



Election manifesto pledges tough curbs on spending

LABOUR'S 'KICK IN THE TEETH'

LABOUR'S ELECTION MANIFESTO was denounced by a leader of Britain's biggest union as a 'kick in the teeth for public services'. Geoff Martin, Unison's London convenor, was commenting on Labour's commitment to keep public spending within the limits fixed by the present Tory government.

Martin complained that Labour's projected election programme, issued last week, offered nothing to his members who contributed hundreds of thousands of pounds to Labour's coffers.

In another warning of what to expect under a Blair government Labour's 'definitive policy statement':

■ Pledges tough curbs on public spending. 'In government, ministers will be asked to save before they spend,' it reassures the bankers.

■ Boasts that Labour will seek big reductions in welfare spending, in return for the empty promise that they would 'invest more in education to help people into employment'.

■ Threatens to scrap child benefit for 16- to 18-year-olds. This is a clear victory for Gordon Brown against some of his fellow right wingers who balked at such a measure.

The Labour Party will spend a million pounds on distributing and promoting the manifesto, with half the cost coming from the pocket of

BY THE EDITOR
multi-millionaire Paul Hamlyn, the former publisher. A senior Labour spokesperson bragged last week that other wealthy individuals had 'pledged and delivered' substantial sums to the party's funds.

Behind this drive for funds from the rich is the Labour leadership's efforts to break all ties with the trade unions.

The party's national executive committee adopted the manifesto, with only two votes against — MPs Dennis Skinner and Diane Abbott.

Refused

Abbott said she had refused to back the manifesto because 'it didn't say anything about full employment or jobs, and there was no specific commitment to tackling racism.'

But she added immediately that 'the important thing is to unite against Mr Major to win the election'.

Skinner said that his proposals for the re-nationalisation of the coal and rail industries 'had fallen on deaf ears'.

Nor, he complained, were there any proposals to 'tax the rich' in order to finance more public spending.

Another Mersey dockers' victory!

BY DOT GIBSON

'CANMAR, the Canadian Pacific shipping line, has pulled out of the port of Liverpool!' This was the good news given to Liverpool's locked-out dockers and thousands of supporters at their rally on 29 June by Mersey Port Shop Stewards' Committee secretary Jimmy Davis.

True to the decision of their International Conference in February, dockworkers around the world are gradually tightening the ring of solidarity around the port, with a total boycott of Mersey Docks and Harbour Company's Liverpool operations in support of the 500 sacked dockers' demand for reinstatement.

Canmar's decision, following a week after the departure of the giant ACL shipping line, means that the port's trade has been cut by 75 per cent.

Among the thousands who marched in last week's Liverpool demonstration, pride of place second only to the Mersey port workers was given to the striking Hillingdon Hospital workers with their new banner. They have been out as long as the dockers.

Post office workers, fresh from the picket line after the second of their one-day strikes, brought their banners on the march, and the 'larger than life' contingent of mainly Turkish and Kurdish workers of NE London TGWU Textile branch marched with a piper and a drummer.

Speakers at the rally included Jack Heyman of the US West Coast International Longshore and Warehouse Union, Dave Morgan president of the New Zealand Seafarers' Union, and Tony Benn MP.



North East London Textile workers' banner on last Saturday's demonstration

MPs' 30 per cent

MPs are set to vote themselves a 30 per cent pay increase. The Senior Salaries Review Body has recommended that the pay of an MP should go up from its present £34,000 to £44,000, and that cabinet ministers should get £88,000, up from the present £70,000.

These pay levels are sup-

plemented for MPs by lavish tax-free expenses which can effectively double their pay.

Labour leader Tony Blair, who is ever-ready to denounce most increases in public spending, refused to oppose the recommendations, instead promising that Labour MPs would have a free vote on the matter.

Workers Aid for Bosnia

Durham Miners Gala

Saturday 13 July: Bosnian miners will be raising their banner in the Market Square, Durham at **9.30am**. We ask everyone who has supported their struggle against racism and fascism to march with them to celebrate workers' internationalism and solidarity.

For those who want to arrive Friday night please contact Tony Parker, 0191-263 5029 (daytime), for accommodation.

Summer Dockers' Festival

A great day out for all the family!

Sunday 14 July, 11.30am-7pm

**Edinburgh Park Dockers' Club,
Townsend Lane, Clubmoor.**

Bands: Poke, Jakaraya, Hoodwink, Bicycle Thieves, Jonti, Family of Free Love, Precinct 47, Dock Band.

All day BBQ, inflatables, kiddies treats, face painting, judo display, Karaoke, Morris dancing display.

Bar open all day.

Event sponsored by local businesses.

Promoters: Tony Melia and Jimmy Davies Jnr, 0151-207 3388.

Hillingdon hospital dispute demonstration

NINE months ago 54 Unison members were sacked from their jobs at Hillingdon Hospital by the private contracting company Pall Mall for refusing to accept pay cuts of up to £35 a week.

Most had worked at the hospital for over 15 years — one for 29 years. To make more profits Pall Mall slashed

pay and weekend premiums. Nearly all the sacked workers are Asian women who relied on evening and weekend working to make ends meet.

For nine long months they have been fighting for justice, to get their jobs back on their old terms and conditions. Support them by attending their march and rally.

Saturday 13 July, assemble 11am

**Colham Green Recreation Ground
Colham Green Road, Uxbridge.**

(Opposite Hillingdon Hospital.)

Nearest tube Uxbridge. No car parking at Colham Green.

PATRIOTISM, said that great Englishman Samuel Johnson, is the last refuge of a scoundrel. And suddenly scoundrels of all kinds are to be heard furiously beating the drum for England. What is going on?

The *Daily Mirror*, after a week or two in which no mud was too foul to hurl at the English football team, suddenly changed tack and dragged English journalism even lower than the gutter with its outrageously worded mock declaration of 'soccer war' on Germany.

Its rival the *Sun* openly admits that it has 'maintained a jingoistic approach', as distinct from the *Mirror's* 'xenophobic' one — and 'I think we can get away with blitzing Fritz', boasts the *Sun's* editor.

Though the *Daily Mirror* supports Tony Blair's 'New Labour' — a party which one Labour MP has aptly suggested ought to be called 'New Conservative' — and the *Sun* supports the Tories, it would be a mistake to see the crude 'xenophobia' of the one paper and the no less crude 'jingoism' of the other as reflecting any important political difference. Profit is what they care about, not principles.

The war that really matters to them is not a soccer war but a deadly serious circulation war, and this they hope to win with a frenzy of chauvinistic abuse, with words that inflame and incite.

That having been said, it is clear that neither paper would have ventured to 'blitz Fritz' in quite the way they did had they not been given the green light by a Tory party which, since the start of the beef crisis, has seen naked Little England chauvinism as its best chance, if only a slim one, of averting a humiliating defeat in the general election.

Tory leaders and gutter press editors share an insultingly low opinion of the intelligence and decency of the ordinary people of this country.

Workers Press

Patriotism and the pseudo-patriots

And here they are making a mistake, as the aftermath of the England-Germany match showed. Except where police in riot gear moved in and provoked them, the English team's supporters behaved in general with restraint.

There was no wave of anti-German feeling or anything approaching it, and the ugly stabbing of a Russian student taken to be a German was a single isolated incident.

* * * * *

DOES THIS mean that socialists can afford to be complacent about the pseudo-patriotism of tabloid papers and political leaders? Certainly not. Least of all can we ignore Tony Blair's efforts to wave the Union Jack harder and more often than the Tories.

To generations of colonial peoples struggling against British occupation and oppression the Union Jack was the flag of those who boasted of the deadly weapons they had at their disposal for crushing the colonial liberation movements:

*Whatever happens, we have got
The Maxim Gun, and they have not.*

And among the young English, Irish, Scots, and Welsh workers in uniform who were sent out to India, Africa, and the Caribbean to keep other workers in chains, on the pretext of

fighting for Queen and Country, there were many who came to realise how grossly and cynically they had been deceived. They came to see the Union Jack for what it was: a butcher's apron.

Tony Blair turns his back on historical truth. He shares the Tories' sick mythology, the Tory passion for celebrating British conquests, British deeds of arms, and British military leaders. He is a pseudo-patriot, not a true patriot.

True English patriotism is working-class patriotism. It casts a cold eye on the English conquest of Ireland, Wales, and Scotland, which was carried out in the interests not of the common folk, but of kings, noblemen, and adventurers. It celebrates the centuries-long struggles of the labouring people of England, from John Ball and Wat Tyler in 1381, through Gerrard Winstanley in the 17th century and the Chartists in the 19th century to the pickets of the 1926 General Strike. It remembers that, 350 years ago, the English people fought a civil war to rid themselves of a corrupt and despotic monarchy.

English working-class patriotism insists above all that every advance of democracy and civil liberties in England, without exception, was won by the struggle and sacrifices of English working people against a corrupt and ruthless ruling class.

