Soon the editorial department was buzzing with excited comment. I remember getting hold of a carbon copy on bright yellow paper and spotting something about the high proportion of CPSU central committee members, and of delegates to the 17th CPSU congress in 1934, whom Stalin had murdered - before the copy was snatched from my hands by an officious colleague who snarled: 'That's private, Peter. The editor says nobody is to see it.'

They might as well have tried to cage a cloud. Overnight our world had been turned upside down. They couldn't go on kidding us any longer; nor could we go on kidding ourselves any longer.

Three years earlier the Daily Worker had said farewell to the greatest man of our time, the great genius, scientist and man of action who had continued the work of Lenin, devised a grandiose plan for turning rivers back in their courses, made brilliant contributions to linguistics, fought for peace, and befriended little children.

Now, among many other horrifying revelations, Khrushchev admitted — and Sam Russell's memo confirmed it — that Stalin had justified the use of torture in a message to party leaders in the 1930s, and that Stalin had specified the tortures to be used on the doctors arrested in 1953, shortly before his death.

It was only a matter of time before some enterprising newspaper published the full text. When the Observer did so in mid-June there were half-hearted attempts by some Stalinist diehards to dismiss the speech as a CIA forgery. But that horse wouldn't jump.

All of us, the die-hards included, were shaken to the core by the speech — though some of us, stimulated by the Soviet rapprochement with and apology to Yugoslavia in May 1955, had begun to read 'forbidden' books, by such authors as Trotsky and Deutscher, and were therefore partly prepared for what now came out.

Yet the Observer is quite wrong to claim, as it did last Sunday, that publication of the speech 'split the Communist Party of Great Britain, between those who continued to defend Stalin and those who left the party in disgust on reading of his excesses'.

Very few people left the party there and then. Before the Hungarian uprising (23 October) and

#### PERSONAL COLUMN

its suppression by Soviet troops (4 November) there was a trickle of resignations, to be sure. But it was Hungary that turned that trickle into a flood, in which the party lost about a third of its members.

The group which was best prepared to reap some political gains from the Khrushchev revelations was the Trotskyist group led by Gerry Healy. As Harry Ratner puts it in his autobiography Reluctant Revolutionary (1994):

'All that we ... had been saying about Stalinism was being daily confirmed in full view of the whole world - and more specifically in full view of the Communist Party's members and supporters.... For the first time since I had joined the movement we were no longer regarded as pariahs on the left, and people were beginning to listen to us.'

For those who, like Bill Hunter and Harry Ratner, had struggled against Stalinist lies and persecution through the dark years, the Khrushchev speech must have seemed like dawn breaking.

#### Like a dream come true!'

MY FIRST impulse on finding an article that begins with the words 'Marx has, by common consent, been thoroughly discredited' is to read no farther but pass on at once to something less hackneyed and less stupid.

I'm glad however that I resisted this impulse when I Michael Kerrigan's started review, in last week's Times Literary Supplement, of Juan Goytisolo's The Marx Family Saga, just published by Faber.

Otherwise I would have missed Kerrigan's admissions, a few lines lower down, that 'a gale of entrepreneurial fresh air leaves Eastern Europe shivering'; that 'workers in the industrialised West are exhorted to ever more improbable contortions in the name of "flexibility"; that, in short, '[t]he world post-Marx is coming to look uncannily similar to the world Marx described'.

I would have missed, too, Kerrigan's elegant and ironic demolition of the Goytisolo book, a novel which turns out to be even more dreadful than its title promises. For Goytisolo takes us into 'an international television co-production recording the life of the Marxes in sumptuous colour and nauseating sentimentality'.

'I'm so happy, Karl! After all these years of hardship and suffering, it's like a dream come true!' gushes Mrs Marx at a ball she and her husband are giving for their daughters at their Hampstead villa (Hampstead villa? Maitland Park Road was, and still is, in Kentish Town, and no. 41 can by no stretch of the imagination be called a 'villa', but we'll let that pass).

Kerrigan slates 'the bad faith of all those for whom every little compromise, every little hypocrisy has afforded an ad hominem excuse for refusing to confront the analysis Marx developed and the challenge it holds out. All the academic commentators here prefer to trivialise: the world according to GATT is to be a single enormous sweatshop, yet Marx must be arraigned for a playful remark about Hottentots.'

For this sound sense, which is pretty rare these days, we must be grateful to Kerrigan; but he errs when he repeats uncritically the canard that Marx 'seduced his servant'. Demuth Helene ('Lenchen', 1820-90), by whom Marx fathered a son, was never a servant in the ordinary sense, but a family friend who was the Marx family's housekeeper.

