

Some hard thinking needed from REAL working-class leaders

LABOUR'S FAULT

THE Labour Party leadership is tooling up to attack the working class if it gets into office. This party which was set up in the early 1900s to defend trade union rights in parliament is now determined to cut off all connection with the workers' movement.

LINES WIDEN

And it is determined to take the Tory anti-union legislation further with Blunkett's proposals for 'compulsory arbitration' in the public sector — that is, banning strikes.

The Labour Party leaders are not leaders of labour. They are political careerists with no concern for the needs of working-class people or of trade unions.

So the real leaders of labour, in the trade unions, in workers' and community organisations, the vanguard of the working class, have the responsibility to think long and hard, and soon, about the ways of bring all these struggles together in the interests of the working class and others fighting capital.

We in the WRP believe that means building a new party of the working class. We stress that it must be a party 'of' the working class and not one presented from outside ready-made.

The WRP is not that party, but we are seeking to find ways of working and joining with others to build the conditions in which that party will come into existence.

On 16 March this year 200 people from many different organisations and no organisation and many different backgrounds took part in a conference in London with just this aim under the slogan 'Crisis in the labour movement — the need for a new socialist party'. This conference decided to meet again later in the year (see advert below).

Dockers

Steve Ballard, co-ordinator of the steering committee set up by the 16 March conference writes:

In March the sacked Liverpool dockers were already organising international solidarity for their fight for reinstatement and against casualisation and the Hillingdon hospital workers had taken strike action against a £35 cut in their wages. These struggles continue after one year.

Since then London underground and postal workers have taken action. This month the people of Darlington have rallied in support of the 350 workers sacked at Magnet

BY THE EDITOR

Kitchens, who carried out all the legal procedures before deciding on strike action in support of their demands.

The Labour Party leadership doesn't just keep its distance from these struggles, it instructs Labour MPs not to speak or act in support of these workers.

Statements

'If this isn't enough, we now have the statements made during the TUC conference promising legislation to stop workers taking strike action.'

'We can all see what can be expected if Labour wins the next general election.'

Millions of workers are hoping that Labour will reverse Tory legislation. But a Labour government will attack the working class in defence of capital, illusions will be shattered and millions of workers will react. A new party is needed and that needs preparation.

The Liverpool dockers have led the way in rebuilding internationalism and the understanding that the working class must overcome the false separation of the political and industrial struggles.

These questions have been the basis of our discussions on the need for a new party over these months.'

As a result of the last WRP congress in July, we will be proposing to the conference in November that a new transitional organisation be formed of those who think that such a party of the working class must be built.

We believe that such a party can only come about on the basis of Marxism.

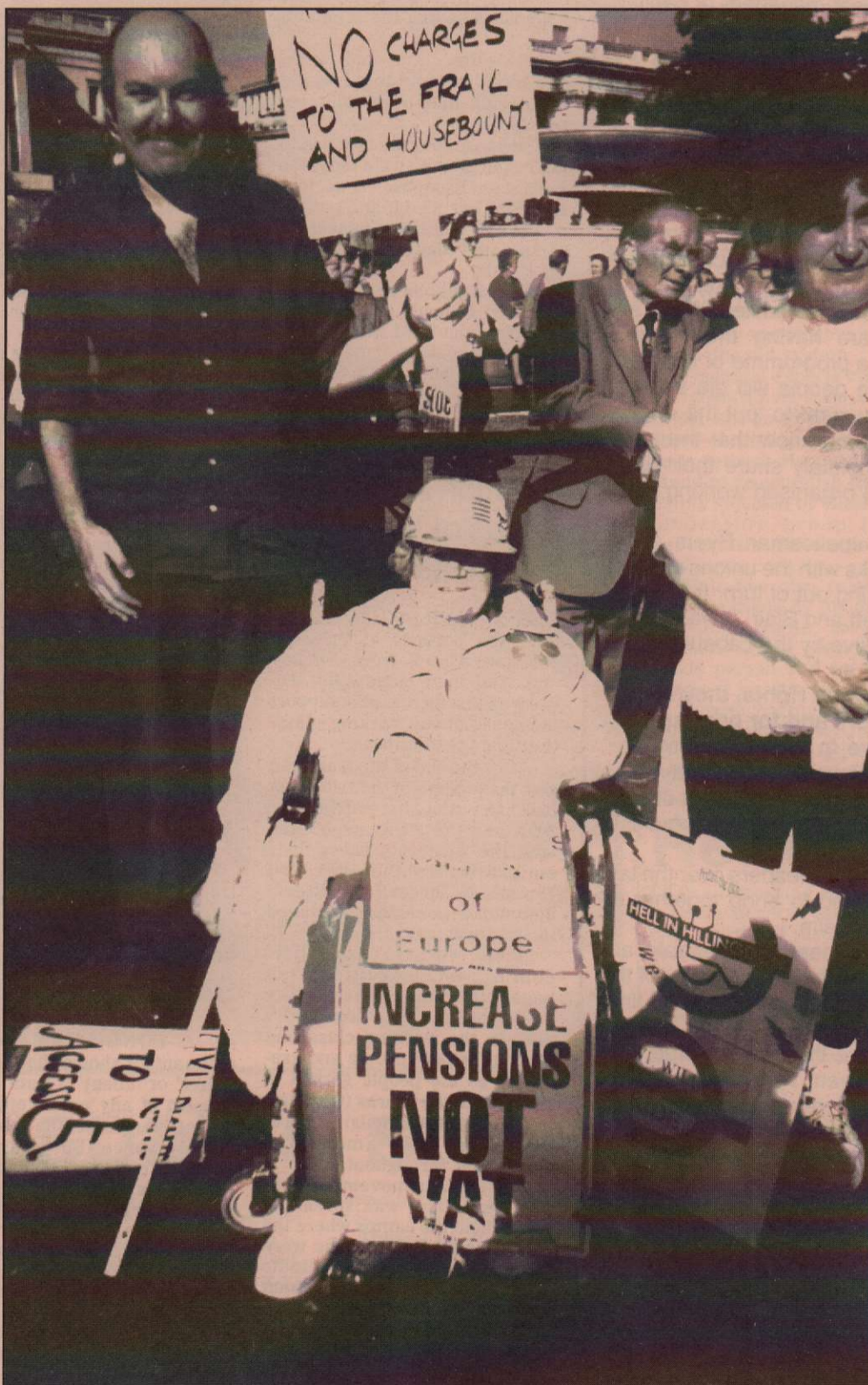
With the creation of such a transitional organisation, the WRP would dissolve itself and make its resources available to the new organisation.