The English workers, whom Karl Marx called 'the first-born sons of modern industry', set an example to

the working class of the whole world by their creation of trade unions in the teeth of repressive anti-union legislation, as well as by developing all manner of self-help organisations, by sustaining a tradition of working-class self-education, and by waging a long and stubborn fight for the vote.

English working-class patriotism has nothing in common with the pseudo-patriotism of Blair, Major, and the *Daily Mirror*. For it is not based on seeing people of different countries and cultures as enemies rivals, or inferior beings. It is in fact inseparable from working-class internationalism, and it places international solidarity as its highest moral imperative.

* * * * *

EIGHTY-TWO years ago there was another historic game of football between English and German teams. It took place on the Western Front on 25 December 1914. On that first Christmas Day of World War I English and German soldiers laid aside their rifles and bayonets, clambered out of their muddy trenches, exchanged cigarettes and other gifts, and played football together.

Such fraternisation between workers in uniform alarmed the officers on both sides, who took good care that it never happened again. At Christmas 1915, 1916, and 1917 it was carnage as usual, which was just how the imperialists liked it.

Those English troops were acting in the best traditions of their class, as were the German troops with whom they fraternised. So let the Blairs and Majors and tabloid editors, and all the other scoundrels, beat the pseudo-patriotic drum as hard as they please. The English working class has marched before, and will march again, to a very different drum.

Letters

Liverpool dockers' tour de France

TWO dockers and a delegate from Women of the Waterfront came to France between 3 and 13 June. They were invited by ART — 'Association pour le Rassemblement des Travailleurs'.

This was the second visit of the Liverpool dockers here. A couple of months ago they were invited by ART in Rouen. This time they spent 10 very busy days in the Paris area and in Rouen.

The list of their activities is long:

- Invitation to meet workers at the big Villeneuve St. George railway centre, one of the most important during the strike last November and December;

- Participation in the CGT union federation area railway conference;

- Meeting with the anarchist CNT union and with underground cleaning workers fired because they mounted a picket line;

- Meeting with the Alfortville unemployment committee;

- A welcome at the mass meeting of the new SUD-Education union;

- An hour-long interview with two radio stations;

- An invitation from postal

- A welcome and financial support from the SUD-PTT union;

- Participation in the great 50,000-strong union demonstration of rail workers of 6 June against privatisation, with dockers' and Women of the Waterfront's banners;

- An invitation to meet workers in the biggest printshop in the Paris area by the CGT union federation;

- A dockers' stall in the 'fête' run by the LCR (French section of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International);

- Dedication of a song to the dockers' fight by the famous singer Renaud during a concert where £700 was raised for the hardship fund; and finally,

- A meeting held by ART itself, with a very rich discussion, in Paris.

Then the dockers left for Rouen, where they were also invited to the local conference of the CGT, met the CGT dockers in Le Havre, had a meeting of solidarity organised by the CGT, 'CFDT en lutte' and the SUD-Rail unions and supported by different factory unions (Rhône-Poulenc, Renault) and the students of the UNEF union.

This list is too dry. It cannot express the emotion, the fraternity, the direct contact.

When the dockers explained that they aren't fighting for money, but for dignity, for union rights, for future generations, against privatisation, when

front spoke on the fight of housewives who have become militants in the conflict... everybody felt that we were among brothers and sisters, that the dockers are at home in France, that their fight is the same as ours in the strike of last November and December.

The organisation of the dockers' tour was the first action for ART (the association of those who fight for a 'new party' of the working class in France).

We have already started to discuss here and with our docker friends of Liverpool how to enlarge the solidarity between the workers of our two countries against the common enemies.

Janos Borovi
Paris

Scotland and socialism

THE author of the article 'For a new party for Socialism', (Workers Press, 8 June), writing on behalf of the Edinburgh Action Group, correctly states that neither 'a Labour government or a Scottish assembly will resolve the crisis.'

In Scotland however the call should be for a new and autonomous Scottish socialist party pledged to a revolutionary struggle for the legitimate rights of the Scottish people to national self-determination, and for the creation of a socialist state in Scotland.

an urgent necessity in a country like Scotland where, for too long, the demand for legitimate self-determination has been confused with diversionary schemes for devolution or with the reactionary policies of the so-called Scottish National Party.

For too long, Scottish socialists and democrats have allowed the issue of self-determination, the central question in Scottish politics — and the key to the solution of the social question in Scotland, to be the exclusive preserve of the careerist and reactionary SNP leadership.

As Hugh MacDiarmid, the Scottish Marxist and separatist poet, once observed: 'Scottish nationalism should never be confused with the antics of the Scottish National Party.'

It's high time for Scottish socialists to combine to mount an effective challenge to the SNP, and adopt a principled position in regard to both the national and the social questions in Scotland. The creation of a Scottish socialist party would be a revolutionary action in its own right.

Is mise, le mor mheas
Adam Busby
(Scottish POW)
Portlaoise

Big Bang

On the subject of Keith Scotcher's letter (22 June), the following extract has been drawn to our attention:

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longer than
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tion of a 'beginning of the world' (start of the expansion) only about 10⁹ [1 billion] years ago have roots of both an empirical and a theoretical nature.

The astronomers tend to consider the stars of different spectral types as age classes of a uniform development, which process would need much longer than 10⁹ years. Such a theory, therefore, actually contradicts the demonstrated consequences of the relativistic equations.

It seems to me, however, that the 'theory of evolution' of the stars rests on weaker foundations than the field equations.

The theoretical doubts are based on the fact that for the time of the beginning of the expansion the metric [see below] becomes singular and the density... becomes infinite.

In this connection the following should be noted: The present theory of relativity is based on a division of physical reality into a metric field (gravitation) on the one hand, and into an electromagnetic field [which describes inter-

actions between current charges and light] and matter of the other hand.

For large densities of field and of matter, the field equations and even the field variables which enter into them will have no significance.

One may not therefore assume the validity of the equations for very high density of field and matter, and one may not conclude that the 'beginning of the expansion' must mean a singularity in the mathematical sense.

All we have to realise is that the equations may not be continued over such regions.

This consideration does, however, not alter the fact that the 'beginning of the world' really constitutes a beginning, from the point of view of the development of the now existing stars and systems of stars, at which those stars and systems of stars did not yet exist as individual entities.

Albert Einstein
The Meaning of Relativity
Appendix I (194

Tolpuddle Martyrs Rally

Sunday 21 July

Programme commences 12.30pm

March 2.30pm

Old Dorchester Crown Court will be open 10am-1.30pm

Senior police officer refuses to enforce law in Kashmir

BY DOT GIBSON

SENIOR Pakistan police officer and Deputy Secretary of Food and Agriculture in the Northern Areas (Gilgit Biltistan) S.S.P. Amir Hamza, says he is 'fully justified to refuse to obey any law and rule extended in [the Northern Areas] by the government of Pakistan.' His Charge Assumption Report says:

■ The region is not a colony of Pakistan where laws can be forcibly implemented;

■ There is no representation of the people in the Pakistan government and therefore they are not bound to honour the government's laws and rules;

■ The people take no part in the election of the Pakistan President and are not bound to comply with the President's Orders.

Afzal Tahir, Co-ordinator of the International Solidarity Campaign for the Kashmiri People, said Hamza was suspended when his wife sponsored a motion on the Northern Areas Council supporting the people's rights.

Pakistan's ruling class is divided over its response to the Kashmiri people's on-going struggle against occupation of their country. Hundreds have been arrested, including 26 leaders of the long march protesting at the rigged 30 June elections. Kashmiri candidates were rejected when they refused to sign an affidavit accepting occupation of their country.

On 22 June 1996 state forces fired on a peaceful demonstration in Gilgit, killing people and provoking the whole population to protest. Hundreds were detained and later released. But dozens are still in custody, subjected to severe torture, among them children from age 10 to 14.

State forces used this situation as a pretext to put the popular leaders behind bars: Hussain Shah, Asan Ali (advocate), Rayees (advocate), and renowned intel-

lectual and writer Mr. Yehya Shah. But state violence is meeting a growing movement for self-determination.

Demanding an end to Pakistan occupation, Tahir said:

'This is not only in the interest of the Kashmiri people, but in the greater interest of the people of both Pakistan and India. We want to make it clear that the struggle in Kashmir is linked with the struggle of the workers and peasants of the whole region.

'In our opinion the military-feudal alliance which for the last 47 years has divided the people on the basis of religion, ethnic origin and sex can only be overcome by the united struggle of workers and peasants throughout the Indian sub-continent.'

■ **International Solidarity Campaign for the Kashmiri People, 234b Wood Street, London, E17 3NA. Tel/fax: 0181-925 2414.**



Demonstration outside Pakistan embassy protesting repression of Kashmiri people

Post union orders workers to cross picket

FROM AN INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

THE post workers' union, the CWU, has given 'dispensation' for members to cross its own picket lines!