#### International workers' conference

## The tasks of the trade union movement today

TRADE UNIONS are the oldest, most basic, elementary form of working-class organisation.

The task of this conference is to consider how the workingclass movement can today rebuild effective international trade unionism, a trade unionism able to act in its interests and that of all working people, and assist them in overcoming the mounting economic, political and social crisis that workers throughout the world now face.

As the conference meets the trade union movement is in a profound crisis.

In many countries trade unionism is illegal and brutally suppressed — its most active members being regularly tortured, killed, thrown into jail or forced into political exile.

In other countries where trade unionism is not yet illegal, the movement is dominated by a corrupt leadership and tied directly to the needs of the employers and the state.

In yet others, under the impact of a mounting economic and social crisis (rising unemployment, etc.), trade union membership stagnates or falls, with more and more working people, young people in particular, having little contact with the organised working-class movement.

The power of capital today threatens the very future of humanity.

Countless millions in Africa, Asia, South America and elsewhere are condemned to grinding poverty, bedevilled by malnutrition and disease.

In the advanced capitalist countries unemployment rises inexorably while signs of social decay are all too apparent: urban decay, mounting homelessness, destruction of any remaining educational and welfare services.

In these same countries the gains that the working class has in the past been able to make the right to welfare benefits, health services, etc. - are threatened with destruction, if they have not already been destroyed.

#### **Thirst**

Meanwhile, capital's uncontrollable thirst for profit means an unregulated development of science and technology which inreasingly menaces the environment on which human life depends.

At the end of the 20th century it is clearer than ever that the confrontation of this crisis involves an international struggle. For if the 'working man has no country' (Marx) nor has capital. It roams the world looking for labour to exploit and profit to be made.

It is the dramatic internation-

Last weekend's international workers' conference called by the International Trade Union Solidarity Campaign and the African Liberation Support Campaign passed the following motion and the resolution below calling for a reconvened conference to discuss a programme of action. Also below is a brief report of the reports and resolutions passed, which will be reported more fully in the coming weeks.





Mounting homelessness: family in US (top) and landless farmers in Shenzhen, China

alism of capital in the recent past - the development of multinational firms, the globalisaion of finance and the consequent playing off of one group of workers against another - that today provides a powerful basis for international trade union solidarity.

At the same time, workers throughout the world face a series of decisive common problems:

legislation designed either to completely outlaw the unions or to prevent them functioning adequately in defence of their members;

by their members; privatisation of nation-

alised production facilities and services;

**casualisation** of labour; **racist** immigration controls

which stop the worker freely selling her or his labour power.

These international trends, as well as the severe erosion or absence of internal democracy in the unions, arise not simply from 'policy options' decided by employers, governments or trade union leaders. They express the deep needs of capital today.

Under the impact of an intensifying world capitalist crisis the employers are forced to strip away every defence that the working class has built up in the past against the employers and the state.

The employers must now establish or strengthen direct, loss of control of the unions brutal relations with the working class, unmediated by effective trade unions, by any control over working hours, wages and conditions, by agreements over safety at work, etc.

> Casualisation likewise aims to step up the rate of exploitation of labour, to cut down drastically

the labour-time necessary fo production and to impose, re impose, or strengthen, the mos primitive forms of the exploita tion of labour by capital.

Privatisation similarly set out to break up the unions in th state sector, as well as to brin every facet of life under the cor trol of 'the market', that is th naked rule of capital.

Increasingly, where capita ism still tolerates unions, demands that they are on directly subordinated to i bloodthirsty needs.

But these trends are a sign no of the strength of capitalism by of its weakness, marks of i decay as a social system.

The fact that it is now drive to impose, even in the rich imp rialist countries, the most barb rous and brutal methods exploitation and control remini cent of the last century is su evidence of this fact.

As experience in country aft country shows, whatever the di ficulties, the working class, insiand outside the unions, has der onstrated its willingness ar capacity to fight against t employers and their state.

The building and re-building of effective trade unions must a crucial part of this fight.

#### Bolder

This trade union moveme must have aims far broader a bolder than the ones to which the past its official leaders ha set out to restrict it.

The rebuilt movement mi support every social and politic movement directed at the liber tion of the working class a oppressed people generally.

It must become the cha pion and representative of t whole working class rallyi around it all workers outside ranks, including the unemploye

It must pay particu attention to the workers in t poorest paid trades, many them women and children, well as workers forced by repr sion or economic necessity in exile.

It is obvious that th problems are not purely e nomic, for they concern not jus fight against this or the employer: they embrace the di culties of the whole working cl in its struggle against the pov of capital. For example, the fi against anti-union laws as wel against immigration contr involves directly a fight agai the state.