■ NEXT STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING: Wednesday 9 October, 7.30pm. Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1. (Holborn tube.)

CRISIS IN THE LABOUR MOVEMENT — THE NEED FOR A NEW SOCIALIST PARTY

RECALL CONFERENCE: Saturday 23 November Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1 (Holborn tube)

For more information contact the co-ordinator Steve Ballard, 0181-889 7255



Last Saturday, 14 September, pensioners and many others marched to protest against attacks on their rights. Full story, page 3

Bosnian vote settles nothing

BY CHARLIE POTTINS

VOTERS went to the polls in Bosnia's first post-war elections last week, held under the US-imposed Dayton agreement and supervised by the Organisation for European Security and Co-operation, in conditions of effective partition and nationalism that make it unlikely they will settle anything.

Bosnia's first president, Alija Izetbegovic of the Muslim SDA, was clearly heading for victory, with 170,107 votes from 38 municipalities reporting, as against 121,391 for Serb nationalist Momcilo Krajisnik, speaker in Karadzic's 'Republika Srpska' parliament.

The final weeks of the campaign saw huge political rallies — 60,000 turning out for the SDA in Sarajevo, 10,000 in Bihac, and nearly 20,000 for the joint list in Tuzla, where Social Democrat mayor Selim Beslagic was a candidate. The list also boasted a rally in Zepca, which is held by Croat forces. Beslagic bewildered many on the eve of the elections by closing Tuzla's municipal television station, one of the few media channels sympathetic to his party.

But as well as media bias, and harassment from nationalists, many, particularly Muslim refugees, faced a Catch 22. If they registered where they sought refuge, this could mean losing the right to return home. But if they voted in so-called 'Republika Srpska', under Dayton rules they could only vote a Serb for president.

With multi-ethnic parties unable to organise there, and extreme Serb nationalists intimidating fellow-Serbs who stepped out of line, this would be like choosing your 'ethnic cleanser'. This may help to explain the low poll, and spoilt ballot-papers.

Biljana Plavsic, Radovan Karadzic's handpicked successor as president, said: 'Our ultimate aim is to have a unified Serb state in the Balkans. This cannot be reached now, but the times are changing. One day, the international community will recognise the fact that there will be no peace in the Balkans till that Serb state is formed.'

Former US Secretary of State and British 'Sir' Henry Kissinger renewed calls for ethnic partition of Bosnia, reverting to the Owen-Vance plan at the start of war, claiming national hatreds are inevitable.

See p.8 for more news, and p.7 for Bob Myers, secretary of Workers Aid for Bosnia, on prospects for Bosnia 'After Dayton'.

Liverpool dockers

Saturday 28 September: First year anniversary march and rally, Myrtle Parade to Pier Head, 1pm.

Workers Press urges all to go to this important workers' movement event

DON'T FORGET: Liverpool dockers' march and rally next Saturday (p.7 and above)

Kim who?