In a 'personal' letter to all CWU members in other departments in the postal service — technical services, typing and secretarial and motor transport grades in Royal Mail — union joint general secretary Alan

Johnson said of the strike: 'You will of course be attending for work at Royal Mail premises during this period and I am writing to advise you that this action does not involve you or any members in engineering, typing, secretarial or motor transport grades.

'Where there are CWU picket lines these will be there to seek peacefully to dissuade any members in those groups which have been balloted from attending.

'You have CWU dispensation to cross such picket lines and you

are advised that you should work normally. Any refusal to attend work by those not involved could give rise to legal claims and undermine the lawful action being taken by colleagues.

'The way to help your fellow workers involved in this dispute is to attend for work as usual and carry out the duties required of you during the strike.'

This means that if managers work the machines, as they have during the strike, engineers have a 'duty' to fix them!

The post office insisted on names and addresses of all those who had been balloted. If anyone had decided not to cross the picket line this would have been considered secondary action and illegal under the anti-union laws.

The union paid £200,000 in legal actions last year.

Whatever the significance of the merger between the postal and telephone unions into the CWU, it certainly hasn't created 'One Big Union' that can fight the anti-union laws.

Bosnia Solidarity Campaign

Remember Srebrenica!

Demonstrate opposite 10 Downing Street, Whitehall SW1

Friday 12 July, 6.30pm – 8.30pm

IN July 1995 world governments, including the British, stood by while the UN handed over the Bosnian town of Srebrenica — a so-called 'safe haven' — to Serbian forces. Thousands of men and boys were massacred, and hundreds of women raped.

All this happened with the complicity of UN forces, under the command of British General Rupert Smith, under a secret deal signed with the Serb General Mladic, allowing women and children to escape but leaving men and boys to torture and death (as reported by Roy Gutman in *With No Peace to Keep*, published 1996). The British government attempted to conceal the truth. At the MoD in Whitehall the media were fed stories by MI6 'spin-doctors', claiming Bosnian men had fled Srebrenica before it was handed over.

Consistent

This was consistent with the Tory government's agreements with Serbian president Milosevic to partition Bosnia, and connive at brutal 'ethnic cleansing'. The US-brokered Dayton agreement is designed to legitimise the results of aggression and 'ethnic cleansing' and set the seal on partition.

One year after the fall of Srebrenica:

■ Milosevic, who launched the war, and ordered 'ethnic cleansing', is treated as a respected poli-

tician and business partner. Indicted mass murderer Karadzic and Mladic paraded openly, intimidating their opponents, in Bosnian cities in the presence of British and US troops.

■ Refugees are still prevented from returning to their homes despite promises of free movement in the Dayton agreement and the presence of 60,000 NATO-led IFOR troops.

Terror

Elections are being pushed ahead to suit President Clinton's timetable, despite continued terror and intimidation, with hundreds of thousands unable to return to their home towns and villages to vote.

■ The International War Crimes Tribunal is underfunded and under-resourced. It has been able only to prosecute the smallest fry, while the major criminals are free.

■ The 7,000 missing at Srebrenica are part of an estimated 30,000 Bosnians still unaccounted for, and probably buried in mass graves.

PROSECUTE THE ARCH-ENEMIES OF ETHNIC CLEANSING!

WHERE ARE THE MISSING 30,000?

DEMAND THE RIGHT TO ALL REFUGEES TO RETURN! CONDEMN TORY COMPLICITY IN MASS MURDER!

Socialist Labour Party lays down the law

BY CHARLIE POTTINS

'DON'T do as I do, do as I say' seems to be a principle in the Socialist Labour Party. Arthur Scargill's initial document last year proposing a new party held up a mythical Golden Age, when Labour was committed to socialism and open to left-wing tendencies, including communists, to join.

But now the law is being laid down against those who took him at his word. Socialist Labour Party (SLP) general secretary Pat Sikorski has written to remind regional, constituency and branch secretaries of clauses in the SLP constitution pertaining to membership.

Clause Two, paragraph 4 says 'individuals and organisations other than bona fide trade unions which have their own programme, principles and policies, distinctive and separate propaganda, or which are engaged in the promotion of policies in opposition to those of the party shall be ineligible for affiliation to the party.'

Paragraph 5 says: 'A member

of the party who becomes a member of and/or supports a political organisation other than the party shall automatically be ineligible to become or remain a party member.'

Automatic expulsion! That's something Labour's right-wing bureaucrats would have loved.

No need for disruptive constituency rows, or time-wasting appeals to the executive. No need even for arguments why this or that paper or group should be on the proscribed list.

All you have to do is show that an individual or organisation has their own principles, or publications — and they are out.

At this rate, Labour's National Executive could have banned not only *Workers Press*, but the *Morning Star* and *Tribune*. And Pat Sikorski would have been automatically expelled for associating with *Socialist Outlook*.

In his letter, dated 11 June, Sikorski says: 'The need to emphasise these clauses has arisen because of the publicly stated intentions of certain groups/organisations to send members/supporters into Socialist Labour.'

'Any person who is a member or supporter of such a group or organisation is ineligible and cannot be admitted to membership of the SLP and any such "membership" is void and invalid.'

There isn't even any need for formal expulsion. Anyone found to have belonged to another political organisation can have their subs returned and be deemed never to have been a member of the SLP in the first place!

This constitution, drawn up by lawyers, was never discussed by the SLP membership. But the national executive says all sections must abide by it, and warns that failure to do so 'automatically renders invalid membership of the individual concerned.'

Indignant

The Communist Party of Great Britain's *Weekly Worker*, which has published Sikorski's letter, is indignant. Having devoted considerable effort (and much of its pages) to entering the Socialist Labour Party, it believes the crackdown is aimed against itself and the Revolutionary Democratic Group (a faction that came from the Socialist Workers Party).

And it blames former members of the late Ernest Mandel's United Secretariat of the Fourth International (USec) entrenched in the SLP.

Weekly Worker (20 June) accuses three members of the SLP's general purposes committee — Pat Sikorski, Carolyn Sikorski and Brian Heron — of belonging to a 'secret faction' known as the Fourth International Supporters Caucus (Fisc), which from the outset has worked to subordinate everything to leaders like Scargill.

Brian Heron has reportedly been assuring confidants that he personally disagrees with bans and proscriptions, and that before long, Fisc will come out of the closet. After the national executive committee's 18 May discussion of the rules crack-

down, S.L. Kenning isn't impressed.

'I have been told that Scargill exercises a moderating hand,' he writes. 'That it was Fisc which wanted to oversee civil war and the political cleansing of the SLP' (*Weekly Worker*, 20 June).

Meanwhile, Heron, a former International Marxist Group organiser, who argued at the SLP conference in favour of immigration controls (in case a Socialist Britain has to keep out white South Africans, he says) has written an article, 'The birth of Socialist Labour' in *Capital and Class*.

He praises the old Communist Party of Great Britain's *British Road to Socialism* as 'the only argument for socialism in Britain which is based on any actual experience.'

This reformist programme, which Stalin helped draft, anticipates a peaceful, parliamentary road, even retaining the monarchy!

It was always opposed by Trotskyists, and by other communists who had experienced Britain's far from 'peaceful' methods in the colonies.

Kenning, who seems to think his comrades 'the Leninists of the CPGB' were first to discover what was wrong with the *British Road*, calls Heron's article 'an apologia for Scargill and Scargillism' (why not for Stalinism?).

Does the ban on SLP members airing their own views wherever they choose apply to Fisc members writing in *Capital and Class*, or other journals?

Weekly Worker says Fisc is split over the 'British Road'. Since their conspiratorial methods preclude the kind of open discussion in which anyone can learn anything, we'll wait to see.

Besides the degeneration of USec, the story illustrates something else. Camouflage and subterfuge are justifiable against the ruling class and its bureaucratic servants; but those who try to keep the truth from the working class (not in front of the children!) only end up kidding themselves.



Pat Sikorski with Arthur Scargill at the SLP's launch

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Inside left

Blair's choice

CASABLANCA's summer issue inspects the crew at the *New Statesman* under its new Blairite captain, Ian Hargreaves, ex-*Financial Times*, *Independent*, and on the advisory council of Demos, the think-tank started by ex-*Marxism Today* editor Martin Jacques.

Hargreaves insists his salary is a 'private arrangement' with the *Statesman's* new owner, Labour MP and former Jaguar executive Geoffrey Robertson. *Casablanca's* sources say it's £30,000 a year plus £50,000 in perks. Former editor Steve Platt got £30,000.

Associate editor John Lloyd came through the hippy 'underground' press (*Oz*, *It*, *Ink*, etc.) in the early 1970s; joined the British and Irish Communist Organisation (admirers of Uncle Joe Stalin and Ulster Unionism); resurfaced in *Time Out* and the *Financial Times*; and wrote a book attacking Arthur Scargill's leadership in the 1984-85 strike. Neil Kinnock liked it.