In short, the rebuilt tra union movement must now out to act for the whole work class and the exploited genera against the international por of capital.

## Reports and decision

THE ITUSC and ALISC international workers' conference heard 14 reports from: Argentina, Brazil, Iran, Kashmir, Kurdistan, Bangladesh, Ukraine, South Africa, Nigeria, Ivory Coast, Serbia, Britain, Angola and Bosnia.

Resolutions were passed from ALISC, the Iranian Refugee Workers' Association, the Movement to Socialism (MAS, Argentina) and the Workers International League (LIT/CI).

These resolutions concerned African liberation, the Iranian Islamic regime's membership of the International Labour Organisation, the imprisonment of Argentinian workers' leaders, and the likely death in police custody of a Turkish Trotskyist after May Day.

The conference also s greetings to the 500 Liverp dockers and the Union of Bosn Coal Miners. Solidarity and support w

given to the heroic struggle of National Garment Workers' F eration members in Banglad who have even suffered rape act of control and intimidat by the bosses. The persecution of memb

and leaders of the Ukrain public workers' union SPF was repudiated and the use 'flags of convenience' to lo shipping standards and wa was condemned.

Support was given to the C struction Safety Campaign's d sion to hold an internation conference on asbestos.

### Towards a programme of action

ALL of us at this international workers' conference extend a hand of friendship and solidarity to our brothers and sisters all working people throughout the world. We ask you to endorse the International Trade Union Solidarity Campaign's founding principles:

trade unions independent of the state and the employers; democracy in the trade

unions; workers' internationalism.

and to join us in the fight to win the trade union movement for

these principles. The ITUSC pledges to par-

ticipate and co-operate in the trade union movement and workers' struggles wherever and whenever possible for a common fight for the mobilising and uniting of the working class and its allies in the fight against unemployment, privatisation and casualisation, antitrade-union laws, anti-asylum and racist immigration laws, for the building and rebuilding of the trade unions. We resolve to reconvene this

conference in London on 7-11 December 1996 to decide a programme of action and we call upon the ITUSC committee to produce a draft programme of action for circulation by 30 September.

## Fourth victim of Turkish police May Day repression Assassinated by torture!

NINETEEN-year-old socialist Akin Recber died on 20 May. He was the fourth victim of the Turkish police repression of this year's May Day celebration.

On 1 May police opened fire on hundreds of thousands of workers in Istanbul, killing three demonstrators and wounding many others.

Akin Recber, who was detained by the police after the 1 May demonstration, lost his life ten days after his release, due to the brutal torture he endured during his detention.

Akin Recber, who came to Istanbul from Ankara to join the Trotskyist contingent in the May Day celebrations, was detained with some hundreds of other demonstrators by the police.

He was brutally tortured in the Security Office of the Istanbul police for eight days. After his release he returned to his father's house in Ankara.

LAST Wednesday supporters of

Christiansen and Oscar Martinez

held a picket of the Argentinian

demand for the release of these

The protest was to support the

Horacio

embassy in London.

Panario.

Recber, who explained to his family the torture he had suffered, deteriorated three days after his arrival.

The doctors that he consulted made contradictory diagnoses and Recber eventually lost his live in hospital on 20 May.

The first look at his body was made by the attorney general in the hospital. Then an autopsy was carried out with the diagnosis 'death due to the insufficiency of respiration and circulation'.

Samples were also taken from his internal organs and sent to Istanbul for definitive diagnosis.

On 22 May the body of Akin Recber was taken from the official mortuary by his family and his lawyers so that he could be buried in Ankara.

In the cemetery hundreds of workers and friends, poor people of his suburb, militants and representatives of democratic organisations and progressive political

**Postcards** should be sent to:

Horacio Panario, Division de

Transito (Policia de Neuquen -

Zapata), Ruta 22, 8240 Zapala,

Prov. de Neuquen, Argentina.

Alcides Christiansen, Unidad de

Detencion No.11, Pabellon 5 Celda

Release Horacio Panario,

**Alcides Christiansen** 

and Oscar Martinez!

Alcides

parties met his funeral procession, which was heavily policed.

The police tried to stop this mass of people participating, but the crowd's angry response was to shout: 'Human dignity will win over torture!; 'Don't be silent. Tormorrow it will be your turn!, and; 'Revolutionary martyrs are immortal!'. They broke through the police barriers.

Akin Recber's father said during the procession: 'Akin explained to me how he was tortured in Istanbul with soil bags and electric current.

'When he understood that he was going to die, he said to me: "They have finished with me by beatings."

'Akin was a sportsman, but his lungs were torn to pieces. This is the work of the Turkish regime.'