'JUST don't call me a socialist' was the headline over Labour MP Kim Howell's article in Murdoch's 'Sunday Times'. Howells is Labour spokesman on Trade and Industry. Well, was anybody going to call him such a thing . . . ?

Socialism is a classless society consisting of freely associated producers. It means, in the first place, putting an end to capitalist private property in the means of production. It is the only viable historic aim of the working class — the class that will bring socialism into existence.

Howells is one of Blair's chosen men whose life was well-known long before he earned his fee from Blair's friend Murdoch. They seek to remove any mention of socialism from the Labour Party.

Why? Because they fear anything, even words, that might contribute to the working class moving in struggles towards a socialist solution. And because they see the Labour Party only as the instrument through which they will become the well-paid political managers of capitalism in Britain.

Howells says that the word socialist should be 'humanely phased out', ie killed off. There is nothing humane about Blair, Blunkett, Prescott and Howells' project. They know that in order to play their appointed part they must, when in government, take back from the working people all the gains they have made in the past through reforms.

Their proposal on child allowances, their acceptance and implementation of government cuts, including the NHS, their endorsement of expenditures like the £40 billion on the European fighter aircraft while millions are without decent housing or are having their homes repossessed — all amount to a programme of killing off more than a mere word. More people will die sooner.

For the same reasons, they want to 'put the unions in their place'. Blair and his team know that the great majority of union leaders completely share their right-wing politics, but they fear the organised working class itself.

The statement by Labour spokesman Byers about severing the Labour Party's links with the unions was not a case of a young acolyte talking out of turn. It followed the speeches made by Blunkett and Blair. It was part of an orchestrated probing offensive by the Labour leadership.

Far from restoring trade union rights, they are for using the laws against strikers and for pressurising unions like the CWU to cave in to the employers.

Workers Press (Workers Revolutionary Party) has fought for the last four years to have the widest discussion on the need for a new party of the working class. This is raised by the crisis.

And the statements of the Labour leaders over the last two weeks surely show the need to bring together all those socialists who share this aim.

Howells' record, his appointment and his role are typical of the dangers resulting from the treachery of the Labour leaders. The same Howells once upon a time spoke differently.

A student radical of 1968, he then spent some time in the Communist Party and even, very briefly indeed, in the Socialist Labour League (forerunner of the WRP).

Howells would like to keep the working class and its unions out of politics, but what about his own treacherous politics in the unions?

In his job as 'research officer' to the South Wales Area NUM (led by Communist Party men at the time), he was one of the architects of the policy which betrayed the great miners' strike of 1984-85.

It was a crippling blow to the morale of the miners nationally when the South Wales executive rejected picketing-out the steel industry, instead banking on a policy which they thought would keep 'their' Welsh pits open.

This was fired by Howells' dogmatic opposition to Scargill's policy in the strike, and was instrumental in bringing about the return to work.

It is urgent that those who know they have to fight the employers and the government, organise for a party separate and opposed to these would-be 'humane killers' of socialism.

On 16 March some 200 socialists, including trade unionists, and Labour Party members met at a conference: 'Crisis in the labour movement — the need for a new party'.

The recall conference is on 23 November. Our readers are warmly invited to take part in the discussion regularly published in Workers Press. We hope you will come to the conference. Workers Press proposes that the conference sets up a transitional organisation for the new party.

Letters

WE WELCOME LETTERS
SEND THEM TO: WORKERS PRESS,
PO BOX 735, LONDON SW8 1YB
— OR PHONE 071-582 8882

Letters longer than 500 words WILL be cut

Does she take sugar?

I AM 83 years old, and I was recently in a south London hospital for a week.

I was disgusted and amazed that I had to wait for five hours sitting in a wheel-chair in my nightdress and dressing gown waiting for transport to take me home.

The hard-working staff told me that the reason for the long wait was because it was the end of the month and the hospital had no money left in its budget.

It's a good job I don't take sugar in my tea because the lack of funds meant that there was no sugar left!

What sort of future have my great-grandchildren got to look forward to if the government can't even make sure that people are looked after in ill-health.

When I first went into the hospital, I was told that I needed a scan, and even in the morning of the day I left I was told that I would be having the scan at 5 pm.

The time came and went, and I was just told that I would be leaving and must wait for transport.

I suppose their budget would not run to giving an old lady like me a scan. I suppose the doctors said that I needed it and put me on the list, and then the accountants came along and took me off the list.

What right has anyone to decide that I should not have the best treatment? At what age do they cut people off and decide that life is not worth fighting for?

H. Hickley
London SW16

Solution in the hands of workers and peasants

KEN SINGER is right to say that 'the purpose of the two-pronged attack from Turkey and Iraq is to annihilate sections of the Kurds who support the cause of the working class' (Letter 14 September).