Hargreaves's 'Number Two' is ex-independent colleague and former *Marxism Today* deputy editor Jane Taylor. Brought aboard as writers: Martin Jacques (see above); his Demos co-founder, ex-*Militant* Geoff Mulgan; and Charles Leadbetter, ex-*FT*, *Independent* and (something *Casablanca* missed), co-author with Jacques of the *Manifesto for New Times* which ran the Communist Party aground.

Dropped with Steve Platt; ex-*Tribune* editor Paul Anderson, who took the helm between Platt and Hargreaves; Ian Aitken (an 'unreconstructed Bevanite'); anarchist Colin Ward; and Andrew Roth, author of *Parliamentary Profiles*. The end of an era, it seems.

Forty years on

THIS is the Kingdom of Defunct Institutions,' declares Susil Gupta, assessing Arthur Scargill's Socialist Labour Party in the launch issue of *The Crying Wolf*, a journal somewhat reminiscent of the 1970s 'underground press'. 'Any nation that has a place for Cilla Black surely has room somewhere for Arthur Scargill.'

The Crying Wolf finds room for former *Guardian* literary editor Richard Gott, selectively recalling events 40 years ago, when Britain attacked Egypt and Khrushchev sent the tanks into Hungary. It was a time of political awakening. Many sought a left alternative to Stalinism.

Gott doesn't mention this, but sighs for a 'lost opportunity'. 'France and Britain... might have teamed up with India and Yugoslavia and the emerging nations of the non-aligned world', helped 'prise the East European countries away from the Communist bloc', and brought the Cold War to an end. Whatever MI5 or the *Spectator* said, Gott's friends were right — he can't be linked with intelligence.

Susil Gupta was in the yuppies-with-attitude Revolutionary Communist Party, publishers of *Living Marxism*. It shows. Deriding people in Labour-related employment... minor Party positions, trade union officialdom, local authorities or the so-called 'voluntary sector', he sneers: 'The Far Left is populated by ageing and talentless dullards whose employment prospects in any other walk of life are limited.'

More or less what Michael Heseltine said, aside from the bit about 'ageing'.

Susil makes some sensible criticism of Scargill's conduct in the Hemsworth by-election (not letting candidate Brenda Nixon get a word in suited the bourgeois media).

He senses 'the tide slowly turning against enterprise culture and the market among people that matter', i.e., for him, 'the middle classes'; 'now knowing some of the harshness meted out to the working class by the Tories'.

That's different from *Living Marxism's* fierce complacency. If Gupta grows up and discovers the working class, he might make a socialist yet.

International workers' conference

Hidden threat from the working class

Report on Bosnia

WORKERS Aid for Bosnia secretary BOB MYERS gave a report to the conference on the Bosnian working class's situation. As Rade Pavlovic from Serbia reported (last week's *Workers Press*), there was a hidden threat to the bureaucracy and imperialism from the working class.

Working people had been unable to see the working class of ex-Yugoslavia where their support should naturally lie. Because of this they had reacted by giving millions to charity. This reaction expressed their humanity, but it was also a way of channelling this into what was safe for imperialism.

The task of the working-class movement was to convert this human response into a class response.

The Tuzla miners were the heart of the working class in Bosnia-Herzegovina and, Myers thought, of the whole of ex-Yugoslavia.

The working class had taken part in the revolution that overthrew capitalism during and after World

War II. But today the working class is being obliterated. The main target of attack is the unity of the working class in the Balkans.

Myers was in the steel town of Zenica in February this year. There he found that the steel industry had been bankrupt before the war. British Steel managers had been brought in to advise on making the industry profitable. They had recommended 75 per cent sackings. The problem had been how to implement such plans.

At the time there had been mass demonstrations against unemployment and falling living standards in Belgrade, the capital of Serbia and ex-Yugoslavia.

Now, after the war, Zenica is shut. The IMF is in charge and rules on the basis of the 'free market'.

The war was not simply between warring ethnic factions, it was a war directed against the unity of the working class.

Workers Aid for Bosnia had been involved in three years of work, which involved participation from France, Spain and other countries, in addition to Britain.

But there is an international crisis of trade unionism. The Bosnian miners, despite repeated appeals, had

received no support from any miners' union. In the past the Bosnian miners had given solidarity to others without hesitation.

But not a single miners' union had returned this. But in the British National Union of Mineworkers there was growing support in the areas and among individual miners. Some miners had gone to Bosnia. And Durham area NUM had launched an appeal on their behalf.

Workers Aid has sent more than 100 lorries to Bosnia but this would not have been possible without the support of young people who weren't in trade unions.

Beacon

THE work had been on a minute scale, but it had invaluable as a beacon to the working class. Last summer there was a union convoy with general trade union committee delegations. In a few weeks there will be a similar operation from Spain.

In recent weeks there has been a delegation from Tuzla miners, who went to Liverpool and worked with the dockers and received and gave support. For the first time the Bos-

nian miners realised the truth. They had to come here to help rebuild trade unionism — just like the Liverpool dockers were doing.

When the partisans had overthrown capitalism it had been a potential step forward for the working class. But that step couldn't be carried through without a struggle against world capitalism. And it couldn't be achieved within the boundaries of Yugoslavia.

But how could the workers in Yugoslavia be part of the worldwide struggle when the movement in the Balkans was cut off by Stalinism from the workers' movement in other countries?

Bosnia stood for the idea of workers' unity in however confused a way. The Bosnian miners had stood and fought like the dockers in Liverpool. Like the Bosnian miners, the dockers had almost but not quite been extinguished.

Myers called for everyone to make the effort to go to the Durham NUM Miners Gala on 13 July, when the Bosnian miners were bringing their banner to march in front of supporters of Bosnia at the event. He also reported that Workers Aid and the Bosnian miners were organising a social event in Tuzla in August.



Kurdish village destroyed by Turkish shell (top), 1991; Kurdish family living in cave (bottom)

Vicious attack on the trade unions

Report on Nigeria

JULIE AFFIONG SOUTHEY gave a report on the situation in Nigeria where workers face mass sackings, or 'retrenchment' as it is called. Port and civil service workers had come under attack. Redundancy money is practically non-existent.

There has been a vicious attack on trade unions. Trade union leaders are jailed.

In 1994, the oilworkers went on strike for democracy. Their leader, Frank Kokori, is still in jail.

As a result of IMF and World Bank policies being imposed on Nigeria, there has been huge resistance.

The Nigerian Labour Congress (TUC) bureaucracy is in control of the movement. The labour leaders have called strikes to fatigue the workers. In addition, they threaten strike actions to get more money for themselves.

Labour activists in Nigeria have had to break away from the traditional unions to form organisations independent of the state and the trade union bureaucracy. One such organisation is the Campaign for Independent Unionism (CIU).

Collapsing

THE neo-colonial states set up after World War II are collapsing. People from the IMF live in these countries to impose imperialism's demands. Mossad (the Israeli secret police), the CIA and MI6 all help countries like Nigeria with 'security'.

But resistance is growing, and people in Africa need support from around the world. For example, people in Nigeria want and are eager to read leaflets giving information.

The workers' leadership has betrayed them. Workers shouldn't depend on these leaderships and must draw a line with the trade union bureaucracy and express their contempt for its activities.

Workers should lead fight against national oppression

Report on Kashmir

AFZAL TAHIR of the Kashmir International Front said that the first trade unions there were set up in 1924 when there were the first strikes in the Indian sub-continent. But the movement had been dominated by pro-China or pro-Moscow factions and never took account of the conditions of workers as their starting point.

Kashmir is under occupation and divided between Pakistan and India and since the collapse of the USSR support for fascist forces has increased in the Indian part. Trade

unions are the first target of these reactionary forces because they were pluralistic in nature. They are attacked as against religion.

The same is true in Pakistan-held Kashmir. There is no industry to speak of or real trade unions. There are some workers in the garment trade and some teachers are organised. In India as a whole there is still a strong base for trade unions but in Pakistan the trade unions are in confusion.

On the grounds that they 'want more capitalists to move in', the Pakistan government has made new laws against trade unions to protect the capitalist class. Because of the state's media offensive, even workers have begun to think in this way.

Benazir Bhutto's government has been in office for three years.

Before it was thought that she was linked to the trade unions. Her party is even part of the Socialist International.

But her first move in government was to suppress the trade unions. It is always the unions that first come under attack in Pakistan. In their place, fascist 'trade unions' had been set up.

People from Kashmir have to move to other places to get work and to be able to support peasant units back home. It is important that workers should lead the movement against national oppression. Workers have no interest in fascist or other 'solutions'.

Report on Ukraine

DAVE TEMPLE described his experiences in Ukraine as a result of being sent there with financial assistance for the miners by the National Union of Mineworkers in 1990. He had been invited back there last year.