Akin Recber's lawyers have declared that the diagnosis of the Ankara official medical examiners is a falsification and the real

cause of his death was not as they said pneumonia, but rupture of his internal organs due to torture.

They have called upon every body and every democratic organisation to help them in their efforts to clarify the reality and to bring to justice those who are guilty of the assassination of Akin Recber.

Trade union and other workers' organisations should denounce this assassination and send protest telegrams to:

Sulleyman Demirel, President of the Turkish Republic, Cankaya, Ankara, Turkey.

Mesut Yilmaz, Prime Minister, Basbakanlik, Ankara, Turkey.

Solidarity messages to the daily paper Demokrasi:

Demokrasi Gazetesi, Kemal Pasa Mah, Ataturk, Bulvan Cad No: 148/28, Aksaray, Istanbul

Turkey. Fax: 90 212 632 28 04.

#### 1,500 prisoners hunger strike in Turkey

FROM 19 May, more than 1,500 political prisoners in 37 jails have been on indefinite hunger strike in Turkey.

Over 50 people in London have joined them on hunger strike and one, Murat Kalay, has been taken to Homerton hospital.

On 4 January this year the state launched an attack on prisoners in Umraniye, killing four members of the DHKP-C and wounding 42. On 13 December an attack in Buca jail in Izmir.

Closure of Eskisehir jail with its coffin-like cells.

An end attacks on prisoners families.

Removal of so-called rules and regulations on getting medical treatment.

Removal of obstacles in the way of cases going to court.

Send protest faxes and letters: Turkish embassy, 0171-393 0202. Turkish president Suleyman Demirel, 00 90 312 427 1330 (fax). Prisons director Zeki Gungor, 00 90 312 452 40 66 (fax). The hunger strike in London is at 84 Balls Pond Road, N1.

## Science focus

A monthly column by Daniel Robertson, principal scientist at a leading bio-technology company

## **Export** this, Major!

THE BSE crisis appears to have taken a new turn with the fears expressed by a consultant neurologist — Dr Alan Colchester that animal rendering plants may be polluting land and water supplies with this deadly disease.

Dr Colchester is treating a cluster of five cases of the new form of CJD believed to be linked to consumption of BSE-contaminated beef. These have all appeared around Ashford in Kent — a CJD cluster like this has never been seen before.

This area is the home of a notoriously unhygienic animal rendering plant that has been the object of a series of prosecutions for breaking regulations. Knowing how inadequately the rules on handling BSE-contaminated material have been enforced, this record makes the mind boggle.

Rendering involves treating waste animal material to produce animal feed and slurry which, in this case, is disposed of by running to waste on land. This material soaks into the ground and will eventually find its way into the water table.

Dr Colchester fears that the polluted land used by the plant may be the source of this epidemic of CJD. He wants the polluted area sealed off until more is known and rendering practices made safer.

Another scientist who has warned of the wider dangers of BSE is Dr Richard Lacey, who fears that pastures supporting BSE cattle may be permanently contaminated and should all be taken out of use for farming.

Prion diseases such as BSE and CJD are a largely unknown danger — I fear that the crisis caused by the government's obsession with protecting farming big business is subjecting public health in Britain to incalculable risks.

No doubt Major is already working on his next Euroconfrontation. Bottle the slurry and insist that the Europeans import it as a health drink!

## Privatising cosmos

LIKE many people I can remember being thrilled by the early years of space exploration in the 1950s and 1960s. I never accepted the arguments that money spent on space exploration could be better spent elsewhere.

Reaching out to space always seemed to represent the best in the human drive to explore and conquer, even if it was really always dominated by US-Soviet military rivalry. But now all that early excitement and promise has

Russia, China and Europe are locked into a struggle to develop the cheapest launchers for sale to privately-owned communications companies. This drive to cut costs and push technology to its limits has resulted in a string of dramatic launcher failures, recent Chinese disasters now being topped by the spectacular failure of Ariane. This retreat into squalid profit-making has hidden some aspects of space exploration that have only recently become public knowledge.

After the Ariane failure journalists were hurried away from the area. Conservationists insist that this is because of the enormous environmental damage that

the rocket explosion caused. The impact of the European

Space Agency's launcher activities on French Guiana, where the launch facility is located, has been substantial. The economy of the country is dominated by the space industry. But so is its environment. Enormous quantities of hydrochloric acid are sprayed over the rainforest during every launch, producing a super-concentrated acid rain.

Now we know why these rockets are launched from South America rather than Europe although to be fair this is also to take advantage of Guiana's proximity to the equator that offers fuel economy advantages.