After the end of the Iran-Iraq war the leaders of the two main Kurdish nationalist parties, the PDK and the PUK, negotiated with the western powers their emigration to the USA and Europe. No organised Kurdish nationalist movement remained in Iran and Iraq.

Some workers' (socialist/communist) organisations began to rebuild themselves underground. They won influence in the working class and among the poor people and gradually as the people gained in confidence the shoras (workers' and peasants' councils) began to arise, not only among the Kurds, but throughout Iraq.

The intifada movement from the West Bank was spreading throughout the camps where the dispossessed Palestinians were living throughout the Middle East. The workers' movement was gaining confidence in Turkey — there was a miners' strike. In Iran the oil workers were on strike.

Saddam Hussein and the Iraqi state bureaucracy knew something had to be done to defeat this movement. The Iranian regime, the US, and Turkey knew that the situation was getting out of hand. If they could not deal with the situation internally, then they might do so through outside intervention.

It came as no surprise to the advanced workers when Hussein organised the invasion of Kuwait, attempting to divert the workers and the poor. And no surprise when the US and the UN used this as an excuse to bring their armies and weaponry into the region.

But the resulting destabilisation was a good opportunity for the workers and the poor to rise up against the regime. In the

north and the south they killed and captured all the security police and surrounded the hundreds of thousands of soldiers. Many soldiers supported the people and became a people's army.

All over the north and south of Iraq the shoras were built in the whole area and they managed to organise the life on a co-operative basis and all the people helped, peacefully, together.

The US, their imperialist allies and the UN sent the PDK and PUK leaders back to Iraq because they knew that the uprising was like a forest fire and it could spread to Turkey, Iran and everywhere in the whole Middle East.

When the nationalist leaders returned, they had radio and television channels and told the people that the UN and the USA would give them food, peace and land. They did everything to divide the people between the villages and the cities and between the workers and the peasants.

There was never any intention on the part of the US and the UN to remove Saddam Hussein. They just wanted to defeat the people. The embargo they imposed was not against the government and the state bureaucracy (do you ever see a starving soldier?) it was against the people.

In the five years since the Gulf War, neither the PDK, the PUK and nor US imperialism have given the people anything but civil war, starvation, disease and killing.

Today's battles tell the same story. The PDK and the PUK, manipulated by the CIA in Kurdistan and Iraq have tried to abolish the regime of Saddam Hussein, and at the same time keep control of the workers and the poor people.

They continue their divide and rule of the people and US troops are being sent in to give some show of strength, but imperialism is not looking for a solution for the people. It would not be good for them to have a solution.

For the solution is in the hands of the people themselves. Despite everything the workers and the poor continue to organise themselves. They will naturally build their own organisations independently. Necessity is the mother of invention!

Raouf Fatah
London NW1

Safety Screens?

AS A LONG-TERM benefit claimant (or should that be 'customer' or 'client'?) I am in full support of any action opposing the introduction of the Job Seekers Allowance. But among the demands of the CPSA union that represents many benefit office workers I cannot agree with the 'installation of safety screens' (Workers Press, 7 September).

In the more than two years I have been out of work I have never seen a claimant raise their voice against a benefit worker let alone physically attack them.

Among other things, the JSA is designed to break up any community of interest between the unemployed and those who are there to help them find work or to administer necessary benefits.

To set up a 'war zone' in the benefit offices, with grills or screens, would just play into

the hands of this aim. I think it would raise the temperature of the situation to an intolerable level.

As an example, one of my local off licences is kitted up with grills like a US 'liquor store' with bars, etc. You can almost imagine the shopkeeper coming out with a pump-action shotgun. John Carpenter's film 'Escape from New York' gives a glimpse of the world to where such a tendency leads. I don't want to live in that world and I have never returned to that particular off licence.

While benefit workers almost certainly have fears of attack, the best way to deal with this is not security equipment but to have training in how to defuse tension and to be able to read the danger signs of those who are disturbed by the way the system is or has treated them. Physical training would be necessary for some.

What we have to fight for is conditions where people are treated in the most human way possible. We know this is not allowed by capitalism, but we have to start now. The JSA is attempting to dehumanise us, unemployed and benefit workers. We must not allow it to succeed.

Bob Stempel
London SE5

They never listen

IT WAS a good lobby of the TUC by the sacked Liverpool dockers, the striking Hillingdon hospital workers and Unison members in Blackpool on 9 September, and Liz Leicester's report (Workers Press, 14 September) conveyed the mood of this lobby very well.

But I think something should be said about the News Line group, especially as their 'Workers Revolutionary Party' banner could cause confusion.

This group was already at the Winter Gardens by the time the other lobbyists arrived. There were about 30 of them — mainly young teenagers with very little experience.

It was quite clear that the organisers of the group had never discussed the lobby with the dockers, and cared little about what the dockers were asking of the TUC. They were only concerned that their group and its banner were at the front.