He went to an iron-ore town which was effectively 80km long. It is completely dependent on the industry for its existence. It provided 80 per cent of the metal requirements of the Soviet Union. Now the mines are decaying.

In 1980 the quality of the ore being mined was 80 per cent metal. Now 25 per cent ore is being mined. There is 50 per cent 'at bank', that is, material previously rejected.

The miners have been on strike

because they were not paid for two months. They managed to secure 1 million 'coupons', Ukraine's currency. To give some idea of what this is worth, Temple said that a cup of coffee at the airport cost 2,500.

The miners aren't doing any useful work, but the government is unable to deal with unemployment.

At Dnieper Petrovsk there are workers who are not paid but still go to work. They work long hours in a four-day week. They work another day on a plot of land where they grow food.

Capitalism can't change this situation. The infrastructure has collapsed. There are miles of roads full of potholes so buses have to travel at 15mph.

There was a contrast to what Temple saw in 1990. Then there was a massive nationalist movement. Now there was nothing like that at all. It is an explosive situation. There is a temporary 'hiatus' but it can't last.

Support workers' struggle in Iraqi Kurdistan

Declaration of the formation of the Committee in Support of the Workers' and Toilers' Struggle in Iraqi Kurdistan, February 1996

SINCE their return to Iraqi Kurdistan, after the events of April 1991, the nationalist and Islamic parties have embarked on a wave of suppression, intimidation and terrorisation of people of the region. They also closed down the newly set up councils in Kurdistan.

These inhumane practices not only did not stop under the authority of the Kurdistan Front and subsequently under the auspices of the Kurdish parliament and the government, but it was escalated and extended to the other areas of social life.

Political freedom and political opposition were suppressed.

Women's oppression was intensified and many were assassinated.

Imprisonment, torture and killing of detainees were routinely carried out.

The barbaric war between the nationalist parties engulfed the life of people in Kurdistan.

Despite all the above atrocities, the nationalist parties have been

engaged in bringing the armed forces of the Islamic regime of Iran, collaborating with the Turkish army, facilitating the incursion of neighbouring countries' agents and murder squads into Kurdistan, propagating and advocating old and reactionary tribal and Islamic traditions and values.

However, the persistent opposition and struggle against this situation, in various ways and forms, has been a constant feature of workers' and toilers' struggle.

Currently a formidable opposition movement against the above-mentioned situation in Kurdistan of Iraq is in existence.

We, a group of political activists residing in Britain, with different political persuasions and beliefs, consider ourselves as part of the fore-mentioned opposition and have decided to set up the 'Committee in Support of Workers' and Toilers' Struggle'.

Our objectives are:

to oppose hunger, unemployment, high prices and endeavour to have economic sanctions lifted from Iraq and Kurdistan;

to enforce unconditional political freedom, freedom of press,

organisation, picketing and demonstration;

to protect basic and fundamental human rights and abolish capital punishment;

to demand total equality between women and men and oppose any discrimination and in particular killing women under any pretext whatsoever.

Organisation and methods of activity

IN ORDER to achieve our objectives, we shall:

engage in every possible activity which is compatible with our humanitarian stance;

attempt to establish links with all freedom-loving and humanitarian individuals and organisations both inside and outside Kurdistan;

expose and denounce the dictatorial and terrorist policies of the nationalist and Islamic parties;

organise meetings and seminars to inform the public of our activities;

broaden and extend our activities and encourage the setting up of similar committees in other countries.

EVERY individual who shares our objectives can, regardless of his/her political inclination, become a member of the 'Committee'.

To finance our activities we rely on our members and other fund-raising activities.

The work of the 'Committee' between general meetings of the members will be administered and organised by an elected body.

We call upon all freedom-loving and human-loving people and those political organisations committed to unconditional freedom to extend to us their support and solidarity and by doing so strengthen this movement.

Our unity and solidarity is of paramount importance in order to assist the people of Kurdistan in their efforts to combat this tragedy.

Committee in Support of the Workers' and Toilers' Struggle in Iraqi Kurdistan, PO Box 10326, London SE16 2ZD



The Nigerian oilfield in Ogoniland

Explosive times

A hard life for people

Report on Iraqi Kurdistan

ROUF FATAH from Iraq-held Kurdistan reported on how the West used Islamic and nationalist forces against the working class.

In spring 1991, at the end of the Gulf War, workers' councils had been set up in the Kurdish area but they didn't last long. The Islamic and nationalist armies returned to take power from the workers.

They disarmed the workers and destroyed the workers' councils. Strikes and demonstrations were banned. The newspaper of the Communist Workers Party was closed down.

It is a hard life for people now. They are homeless, unemployed. Medical treatment is difficult to obtain. But people have not lost confidence in being able to change the situation. They see little difference between the nationalists and Saddam Hussein.

City Lights

On capital and 'labour standards'

DID YOU KNOW that Britain's bosses are suffering because they are paying too low wages? Nor did I. But this is the strange, if not bizarre, claim made in a pamphlet published last week by the Institute of Employment Rights (*Labour Standards — essential to economic progress*, by Simon Deakin and Frank Wilkinson).

Such an absurdity would perhaps not be worthy of comment were it not that the Institute of Employment is a labour law think-tank supported by most of Britain's trade unions.

The reformist standpoint of the authors is clear from the outset. They bemoan the collapse of the 'wide consensus in advanced industrial countries' that ensued from World War II and lasted until the mid-1970s when it was generally accepted 'that an effective and equitable floor of employment rights was both socially and economically beneficial'.

According to our Fabian day-dreamers the break-up of this consensus was brought about by the thinkers of the New Right who took the lead in effecting a new 'climate of opinion'.

Unfortunately, we are led to believe, 'from 1979 the direction of government policy in Britain has been advised by the arguments that high unemployment and labour market inflexibility result from trade union and government regulation of the labour market, that social welfare is an important disincentive to labour market activity.'

This 'explanation', if it can be graced with the name, is sheer idealism. It regards 'government policy' as something determined by the ideas of economists and politicians. Or more precisely people like themselves. Economic policy, it seems, has little to do with the contradictions of capital.

There was a swing to the right among economists and others in the 1970s precisely because of the intensification of capitalism's problems as it became clear that Keynesianism had no answers to accelerating inflation that was combined with mounting structural unemployment in all the advanced capitalist countries.

LET US try and summarise the argument of Deakin and Wilkinson — both teachers in the University of Cambridge, for long the centre of Keynesian economics in this country — to the effect that low wages are harmful to capitalists and workers alike.

By paying poverty wages, inefficient firms that are technologically and managerially backward are able to survive. This prevents more efficient firms from increasing their share of the market.

Because of this, so the argument goes, the more efficient firms are held back in current markets and are thus unable to invest sufficiently in the development of new products and services. But in today's intense international competition, survival depends precisely on improving the quality of services and products, rather than competing on price alone.

'A strategy of competing on quality requires co-operation between management and labour. Low pay and poor conditions are not the way to achieve this [necessary quality]. Low paying employers are the least likely to train workers and low paying industries are likely to suffer from shortages of skilled workers.'

The authors want to see the establishment of minimum labour standards to prevent what

they refer to as 'destructive competition' between firms, that is competition based on wage cutting. One aim of setting such standards would be to enhance co-operation 'both within and between firms'.

The entire pamphlet is suffused with this sort of reformist, class collaborationist, drive.

THE capitalist system of the 20th century is characterised by an enormous growth in monopoly, with a few giant firms controlling whole industries, nationally and increasingly internationally.

But the existence of such monopolies does not eliminate competition, despite the efforts of the monopolists to regulate relations between themselves through price agreements, plans for market sharing and the like.

While in periods of capitalist expansion (expanded reproduction) such plans may well indeed work within limits, in times of crisis they invariably disintegrate and bloody competition for markets and surplus value reappears on the very surface of economic life.

Thus it was in the 1920s and thus it is 70 years later. It is no accident that complaints grow shriller in each capitalist country about the 'unfair' trading practices of their rivals.

To plead for the elimination of 'destructive competition' and its replacement by 'regulated competition' is in fact to ask for the end of the rule of capital. For while the laws of capital do not originate in the sphere of competition it is nonetheless in that realm that the laws of the system are 'executed' as Marx put it.

In calling for the establishment of a legal minimum wage, Deakin and Wilkinson say that such a wage will force the employers 'to make better use of their workers'. But what, from the standpoint of capital does this 'better use' mean?

Capital has only one interest in the worker — as a source of surplus value, and thus indirectly of profit. The employer is not interested in what he produces — it can be swords or ploughshares — but in whether he makes sufficient profit in the course of production.

Nor is capital interested in 'efficient' production. By any rational standards capital today is obscenely inefficient. In the interests of profit it grossly under-utilises productive capacity.