An additional side effect of the drive to produce ever larger booster rockets to meet communication satellites requirements is the added load of ozone damaging chemicals they introduce into the stratosphere.

These have the potential to cause substantial damage - just at a time when drives to reduce damage from CFCs are beginning to show some success.

It all seems sadly disappointing after the excitement of the years of Sputnik, Yuri Gagarin and Apollo.

## What's behind paranoia?

AS THE human drive into space has faltered space travel of quite another kind has caught the human imagination. There is an increasing obsession in the media with the subject of UFOs (Unidentified Flying Objects or Flying Saucers).

It is easy to dismiss this as nonsense, but the fact is that growing numbers of people believe in them, and often sympathise with bizarre conspiracy theories that governments are suppressing the true story of the nature of UFOs.

The militia movement in the USA, and New Agers in Britain (both increasingly influenced by neo-nazi groups) have incorporated UFO paranoia into their philosophies.

So we must take this seriously and try to understand what lies behind this phenomenon.

I have to confess to having been fascinated by this subject since being a teenager in the early 1960s. But I have noticed a strong tendency over the years for fashions in UFOlogy to closely follow science fiction films.

An epidemic of claims of abductions by aliens followed films such as 'Close Encounters' and 'ET', with the aliens involved even resembling those portrayed in these films.

There is clearly an element of mass hysteria involved. But ignoring this, I know that there are plenty of perfectly sensible people who claim to have seen some strange phenomena in the skies, including pilots of aircraft who are trained to be very aware of the space around them.

On the other hand we all know that under the right circumstances it is easy to completely misinterpret what we see.

Does the interest around this subject reflect the growing crisis in capitalist society in some way?

Is it being purposely promoted by reactionary governments for some hidden purpose — and I note here that the MoD's expert on UFOs, Nick Pope, is about to go into print with a book claiming the reality of the phenomena.

Is the whole subject just an enormous money-making hype reflecting the descent of bourgeois culture into purely marketdriven rubbish? Or is there some truth behind the hysteria?

I would be very interested to hear readers' opinions.

#### trade union and unemployed 4, Parque Industrial, 8300 last year three DHKP-C members Neuquen, Argentina. workers' leaders who are were murdered and 28 injured in imprisoned and threatened with ■ **Protest** to: President Carlos up to ten years in jail. Menem, c/o Argentinian Alcides recently went on Embassy, 53 Hans Place, London Among the prisoners' dehunger strike. mands are: Bearing with Boris?

NOW the novelty has worn off, Russian voters are becoming almost as sceptical about the choice in the ballot box as we are here.

Boris Yeltsin has not got around to claiming 'it hurt, but it worked' yet. Five years ago, he promised the pain of capitalist reform would last 'about a year'.

In 1992 he claimed to see the first signs of recovery. Now he assures voters: 'If we don't make a mistake on 16 June, if we continue along the way we have chosen, the improvement will begin in one year.'

Like a mixture of capitalist conman and temporarily benevolent Tsar, the Russian president traipses around, dispensing electoral largesse.

Money that was not available before is miraculously found — three billion roubles for a church at Stavropol, 60 billion for factories at Zelenograd, 133 billion for the miners at Vorkuta.

Decrees are signed on the spot for money for museums, or a new nuclear submarine. (Better the state should do something about the dangerous rusting old ones, but the scientist who raised that has been gagged for the elections.)

#### Booze

They said that Yeltsin could not stand again, but he is even off the booze. He is leading over the 'Communist' nationalist Gennady Zyuganov in the polls.