It was no surprise to those of us who have come across this group before that they were chanting 'General Strike!' They do that at every TUC and on every demonstration. It's like a quack's cure!

These sectarians never listen to workers' in struggle, they always think they know best. They have no respect for the sacked Liverpool dockers' decisions.

They planted themselves in front of these workers and kept bellowing out 'TGWU must make the dock strike official!'

The News Line group has a representative at most of the Liverpool dockers' mass meetings.

They know that the dockers have said from the outset that whatever their own views about the way to fight the anti-trade-union laws, to put all their efforts into a demand for the TGWU to make the strike official would have led them into a head-on collision with the union's conference decision not to break the law.

It would have detracted from their own democratic methods of organising, and sidelined-

their decision to win international support. The youngsters who joined the News Line group could not be blamed for ignorance, but the group's organisers know that the TGWU finances and general purposes committee has instructed general secretary Bill Morris to request a meeting with the Mersey Dock and Harbour Company.

They intend to negotiate with 'no pre-conditions' — ie dropping the demand for reinstatement of all the sacked dockers.

But the News Line demand that the TGWU takes over the dispute!

Helena F
London SW

Marxists not 'martyrs'

CONCLUDING an informative piece on contemporary perceptions of Trotsky's murder by Stalin (Workers Press, 31 August), James D. Young states that the memory of socialist martyrdom will contribute to the renaissance of socialist ideas. This is contestable.

Martyrdom has its origins in religion. It is based on irrational beliefs encouraging the faithful to welcome death as an effective challenge to persecution. For centuries, religious leaders have told believers that by volunteering for death, once dead, they will be certain of life of eternal happiness. The material justification for martyrdom is that the cause of the faithful will be advanced.

Moreover, successful world religions have used martyrdom to distort history. The emerging feudal ruling class of Europe and Asia adopted Christianity and Islam because they were the most sophisticated means for making unfree labour adopt an attitude of submission to an acceptance of their exploitation. It was this ideological rotation that made them into world religions not the martyrdom of Islamic and Christian saints.

Transposed into the political sphere, the veneration of leaders who met untimely death such as Lenin, Connolly and Maclean, has been used by both nationalists and Stalinists to manipulate emotion, silence criticism and distort history. Stalinism, of course, justified the deaths of millions of workers and intellectuals as a sacrifice to the fetish of 'socialism in one country'.

On the contrary, Lenin, Connolly, Maclean, Trotsky and Luxembourg did not welcome death in order to advance an irrational doctrine. Nor did they reverently worship their Marxist teachers and peers.

Respect for Marx and Engels meant an attempt to further a scientific understanding of the world they lived in. This inevitably drew them into the heart of the class struggle worldwide.

They organised for a world which not a single worker's life would be sacrificed on the altar of capital. They were defeated.

Our attitude to them should be the same as theirs to Marx and Engels. We stand on their shoulders and are in a better position to explain the limits of their times. Pious or sentimental veneration of dead Marxists as 'martyrs' is an anathema to those of us attempting to rationally appropriate their thinking for the struggle ahead.

Paul B. Smith
Glasgow

Festival of SE Asian food and music

Saturday 12 October 7.15 pm
The Hampden Community Centre,
150 Ossulston St. London NW1
(5 mins from Euston or Kings Cross)

Adults £10 (£15 couple) children
over 12 £5, under 12 FREE
Tickets, payable to: ITUSC from
PO Box 18, Epsom, KT18 7YR

The crisis of capitalism and the tasks of trade unions an international workers' conference on 18-22 January 1997

The Palms Hall (4th Floor), University of London Union
Malet Street, London, WC1E
(Goodge St. Warren St. Euston Sq, Russel St. tubes)

£20 for entire conference, £5 daily, concessions

Registration with cheques/money orders to:
ITUSC, PO Box 18, Epsom, KT18 7YR Tele/fax 01372 817 778

'Re-instate dockers!' say Labour women

BY JACKIE VANCE

A RESOLUTION of support for the 500 sacked Liverpool dockers was passed unanimously at last weekend's annual conference of the Greater London Labour Party women's sections.

This decision, which gives a huge boost to the campaign to force the Labour Party to take a stand for the reinstatement of the dockers, came after Women of the Waterfront (WOW) representative Doreen McNally explained the background to the

dispute and the severe financial problems that the dockers and their families were facing.

The resolution called for the Labour Party to immediately support the Transport and General Workers' Union's hardship fund by launching a special appeal within the party and publicly.

It also called upon a future Labour government to use the 'golden' shareholding that the British state has in the Mersey Docks and Harbour Company to reverse the policy of sackings and casualisation.

The Labour women also praised the work of WOW and

the Dockers London Support Group. Pauline Bradley, the delegate from Hornsey and Wood Green Labour Party who moved the resolution, is joint convenor of the Support Group.