In the same interest it exploits millions of children throughout the world, destroying many and stunting the spiritual and physical growth of countless millions more. Because no profit can be made out of their labour, millions throughout the world are allowed to rot.

The only 'efficiency' known to capital is the efficiency with which it can extract surplus value and thus make profit. If it can best do that under backward technological conditions then so be it.

These things in the final analysis are settled neither by governments nor by the capitalists themselves. They are decided by capital and its laws, of which the individual capitalist is merely the personification.

Such are those laws today that there isn't a cat in hell's chance of the ideas contained in this pamphlet being implemented.

Should the next Labour government institute a minimum wage, it will be on terms decided by the employers and fixed at a level at which it will be impossible to live in any proper sense of that word.

The raising of wages to a decent level requires the united struggle of the international working class. Difficult though this task may prove to accomplish, it is a perspective a thousand times more realistic than the quack remedies proposed by bodies such as the Institute of Employment Rights.

Threadneedle

Interview

Forgotten heroes

WP: The war is over, peace is holding somehow, but how did you manage to work during the war?

RG: Four difficult years of the war are over, specially for health workers.

We worked in very difficult conditions, very often without electricity, water, heating and food. Nor were we paid for our work. We lived on insufficient aid, supplied by various humanitarian organisations.

You must bear in mind that there were about 2,500 employees and no humanitarian organisation was strong enough to help us sufficiently. What foodstuffs we did receive had to be shared with our patients. It goes without saying that we did not have holidays or days off.

Nobody cared for working hours — many times we worked continuously over 24 hours.

WP: What are the prospects for the future?

RG: First, we expect the international community to make a reality of its many promises and help our economy to revive. That

RAZA GULAMOVIC, vice-president of the health workers' union in Tuzla, Bosnia, was invited by Middlesbrough No.2 Unison branch, also relying on support from Camden, Salford Mental Health, South-Tees Health and others, to attend the annual conference of Unison, the public service union, in Bournemouth from 17 to 21 June.

This is the first time that a trade union official from Bosnia has been able to attend a conference in Britain and speak to an international audience.

FARUK IBRAHIMOVIC spoke to Raza about her visit for Workers Press. Below is a report on her other meetings with trade unionists in Britain.

would mean a boost for everybody.

Second, this would bring about changes in society including necessary changes for the health care system. But, don't think that our situation will improve easily and quickly.

The country is devastated and we are sure that our problems will not be given top priority.

Third, we have to organise our trade unions in a new way with more powerful and influential leaders.

WP: Was your union able to function during the war?

RG: Only to a very limited extent. We were over occupied with work. We were many times called 'heroes in white,' but almost nobody cared about us.

Public transport did not operate and our workers had to walk to and from work. Some of them walked more than 15 miles. The work was organised in 24-hour shifts.

Shelling of Tuzla and nearby communities was very frequent. In such a situation it was difficult to organise any union activity. Therefore we decided to set up an independent trade union of health workers in February this

year. All staff within hospitals are our members. We have doctors, nurses, manual workers, white collar employees, mechanics, drivers, etc.

WP: What is the purpose of your visit to the Unison conference in Bournemouth?

RG: To meet as many people as possible in a single place, and exchange views and opinions on the role and work of trade unions.

Thanks to Workers Aid for Bosnia's campaign, some Unison members have already visited Tuzla and other parts of Bosnia.

We wish to make links and exchange delegations. Our union is fresh and we have to learn much. We don't only need your assistance but also your solidarity.

It is sad to say that we did not receive any letter of support from any trade union in the world and we felt abandoned and forgotten.

It grieved us greatly, particularly if you know that some activists from Britain and other countries visited their counterparts in Tuzla.



Raza Gulamovic (centre left) with friends at the public service union Unison's annual conference in Bournemouth

'Women suffered the most'

THE FRIENDS who invited Raza Gulamovic over to Britain did everything to meet her wishes.

In Bournemouth they organised a fringe meeting on Bosnia where a video on Tuzla hospital and its work in the war was shown. It presented 'something which was not possible to be seen on TV, or heard on the radio or read in the paper here', said Anna McGonigle of Unison's executive who chaired the meeting.

Another speaker was Naseem Akhtar, one of the Unison members who visited Bosnia in early April. She and her colleagues focused on the community of Banovici, not far from Tuzla.

'Banovici is a multi ethnic town with many intermarried families. Since the years of war these families have been split. Many people have left and some families will never be re-united. I cannot comprehend the enormity of the tragedy.

'Curfews, people still short of water, gas, electricity, most shops still empty, tension high. People are exhausted but they still have great strength and resilience to survive and fight for their multi-ethnic identity.'

'For me this is the beginning of my friendship with women in Banovici. Will you help in my task of demonstrating our solidarity in practical terms?'

Raza Gulamovic spoke about the hard life and work they faced during the war and about the future.

'The war is over. Peace has come — what peace, we shall see. We are over-tired. Some colleagues have psychological problems.'

'When the war was going on they did not have much time to think of it. Women suffered the most.'

'They had to prepare meals without foodstuffs, wash without water, bake bread without electricity and do their regular jobs.'

'We don't know what was new in medicine over these four years. Our difficult situation will not change dramatically, even if this peace holds.'

'Our country is devastated, the economy should restart, social problems are enormous and any government, we are aware, is interested to have as cheap and as efficient a health care system as possible. We need and we will

need your support and solidarity.'

Raza later had several meetings with Unison officials. The most promising were one with John McFadden and Louise Richards from International Department, and the other with Wand Macmillan (NEC).

It is almost certain that a Unison delegation will visit Tuzla in the near future.

After the conference Raza came to London where she attended a joint meeting of Workers Aid for Bosnia and Artists Convoy members. She was impressed by the energy of the people working in support of Bosnia.

Another evening was spent

with a doctor and a nurse. Nurses are the same the world over — they understood each other very easily.

Raza Gulamovic is now back in Tuzla doing her everyday nursing job.

She feels easier and confident since she has met many friends in this country and she has realised that ordinary people are the same — friendly and supportive. But she also discovered that many elements in the trade union bureaucracy shared its government opinion and have in the past given little encouragement to Bosnia's fight for survival.

Maybe this visit will help to change the situation. We hope so.

ABOUT 2,500 employees in Tuzla's hospitals treated over 16,000 patients from the Tuzla municipality in the period 15 May 1992 (when the war started in Tuzla) to 31 October 1995.

The hospital statistics show that 405 civilians were killed, 1,236 civilians wounded and 14,462 civilians are today suffering from the war's side effects. These hospitals offered their services to people from other communities as well. About 1,200 people seriously and about 750 lightly wounded were treated.

The most difficult day for all the staff was 25 May 1995.

'That day Tuzla boys and girls were dying on our hands. We did our best to save the lives of our friends' children but we did not know whether our children were among them,' they say.

'Help me continue fight in South Africa'

Workers International (South Africa) and International Trade Union Solidarity Campaign member BONGANI MKHUNGO writes about his situation and asks for material help.

THIS appeal is made in connection with a brutal attack that was made on me on 2 December last year at the COSATU trade union federation tenth anniversary rally in Durban.

I will explain the background to this event and draw some conclusions as to the practical ways we can begin to overcome the problems that it has created.

Thanks to the International Trade Union Solidarity Campaign the attack made on me that day has been raised in the workers' movement outside South Africa and a request has been made for protest letters to be sent to COSATU.

However, there has been little or no response from COSATU, and therefore I am requesting that this matter is pursued further, and I set out the details to assist trade unionists and socialists to do that.

On 2 December 1995 I was attacked and threatened with death by the marshals on duty at COSATU's tenth anniversary rally in Durban, and was subsequently forced to take my family to an alternative home.

Those who live in South Africa know that such threats must be taken seriously. There were over 3,000 sectarian murders in Natal in the last 12 months.

My trade union history

I SHOULD first give my own history:

I became a member of the Metal and Allied Workers Union in 1981. This was in the Dunlop BTR factory in Durban. In fact I was one of the workers who started to organise the union in the factory.

After that, when the union was recognised, I became the secretary of the shop stewards' committee. I also served in the union structures at branch level, and was elected to the national executive committee of the union.

When workers at BTR-Samcol were dismissed, I was secretary of the Dunlop stewards' council in South Africa, and therefore involved in the campaign for the reinstatement of those workers.

During the campaign I was elected by the union to go to represent the Samcol workers at the European Court in Brussels in 1986.

Then I was asked to attend a campaign in Britain and met many British shop stewards. That campaign was made possible by the British TUC.

After that I was involved in the campaign for the release of Moses Mayekiso in 1989 and ended up working for the Transport and General Workers Union at their Liverpool office for six months. But by that time I had been victimised and had lost my job.

Therefore, when I returned to Durban, I could not get a job and it was only with the assistance of comrades in Britain that I have been able to maintain my family and keep up my struggle to recruit workers to the unions and to fight for socialism.