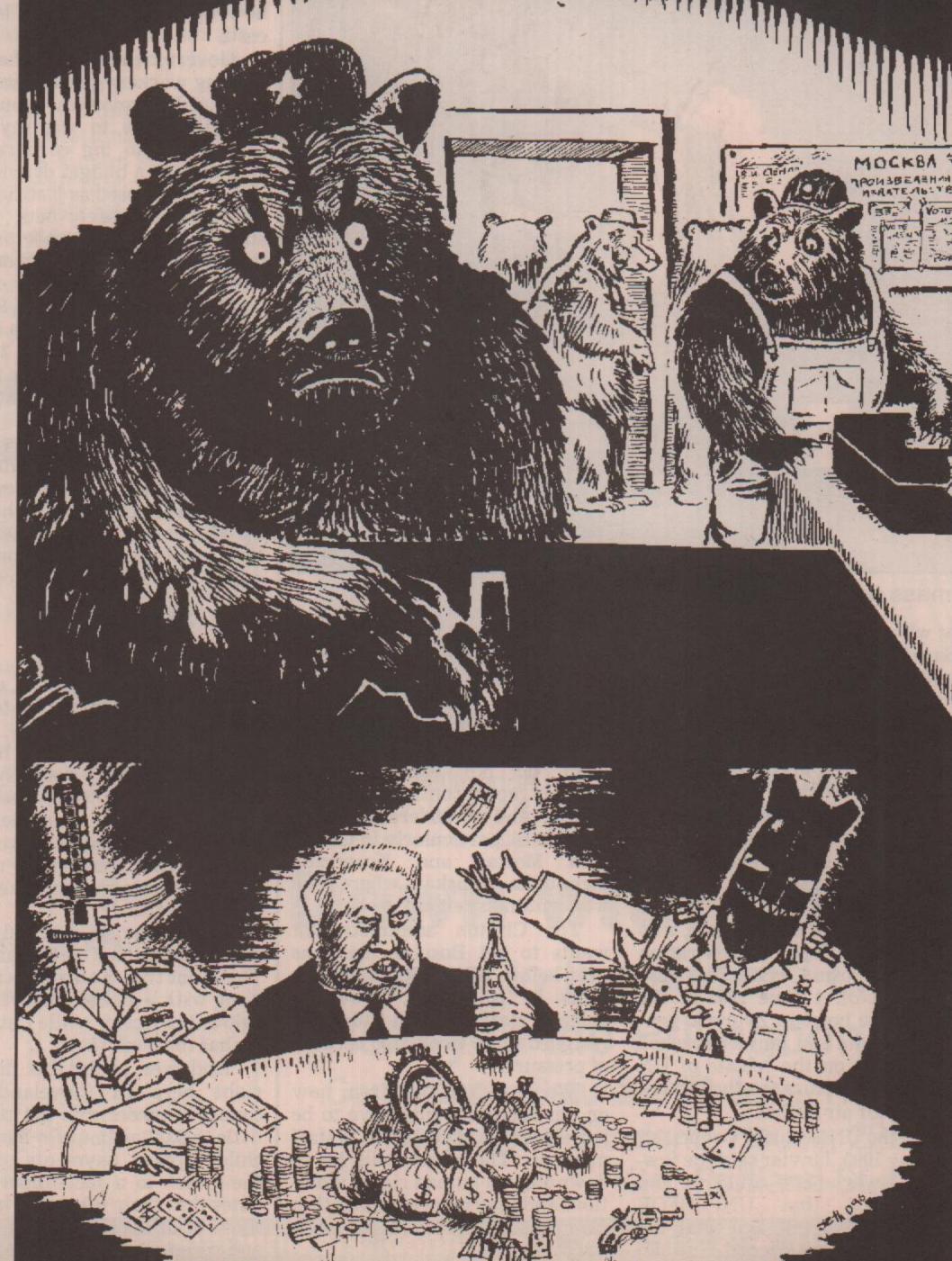
The television channels have suddenly been full of films about Stalinist repression and labour camps as a reminder to the voters of what the 'good old days' were really like.

The opposition doesn't get much of a look in. In Moscow a mayoral candidate who claimed to 'support the communist idea' was blown up by a radio-controlled bomb.

Some of Yeltsin's generous promises will be forgotten as soon as he steps back into his armoured limousine. The workers know this, really.

Other promises - like paying workers the wages they're owed — may be covered by printing money for now, and leaving the 'economic hangover' till after the election, when the workers can be handed the bill. Just like our own Tory chancellors!

But Yeltsin or his rivals could find that a bear with a sore head is a dangerous creature to mess with!



Page 8

Saturday 15 June 1996

BY CHARLIE POTTINS

of insulting the feelings of Dutch

diers, latent racists, and abso-

lutely stupid, could not protect

Srebrenica from racists. . . . This

play is a cry against the betrayal

The authors replied: 'Our sol-

Newsdesk 0171-387 0564

Send your letters and photos — Deadline Monday 🤡 Workers Press, PO Box 735, London SW8 1YB Telephone: 0171-387 0564 Fax: 0171-387 0569

E-mail: søgp@exnet.co.uk

# EU 10W OVET AGONISTES srebrenica

UNITED Nations officers investigating mass graves near Srebrenica in Bosnia dug a small 'test trench' at Nova Kasaba on 5 June, and found at least six corpses, with more thought to be nearby.

soldiers.

Survivors, and US satellite photographs, suggest up to 2,700 missing men and boys may have been massacred by Serb forces in the valley.

Serb authorities claim any Bosnians buried there were soldiers killed in battle. But the latest bodies found were in civilian clothes. One had a smashed skull. Two skeletons found had their hands tied behind their back.

Bosnian Croat authorities at Jajce said they had unearthed 63 bodies, many of them women, believed to be victims of Serb Chetniks who seized the town in 1992. Relatives had identified most of them.