Doreen McNally was given an exceptionally warm welcome by the delegates, who raised money for the dispute by buying T-shirts and *Dockers Charters* and subscribing to a substantial collection.

There is no time to lose in the fight to make sure that the dockers' dispute is put on the agenda for the Labour Party conference in October. This can only happen if many more emergency

resolutions are presented along with the one from the London women's conference.

The Dockers London Support Group has circulated every London Labour Party constituency branch and many party activists with a model resolution along the lines of the one passed by the women's conference.

All those Labour Party members who support the dockers' fight against casualisation and for a secure job with sickness and holiday pay should attempt to have a similar resolution passed and insist that time be given at the conference for a discussion on this urgent matter.

Pensioners demand 'Restore the link!'

BY PETER GIBSON

OVER 10,000 supporters of the demand for better state pensions marched from London's South Bank to Trafalgar Square last Saturday.

Retired and pensioners' groups from all over Britain carried their banners and posters into the Square to hear Jack Jones, ex-general secretary of the Transport and General Workers' Union, introduce a string of speakers calling for the restoration of the link between average earnings and the retirement pension.

The link was broken in early 1980 when the Tories decided to limit pension increases to the percentage rise in the retail prices instead of the percentage rise in average earnings. As a result a single pensioner now receives £21 per week short, and a married couple £34 short, of what they would have received under the old system.

Financial experts claim that the government has saved between £2.5 to £3 billion by this short-changing of those who have retired. However, the demand to re-establish the link is firmly rejected by Blair and his leadership group in New Labour. It would cost too much, they say.

Blair has also rejected the promise made by his predecessor, John Smith, to increase pensions by at least £5 for a single person and by £8 for a couple if he won the election.

Harriet Harman, the Labour shadow spokesperson, is putting in a lot of time all over the country saying that to restore

the link would cost £3 billion in the first year, equal to a rise of 2.5 pence on the basic rate of income tax.

Ms Harman is asking the union leaders to help her out at the Labour Party conference by not supporting the demands of their members.

There is a head of steam building up in the trade unions on the pensions issue. Following privatisation they find their industrial pension schemes disappearing and they are being asked to accept expensive private schemes which will mean for many 40- and 50-year-olds little, if any, income following retirement, other than the state pension.

The unions may well cause a problem for the Blair leadership at the Labour Party conference. Last Sunday's press reports that former Labour minister Barbara Castle is prepared to go to the rostrum calling for the restoration of the link between pensions and average earnings.

Pushing

Both the Tory and Labour leaderships are pushing for everyone to take out a private pension. But the 4 million people in Britain earning less than £4 per hour, and even those on £6 per hour, do not have the income to invest in a private pension scheme.

The pensioners' groups are not, on the whole, supporters of Blair. Jack Jones makes the point that if any government fails to support the pensioners' demands it cannot expect to get the pensioners' vote. There are 10,600,000 pensioners in Britain — that means 10,600,000 votes.

Defiance of Haringey's disabled

'I will not pay these charges. I defy this Labour council to take me to court.' These words from a 64-year-old woman, crippled with arthritis and totally reliant on her wheelchair to get around, summed up the mood of a 60-strong demonstration at Haringey civic centre last Monday.

They were protesting against the implementation of charges for community care to disabled people. Most of the vociferous crowd were in wheelchairs and they blocked the main entrance as members of the social services committee arrived for a meeting.

Haringey council is composed of 52 Labour members and two Tories. It has imposed a viciously high rate of charges to the disabled for services such as home helps and daytime activities.

Councils across the country are penalising the disabled because the Tories have cut the grants for community care. Haringey's charges are particularly high as the Labour group tries to make the disabled pay for the huge losses incurred in the refurbishment of the Alexandra Palace complex.

One wheelchair-bound woman is being asked to pay £15 per week from her income support for a home help to do her ironing two hours every week.

A couple on £168 between them are being asked £23 for four hours of home help. A woman who needs help to get into bed every night faces a bill of £52.50 every week just for this essential activity.

This is a tax on disability. Many are saying they no longer wish to receive services because they cannot afford to pay the charges. This will mean they will no longer receive the support they need, increasing their own isolation and hardship and placing more pressure on their relatives and friends.

But many are insisting they will not pay. The council is obliged by law to continue providing the services. Are we going to see a Labour council take a disabled person to court to force them to pay for services that keep them alive?



CIA-crack link sparks storm

BY DANIEL ROBERTSON

THE revelations that the CIA was behind the crack epidemic that has ravaged black US inner cities has sparked a wave of anger. Activists are planning campaigns of civil disobedience to prevent a cover up.

A recent meeting of 1,500 angry members of the Congressional Black Caucus heard how crack cocaine had flooded their areas as part of a fund raising drive for the Contras sponsored by the CIA in an attempt to overthrow the Sandinista government of Nicaragua.