I stood in the independence elections on the policies contained in the Workers' Charter and received over 4,000 votes in Durban.

Background to 2 December events

WEIN the Workers International in South Africa were already discussing with workers their concerns about the problems they



Workers demand the housing, electricity, water, schools, health facilities and work, promised before the elections

ernment of National Unity came into office.

Our focus was on the current developments which were taking place — 7,000 nurses had been sacked in the former Transkei and the blockade by Turning Wheel truck drivers had been broken by the police and the army.

Our main concern was the alliance between COSATU and the Government of National Unity. We saw that the interests of the workers were irreconcilable with the capitalist class which this government was supporting.

Therefore we were calling for COSATU to break away from this alliance and regain its independence to fight for the workers' rights.

We decided to issue a leaflet discussing this question and proposing to the members of the unions that they call upon COSATU to make this break in order that these members could be properly represented by independent unions not tied to the state.

Even before the elections COSATU had an alliance with the ANC, which was not supported by the whole of the working class. The division had arisen in 1987 over the adoption by COSATU of the Freedom Charter which was the programme of the ANC.

This adoption of the Freedom Charter was opposed by many shop stewards and other leading workers in the unions who proposed instead the Workers' Charter.

This stance of COSATU and the ANC has made it very difficult for COSATU to have an independent role in the violence between Inkatha and the ANC, because Inkatha workers saw COSATU as synonymous with the ANC.

For those of us in the trade unions who were fighting for the unity of workers against apartheid, this alliance created divisions which hindered that unity and endangered many lives.

Since the independence elections this situation has not changed and in fact has worsened because now the Inkatha workers see the trade unions in COSATU tied to the ANC and therefore to a particular wing of the govern-

Therefore this question of ending the alliance is vital for unifying the workers in independent trade unions.

(Naturally we do not insist that individual members of COSATU who support the ANC should necessarily change their political allegiance but that COSATU as an organisation should end its support for the ANC-dominated government.)

This is not a small question — as I stated previously, in one year over 3,000 workers have been killed in sectarian violence. It would go a long way towards overcoming these divisions and this violence if COSATU would come out as the champion of all the workers, regardless of their political affiliation.

What happened on the day

OUR leaflet was received favourably by the workers attending the COSATU anniversary rally. Clearly this is a matter of great concern to thousands of trade unionists, who lead the struggle for a better quality of life for the working class of South Africa.

However, to our surprise we found ourselves surrounded by the COSATU marshals.

First, while I was busy handing out our leaflet at one gate, the marshals approached two other members on another gate in a very hostile manner. The marshals then brought the two members to where I was standing and started asking why we had these leaflets.

I explained that we felt that we should come to say these things to the workers because there was so much concern about the disunity and violence.

But it was not a healthy discussion with these marshals. They surrounded me and started to man-handle me and beat me up. (Meanwhile, fortunately the other two members were able to disappear into the crowd.)

They knocked the leaflets to the ground and then told me that I must bend down to gather them up. But some of them set fire to the leaflets.

I had a bag on my shoulder which contained some newspapers and other documents and

also personal belongings (my spectacles, reference book and diary etc.).

While they were hitting me, I was trying to hold on to my bag. They then grabbed the bag (and I have not seen it since). They pushed me toward the stadium and just inside the stadium by the gate there was a mobile police station. I made a dash to this police station and asked for protection.

Some of the marshals told the police that they must let me go with them and they tried to convince the police that they would not hurt me.

However, two black policemen



Privatisation is ANC policy

refused to let them take me, saying that they knew very well that if they took me with them they would kill me.

These two policemen took me to see their superior officer and asked him if they could accompany me to safety outside the stadium. He agreed and they took me in a police van to safety.

While all this was happening some of the marshals were shouting threats that they would get me and kill me.

I went home, and when I told my family what had happened they got very scared because they

know that these are not idle threats.

My concern then was what had happened to the two members who had disappeared into the crowd. I went to see their families and when I discovered that they were not at home I promised to return later to check.

But that evening the two members came to my home and they reported how they had managed to run away but felt they had to hide for a while because they had seen the violence of the marshals against me.

Also they thought I might have been killed and they were worried about going to see my family. They were very relieved to find me at home.

Over the next two days my wife reported that there were strange people who came walking around the yard near my home with balaclava helmets on and who appeared to be armed.

Then my wife and I got very worried — we have six children — and we decided that we must 'disappear'. This is no small matter. We lived in a self-built two-roomed house in a township.

Now we needed to get a place in the suburbs. With the help of a fund raised by our members and trade unionists in Britain we managed to get a share in a three-roomed flat. But the two boys, aged 10 and 8 have had to go to live in another township with my mother.

Clearly it is impossible for me to disappear — many people know me and I am not going to stop the fight for my principles, but at least I felt that my wife and children were safer.

We call for a campaign

MY COMRADES in Workers International (mainly in Britain) asked trade union leaders and members to protest about this action to COSATU, but there has been very little response.

I have been told that the COSATU executive committee decided to hold an inquiry into the poor attendance at the Durban Rally, and some members asked for an inquiry into the incident between the marshals and me. I do not know whether such

an inquiry has been held. However, it has become clear that our leaflet was not the only way that these concerns were being raised. There are many members, shop stewards and members of the leadership who are raising questions about this alliance.

For example — the government's proposed privatisation of telecommunications and the transport system, etc., is causing great concern among the workers in those industries. The unions at the moment find it very hard to defend their members because of this alliance with the government.

The union leaderships say that they are taking up a fight on behalf of the members but at the same time they want to be part of the 'restructuring' which will deprive their members of their livelihoods.

This was made clear during the visit of President Mandela to Germany when he said that privatisation is the policy of the ANC and nobody will prevent the government from implementing this privatisation.

Once again let me underline — COSATU is in alliance with the ANC and therefore the trade unions are implicated in this privatisation.

Whatever views those who are being asked to protest against my treatment may have regarding the COSATU-ANC alliance and regarding privatisation, they must surely support our right to propagate our ideas without the threat of violence against us.

All in the working class have the right to air their views without fear of intimidation, especially after the declaration of independence in South Africa.

Conclusion

WORKERS in South Africa are rightly demanding the housing, electricity, water, schools, health facilities and work, which were promised before the independence elections.

They see the rich capitalists being protected by the government. Without their own independent voice they are left divided and frustrated.

We in Workers International are determined to continue to struggle for that independent voice. That is why we advise workers to call upon COSATU to end the alliance with the ANC, and why we advocate the Workers' Charter.

But there are certain minimum conditions required for us to carry forward our work in South Africa. My paramount concern is for the safety and peace of mind of my wife and children.

At the moment, because my wife and family are having to share a three-roomed flat with another family, two of my children have had to move a considerable distance away to live with my mother, which as you can imagine itself causes considerable difficulties.

Given adequate accommodation I could have some space to work as well as a telephone which is necessary for security.

Workers in Durban cannot meet with security unless we arrange a room overnight in a hostel — therefore much of the time we have to meet in the park. We need to produce a small bulletin and regular leaflets. We are ready and willing to organise, but we need the funds to do so.

After discussions with my fellow workers in South Africa I estimate that £10,000 would be a realistic sum to carry out our work under reasonable conditions.

It is on this basis that I am appealing to all trade unionists and socialists, to all those who defend the basic right to express one's opinions inside the labour movement for funds to make these aims possible.

Bongani Mkhungo, PO Box 48764, Qalbert, Durban, South Africa.

Donations can be sent to South Africa Solidarity Fund, PO Box 735, London SW1Y 1YB.

Doctors' report details barbarity Humanity under siege in Bosnia

THE barbarity of the war waged by Serb and Croat nationalists is documented in *Medicine Under Siege*, a 200-page report published by Physicians for Human Rights (PHR) examining how medical care and facilities, health workers and patients, were attacked.

Based on four years of research and on-the-spot investigation, the report details attacks on hospitals and clinics in Sarajevo, Gorazde, Mostar and other places.

One of the worst atrocities was at Vukovar, in Croatia. Yugoslav People's Army (JNA) and Serb Chetnik irregulars laid siege to the city for three months in 1991. Hundreds of civilians were killed, and extensive damage done.

Shortly after Vukovar fell on 19 November 1991, the JNA and Chetniks removed over 200 patients, physicians and orderlies from the hospital. It is alleged they took them to a field outside the city, shot them, and buried them in a mass grave there.

Although indictments have been issued by the International Criminal Tribunal for this massacre, the Serbian government has yet to hand over the three officers charged with the crime.

Other atrocities highlighted by the report include:

■ Targeting of ambulances and other medical vehicles for attack by mortar and sniper fire, sometimes killing patients and staff inside; in one case described in the report, a single ambulance was riddled with a total of 178 bullets.

■ Repeated blocking of delivery of essential food, medicine, and medical supplies, causing hundreds of deaths from untreated illnesses. One surgical team in Srebrenica carried out some 100 amputations without anaesthetics during an eight-month period.