The remains of 20 Muslims gunned down by Chetniks in June 1992 were unearthed at Jesevo, north west of Sarajevo. Near Brcko, in Serb-held northern Bosnia, IFOR troops were guarding a mass grave after a Serb contractor arrived with bulldozers to clear the site for a factory.

A row has broken out over responsibility for the fall of Srebrenica, a UN 'safe area' surrendered by Dutch UNPROFOR troops. The French foreign ministry denied a claim in the Dutch paper Handelsblad that it resulted from a secret agreement between presidents Chirac and Milosevic. The paper says Chirac phoned UN commander General Janvier to veto airstrikes, in gratitude for the release of French soldier hostages.

#### Refused

The Quai d'Orsay said Chirac had called in a Bastille Day speech for action to save Srebrenica, which other powers refused, and France had initiated the Rapid Reaction Force.

Holland's Foreign Minister Hans van Mierlo had said he would take up the allegations, which follow a British television documentary accusing Chirac. Van Mierlo's D66 party wants an international investigation.

The Dutch Defence Ministry tried to interfere with a play 'Srebrenica!' which opened in Amsterdam last month. The authorities accused writers Guus Vleugels and Ton Voorstenbosch

A Dutch TV documentary, 'Franken's list', showed that commander Major Dutch Franken left Bosniaks working at the Srebrenica UN base off the evacuation list.

A soldier admitted to the paper Volkskrant that while leaving Srebrenica, he ran over civilians with a personnel carrier and 'did not feel anything'.

Dutch members of Médécins Sans Frontières said UN Dutchbat doctors were banned from giving medical care to seriously

The US assistant secretary of state in charge of intelligence service, Toby Gati, admitted: 'We bear our share of guilt for Sre-

Robert Frowick, the US diplomat heading the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) team monitoring wounded Bosnian civilians, most election conditions in Bosnia has

says the CIA knew the Serbs were preparing an offensive, and that General Mladic had been to Belgrade, but they played down the threat.

brenica.'

of humanity.' Recently disturbed earth Unclassified

Satellite picture of suspected mass grave outside Srebrenica

## Workers Press SUBSCRIBE

to the socialist weekly that tells the truth

Please send me

☐ 10 issues for £5.60

□ 50 issues for £27.60

INTERNATIONAL RATES: Europe and Near East, £7.70 for 10 issues, 50 for £38.50; Africa, Americas and India £12.70 for 10 issues, 50 for £63.50; Australia, Japan and E Asia 10 issues for £13.70, 50 for £68.50.

Name Address

I enclose £..... for my subscription, and

an extra donation of £......

Make cheques, POs payable to Workers Press, PO Box 735, London SW8 1YB.

of whom died. Interviewed in the Sarajevo weekly Svijet, Vleugels and Voorstenbosch describe the 'vulgar' ceremonial welcome to the Dutchbat soldiers in the Zagreb UNPROFOR HQ, where Prince Willen arrived, after the fall of Srebrenica.

They added: 'General Karremanss, now our envoy in NATO HQ, toasted the Serbian victory in the company of General Mladic.'

US journalist Roy Gutman, who discovered Serb concentration camps in Bosnia, writes in Newsday that on 4 June 1995 at the Vidikovac hotel in Zvornik, generals Mladic and Janvier reached agreement on the release of UN hostages in return for the UN not calling for air strikes.

At the UN Security Council on 24 May 1995, Janvier said the Bosnian government could defend Srebrenica, that UNPROFOR should withdraw, and that air strikes were not needed. Gutman

denied telling staff to play down human rights violations.

OSCE staff complain of harassment by Serb and Croat nationalists, and say conditions laid down in the Dayton agreement do not exist. Refugee officials report continued intimidation and interference with movement, particularly in Croatheld Mostar and Karadzic's 'Republika Srpska', where the war criminals remain in charge.

The Clinton administration wants to get Bosnian elections over before US presidential elections in November. Frowick's chief of staff, William Stuebner, resigned three weeks ago because of pressure.

'We were told that from now on our reports would have to be more positive,' said an OSCE staff member. 'The effect will be to downplay all human rights violations and play up everything that can be used to promote the holding of elections.'

#### AFL-CIO leader laments end of American dream

#### BY VIC CHARLES

CAPITALISM'S hunger for profits has ended the American dream - or as John J. Sweeney of the American Federation of Labour-Congress of Industrial Organisations (AFL-CIO) puts it, wiped out the 'social contract' between workers, employers and government.