Activist Dick Gregory and talk show host Joe Madison, who has publicised the story, have been arrested demanding an inquiry. They have now started a hunger strike.

(The full story of the CIA-crack connection was published in *Workers Press*, 7 September.)

The CIA boss John Deutch has been forced to call an inves-

tigation — but has already described the claims as untrue.

CIA representative Mark Mansfield described the claims as ludicrous and without merit. But the evidence of a CIA hand seems undeniable. Despite this a media cover up is feared, as has happened over past allegations of CIA drug running. Black activists are determined that this will not happen again.

Civil rights leader Jesse Jackson has said: 'If most Americans knew that our government, through the CIA, were involved in subsidising drugs for these cities it would create a great sense of revulsion.'

Representative

Vaughn Chapman, a representative of the Ministerial Alliance in San Jose has described being moved to tears of anger and describes the CIA's actions as genocide.

Congresswoman Maxine Waters asserted: 'Portions of this country may have been ex-

posed, indeed introduced, to the horror of crack cocaine because certain US government paid or organised operatives smuggled, transported and sold it to American citizens.'

But these allegations are not new. Black activists have long believed that there has been a CIA presence behind the flooding of black areas with drugs, both to fund the Contras and undermine black resistance.

Similar tactics were used by the US government as part of their murderous campaign to destroy the Black Panthers in the 1960s. The Mafia are alleged to have been allowed a free hand in drug trading in return for fighting the influence of the Italian Communist Party in the 1940s.

Recent events in Italy have demonstrated the truth of Mafia involvement at the centre of postwar Italian politics. The one condition made by the CIA was that they target blacks rather than whites. Memories of these past allegations have streng-

thened the angry response to the present revelations.

These CIA-crack-connection allegations come at a time of growing anger over the disparities in sentencing for crack cocaine possession or dealing.

Severity

Crack, which is normally a black drug, attracts 10 times the sentencing severity as normal cocaine, which is a white habit, even though they are essentially the same material.

Clinton has refused to act, despite a Sentencing Commission recommendation, endorsed by the Attorney General, that the law should be made less unfair.

This story — which has received very little coverage in the British media — will undoubtedly fuel the growing anger in the US against big business dominated politics, reflected in the recent growth of trade union activity and the founding of the US Labor Party.

Refreshing change

IT IS a refreshing change to see a union general secretary decide to stand aside for new blood. But that is what Ronnie McDonald, general secretary of the Offshore Industry Liaison Committee (OILC) is doing.

McDonald has been in position since 1989 — first as manager of the Offshore Information centre opened by the oil rig workers and their families who founded the OILC after the Piper Alpha disaster in July 1988 when 167 workers were killed, and then as general secretary when the organisation became a trade union in 1992.

'You may have seen some of the media coverage which was (and there's no surprise!) not entirely accurate,' says McDonald in a letter to members. 'Contrary to speculation I am not in the process of quitting the union.'

He sees the move as confir-

mation that the union is 'maturing and developing'.

'As a legal entity, complete with its system of administration and membership as required by law, the job of creating the union is now complete,' reported McDonald to the union's executive in August.

'The elected executive committee now has a grip on the affairs of the union... it is time to clear the way to allow others to take a more direct hand in running the organisation. Fresh ideas are required. New energy has to be injected.'

'Also, I need space and the time to redirect my thoughts,' said McDonald. 'I think seven years in an administrative position like that of general secretary is enough.'

'I have accepted the proposal to become Research Assistant, and will be giving attention to a number of research projects.'

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 date

Address

Trade union (if any) Age (if under 21)

Send to: PO Box 735, London SW8 1YB

Inside left

North north-west

10 years ago, accusing Workers Aid of Bosnia of gun-running for NATO arms dealers, David North's International Committee of the Fourth International predicted the WRP (Workers Press), already an appendage of the labour and trade union bureaucracy, would be about to join a Tory coalition.

North's man in Rotherham, David Land, wrote to Labour MPs and trade unions, warning that a satellite Workers Aid had considered carrying out a Tuzla telecomms proved it was tooling-up for star-wars.

Hyland's *International Worker* has denounced Liverpool dockers' shop stewards as 'Stalinists', and the US seafarers union which backed them as Mafia and CIA-run. It thinks unions can only help the bosses control workers (something the Tories and their employers obviously haven't grasped).

Now it attacks veteran Trotskyist Peter Hunter, complaining his book on dockers' struggles, *They knew why they fought*, 'suppresses' Gerry Healy's allegedly vital role in northern dockers' 1954 move to the 'Blue Union'. Ever since how right-wing witch-hunters and ultra-lefts concur, workers can't do anything without some conspiracy behind them?