Pneumonia

In the spring of 1993, 40 to 60 Srebrenica residents died each day from injuries, pneumonia, cold, hunger, and exhaustion — their care greatly compromised by lack of medicine, blood, and bandages.

Part of a mobile hospital delivered to Mostar in February 1994, including 10 tonnes of medicine, was totally burned upon arrival by Croatian gunfire.

BY CHARLIE POTTINS

Sarajevo's Kosevo Hospital Clinic complex, the main university hospital for Bosnia and Herzegovina, was struck by at least 172 mortar shells in 1992 and early 1993.

On 26-27 May 1992, Serb forces repeatedly shelled the Children's Clinic and the adjoining Obstetric and Gynaecological Hospital at close range.

Dr Esma Zecevic, chief paediatrician, and her staff evacuated 17 newborns (many removed from their incubators and without supplemental oxygen) and 33 sick children to the hospital basement 100 metres away.

Bullets and shells fell around them as they carried the children. Five minutes after they left the clinic, a mortar grenade fell on the neo-natal unit, destroying every incubator and incinerating the unit. Nine of the babies died for want of heat and oxygen.

An appendix to the report includes the names, photos and descriptions of 100 doctors, nurses, and medical technicians killed in Bosnia and Herzegovina during the war.

As well as atrocities, the Report condemns the misuse of 'science' to serve ethnic hatred.

In 1992, the Croatian Medical Journal published a racist tract by a Croatian psychiatrist who described Serbs as having a 'complex of inferiority', Bosnian Muslims as an 'undistinguished ethnic group', and Croats as having 'developed a society based on labour, dialogue and obedience'.

Physicians for Human Rights say such writing is a perversion of medicine and science. It calls on professional associations to ensure that articles in professional journals do not promote ethnic or religious hatred.

Four years of war, torture and massacres in former Yugoslavia have left hundreds of thousands of people scarred, physically and psychologically, affecting families and communities.

First-hand interviews con-

ducted by PHR in 1993, and data from a physician in the Karlovac refugee camp located outside Zagreb, indicate that former prisoners, held in Chetnik-run detention centers in the Prijedor region and at the Manjaca camp in Banja Luka, suffered severe physical and psychiatric after-effects of this ill-treatment.

About 40 per cent of the 1,611 people examined at the camp showed scars of physical abuse and the rate of suicide attempts was determined to be 78 per 1,000 per year.

Suicide

Suicide attempts in Karlovac in 1993 were approximately 26 times higher than in the United States.

'The suffering of the people of the former Yugoslavia did not end with the Dayton Accords,' PHR executive director Leonard Rubenstein told a Sarajevo press conference.

'The international community must do its part to ameliorate this damage, and the victims must have access to care that

addresses the physical and psychological impact of the atrocities of the war.'

In the past five years, Physicians for Human Rights, an organisation of health professionals and concerned citizens, has condemned violations against health workers and patients in Burundi, Chechnya, El Salvador, Israel and the occupied territories, Kashmir, and Somalia.

Since 1993 it has been involved in exhumation and examination of mass graves in ex-Yugoslavia.

Medicine Under Siege warns that peace and social reconstruction will be impossible without accountability. It calls for the indictment, arrest and prosecution of war criminals.

'We cannot tolerate that the perpetrators of these violations are free and exercising political authority while the suffering they brought about continues,' said Rubenstein.

Urging medical associations in former Yugoslavia and the rest of the world to support colleagues who care for patients, without discrimination, in times of war, and to condemn all violations of



Vukovar in 1991: scene of one of the worst atrocities

medical neutrality and facilities, Physicians for Human Rights urges professional associations to take on a pro-active role to protect patients and colleagues, by developing international responses, correspondence networks, and material support.

■ See interview, page 6.

■ *Medicine Under Siege* available for \$12.00 each, post included, from: Physicians for Human Rights (PHR), 100 Boston Street, #702, Boston, MA 02111, USA. Tel. (617) 695-0041. Fax: (617) 695-0307.

Email: phrusa@igcapc.org

Bangladesh fire kills 13 workers

MORE THAN 13 Bangladesh garment workers, 11 of them women, were killed by fire in two factories in an eight-storey building in the Pallabi area of the capital, Dhaka, on Monday 24 June. Many others were injured.

The National Garment Workers Federation has held the owners of the factories responsible for the deaths of the workers.

'The reluctance [to act] and ignorance of the owners caused repeated accidents in the garment factories,' said federation President Mojibur Rahman and General Secretary Amirul Haque Amin in a joint statement.

They demanded Tk100,000 for the families of those killed and Tk50,000 for the injured.

Only four of the dead were immediately identified: Mahmuda Khatun (40), Mariam (38), Parem (23) and Saraj (18).

One of the injured, Nasima (26), was admitted to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) in a critical condition. DMCH claimed the death toll was 11 and that all the dead were lying in the hospital. Most died on the way to DMCH.

Flames

Flames engulfed the third and fourth floors of Trimot French Ltd and the fifth, sixth and seventh floors of Sentex Garments after an incident during the lunch break. The fire was finally

under control at 6.30pm. A fire service official claimed that a burning calendar was left by a worker on a piece of garment material. The fire service said no one was trapped in the building and they confirmed 11 deaths.

Most of the dead were in the 16-30 age group. They died mainly in a stampede. Some of the victims died due to lack of oxygen as they took shelter in the bathroom.

Most of the men managed to escape through a passage to an adjacent building on the fifth floor. But for some reason the women were not able to use this route and were trapped.

Most of Dhaka's garment factories lack emergency exits and

fire extinguisher arrangements and such fatal incidents are common.

About 1,200 workers, mostly women, work in the two factories.

Government ministers expressed shock at the incident but did little more than offer prayers, like Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, for the 'salvation of the departed souls'.

The prime minister visited the factory to see the damage and she said necessary steps would be taken. It seems unlikely that any steps would be taken that would result in expense to the employers.

■ The National Garment Workers Federation can be contacted on fax 00 880 2 867485.

Moroccan yeast workers raise hopes

MOROCCAN yeast workers, whose union battle has raised fellow-citizens' hopes for democratic rights, are appealing for international support.

The 300 workers at the Somadir plants in Casablanca, and 200 at the company's El Jadida factory have been locked out since February.

Since 1993 the yeast workers, organised by the UMT labour federation, have been demanding union recognition and a collective agreement, with full rights for temporary workers (many with up to six years service), a wage increase, and social security benefits.

Management's response was threats, firings, and lockouts. When the workers' list of demands was again submitted last year, union representatives became targets for arbitrary transfers and layoffs.

Somadir is owned by the family of former Prime Minister Karim Lamrani, whose three terms in office saw particularly violent attacks on trade unionists

and workers' rights. Workers at the Casablanca plant walked out on 18 February, when their local union secretary was fired.

Management responded with a lockout and the dismissal of 12 elected union representatives and 40 other employees. Workers at the El Jadida plant walked out in solidarity with the Casablanca workers on 26 February. At both plants, the strike took place only after workers had cleaned and sterilised the yeast-making equipment while the union maintained security.

Somadir management declared a lockout at the second plant and fired all union representatives, while organising the import and sale of yeast under police protection.

The union has issued a warning concerning the possible health dangers of yeast purchased on the black market.

Meanwhile the price of available yeast has increased by as much as ten times and many bakeries have had to close their doors.

On 8 April, management sent letters to the locked-out workers urging them to sign a deliberately humiliating text attesting that they were not involved in the union, and they wanted to return to work.

The strikers remained solid and the letters were returned unsigned.

On 17 April, police in Rabat violently attacked a peaceful demonstration for union rights organised by the UMT. Eighteen workers, among them 11 women, were injured and five required hospitalisation.

Vital

Many people see the workers' struggle as vital for democratic rights in Morocco. Newspaper articles have criticised management intransigence and the government decision to grant Somadir an import licence, thereby using valuable foreign exchange to subsidise an attack on workers' rights.

The International Union of

Food, Agricultural, Catering, Allied Workers (IUF) supports the workers' fight, and is urging protest messages to Somadir management and the Moroccan government, demanding reinstatement of sacked workers, negotiations with the UMT for the free exercise of trade union rights at the Casablanca and Jadida plants.

Messages should be addressed to:

■ Prime Minister Abdellatif Filali, Rabat, Morocco. Fax: +212 7 69 95.

■ Mr Amine Demassieux, Employment Minister, Rabat, Morocco. Fax: +212 7 76 88 81.

■ General Management Somadir, Casablanca, Morocco. Fax: +212 2 24 84 68.

The IUF asks for copies to be sent to them so they can be forwarded to the UMT. IUF, Rue du pont-rouge 8, CH-1213, Geneva, Switzerland. Telephone: +41 22 793 2233. Fax: +41 22 793 2233. E-mail: iuf@geo2.poptel.org

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