America's top union leader says workers' anger against 'greedy corporations' is growing. Unless things changed, he warned a meeting in Cleveland, Ohio, 'America will become more like the trouble spots where we send our sons and daughters to keep the peace.'

Fond of recalling his father, 'a New York city bus driver and a proud member of the Transport Workers Union', the AFL-CIO president said:

'My father lived and worked in tough times. But working people, business people, and public officials back then shared certain understandings — a social contract, if you will....

'For almost 30 years after winning World War II, we all prospered because we prospered together,' he claimed. 'We were concerned with raising the standard of living for all Americans not just accumulating enormous wealth for a fortunate few.

'That social compact was a formula for the strongest economy, the largest middle class, and the most successful society this world has ever known. Unfortunately, those days are gone....

'In the early 1970s, business was forced to find new ways to compete in a new world marketplace and for the most part they decided to do so not by American team-work and American knowhow, but by driving down labour costs.

'Government did its share of picking workers' pockets with 12 years of Reaganomics — massive tax giveaways to wealthy taxpayers and to big corporations that created a budget deficit that is now being used as justification for cuts in safety-nets, wage standards and income protections working people depend on most.

'Over the past 20 years, 97 per cent of the income increase in our country went to the top 20 per cent of wage earners...the top 10 per cent now control almost 68 per cent of the wealth.

'Since 1980, productivity went up 24 per cent ... [that] productivity was converted into increases in corporate profits, which went up 200 per cent between 1980 and 1995, and into executive compensation, which is up 400 per cent....

#### Squeeze

'Caterpillar is doing great, racking up record profits, enjoying great productivity. Instead of sharing their prosperity, they decide to squeeze a little harder with a two-tier wage system, more work on the weekends without paying overtime pay. They force thousands of workers out on strike, commit 300 unfair labour practices, and make even bigger profits.

'Caterpillar says it did it to stay "competitive" with Kamatsu. That's not true. Kamatsu is struggling with a global market share below 3 per cent, while Caterpillar has the lion's share....

'And how about this picture, right here in Cleveland: the county workers who get paid as little as \$6.81 an hour for handling child support payments present their case to a fact-finder, who notes that their wages lag behind those of other county employees and recommends a 6 per cent pay

raise, retroactive to January. The workers and their union are ready to accept, because 32 of their members make so little they are eligible for food stamps. The county says "no" and sticks with its offer of 3 per cent and now the clerks will probably have to strike...

'Millions of American workers are running out of money, running out of options and running out of hope. They've exhausted their savings accounts, they are working two and three jobs and they are loaded with debt. They see the stock market soaring and profits roaring and they wonder, "Who the hell is getting my share?"

'Lucio Noto and Allen Murray of Mobil got \$2.3 million dollars of it — that's how much their net wealth increased the day after they announced their layoffs. Chase Manhattan's Thomas Labreque and Chemical Bank's Walter Shipley made off with \$6.7 million of it after they fired 12,000 loyal employees....

#### Cynical

'Workers read these reports every day and it makes them cynical and bitter and vulnerable to appeals from demagogues like Pat Buchanan and, before him, David Duke.

'Their frustration and anxiety is eating away at our economy, which depends on consumer confidence and business optimism in order to thrive, and it is destroying faith and confidence in the government institutions that keep our society civilised.

'America is becoming edgier, angrier, and meaner. Until we ease the growing gaps in work, wages and wealth we will be reading more dispatches from a wounded nation — more militia movements, more bombings, more hate crimes, and more of the quiet anguish of Americans losing their sense of a common destiny and a common purpose.

'America will become more like the trouble spots where we send our sons and daughters to

keep the peace.'

Warning against right-wing demagogues, Sweeney's only remedy is an appeal to the bosses' better nature. Evoking 'basic values like responsibility and loyalty', he urged business: 'Work with your employees and their unions. Give us a voice in decision-making. Give us half a chance to improve the quality of our goods and services.

'That is the path to lasting prosperity - and we want to walk down that road with you.'

The AFL-CIO has held rallies across the country demanding 'America needs a raise!' Emulating the black civil rights movement of the 1960s it has declared a 'Union Summer', sending teams of young people on organising drives. The leadership hopes workers' enthusiasm will help it win influence with business and the White House.

Criticising 'a tax code that has reduced taxes on millionaires by one-third over the past 15 years while raising taxes by a similar amount on middle-income Americans,' Sweeney urged 'Stop beating up on the poor, the young and the elderly.

'Beef up Social Security and Medicare, don't destroy them . . . And for God's sake, honour the wishes of 84 per cent of the American people and raise our paltry minimum wage to \$5.15 an hour.'

Cleveland may hear a different appeal next month, when delegates gather there for a new Labor party. It remains to be seen how different.