Artist's role

My remarks (on 20 July) about French writer André Breton and the Trotskyist movement prompted a comrade to write from Lorraine, in France: 'A recent *Inside left* column of yours suggests that Diego Rivera contributed to the writing of *Towards a Free Revolutionary Art*. But, as Breton points out in his *Visit to Leon Trotsky*, although Rivera is one of the signatories it was really a collaboration between him and Trotsky.'

At a Paris meeting commemorating the October Revolution, on 11 November 1938, Breton spoke about his visit to Trotsky, and the manifesto which appeared beneath the signatures of Diego Rivera and myself:

I must make clear that it is due to Trotsky, rather than Rivera or myself, that it calls for total independence for an artistic point of view. It was in fact comrade Trotsky who took the draft, where I had formulated: "Full freedom of art, except against the proletarian revolution"; and warning us how this phrase might be misused anew, struck it out without hesitation.'

A note to Breton's speech, included in *La Clé des Champs* (1953) says: 'Although published under the two signatures, this manifesto had in fact been drawn up by Leon Trotsky and André Breton. For tactical reasons, Trotsky asked that the signature of Diego Rivera be substituted for his own.'

A photograph shows pages of Russian typescript and handwriting in French. So, did Rivera play no part? Writing to *Partisan Review* in June 1938, Trotsky said the Mexican artist was the greatest interpreter of the October Revolution, and the Fourth International was proud to have him in its ranks (see Leon Trotsky, *On Literature and Art*, Pathfinder 1970).

Having withstood both capitalist and Stalinist pressure, Rivera subsequently veered from one to the other, possibly blown off course by stormy personal relations. But in December 1938, after the manifesto *Towards a Free, Revolutionary Art* launched a Generation of Independent Revolutionary Artists, Trotsky wrote to Breton: 'With all my heart I congratulate Diego Rivera and yourself on the creation of the FIARI' (*On Literature and Art*). Just tactics?

Some readers probably know more about this. What's striking is that Trotsky, without accepting Breton's aesthetic philosophy (as the latter noted), still worked with him and Rivera, and strongly emphasised artistic freedom. Charlie Pottins

TUC and Labour

'Don't expect a union conference'

LIZ LEICESTER, Unison TUC delegate:

I WAS elected as a delegate to this year's Trades Union Congress by the London regional council of Unison, the public sector union. This union has almost 1.5 million members in Britain and the north of Ireland.

One of the first things we were told at Unison's delegation meeting before going to Blackpool was not to expect the TUC to be anything like Unison conferences. This was certainly the case. In the rough and tumble of Unison conferences, the union leadership sometimes loses a battle. At the TUC every move is worked out in advance and tightly controlled. It is hard to imagine how to break the grip of the bureaucracy at this event.

The sacked Liverpool dockers and Women of the Waterfront fought hard to do just that. With courage, dignity and great patience, they lobbied delegates, explained their situation, asked for support, and on one occasion moved even the most hardened bureaucrats to tears.

Throughout the week the dockers and their supporters attempted to find a mechanism that would allow a docker to address the congress. The enthusiastic standing ovation they got on the first day of the congress showed that a substantial number of delegates wanted to hear them speak.

This could have been accomplished through an emergency motion or it could have been done by suspension of standing orders as at the Scottish or Welsh TUCs.

However as the week progressed it became clear that without the support of the Transport and General Workers' Union leadership this was going to be very difficult to win.

Speakers from the railway workers' unions, postal workers, Scottish teachers, miners and fire brigades unions spoke of the dockers' struggle in their contributions. Neil Trickett from Blackpool trades council, who welcomed delegates to the congress, said he was proud that trade unions in his town have started work to support the Mersey dockers. Others echoed this sentiment.

Emergency

In the last session of the last day of the congress, sacked Mersey docker and TGWU delegate Bobby Morton raised a point of order following an emergency motion on the Magnet Kitchens' sacking of 350 workers in Darlington for voting to strike against pay cuts.

Morton asked the congress to take time to discuss how to help the Magnet workers. Otherwise, he said, 'these people will be left in isolation like the dock workers.'

Congress chair Margaret Prosser

replied that she was sure the delegates would take the spirit of what Morton had said and promptly moved on to next business.

TGWU deputy general secretary Jack Adams spoke in the discussion about the 'Disputes and Trade Union Rights' section of the general council report — a section which did not even mention the dockers' struggle. He said that the dispute was unofficial and that this was against union policy.

'The TGWU,' he said, 'wants a fair and honourable settlement based on reinstatement' but not 'with unlawful action'. He called on the movement to continue the 'tremendous support' they had shown the dockers and their families.

'The Liverpool dockers have always been generous,' he said. 'They gave over £1 million to the miners during their strike.' He appealed to the movement for solidarity and to 'extend the old values of our movement which we should never be ashamed of.'

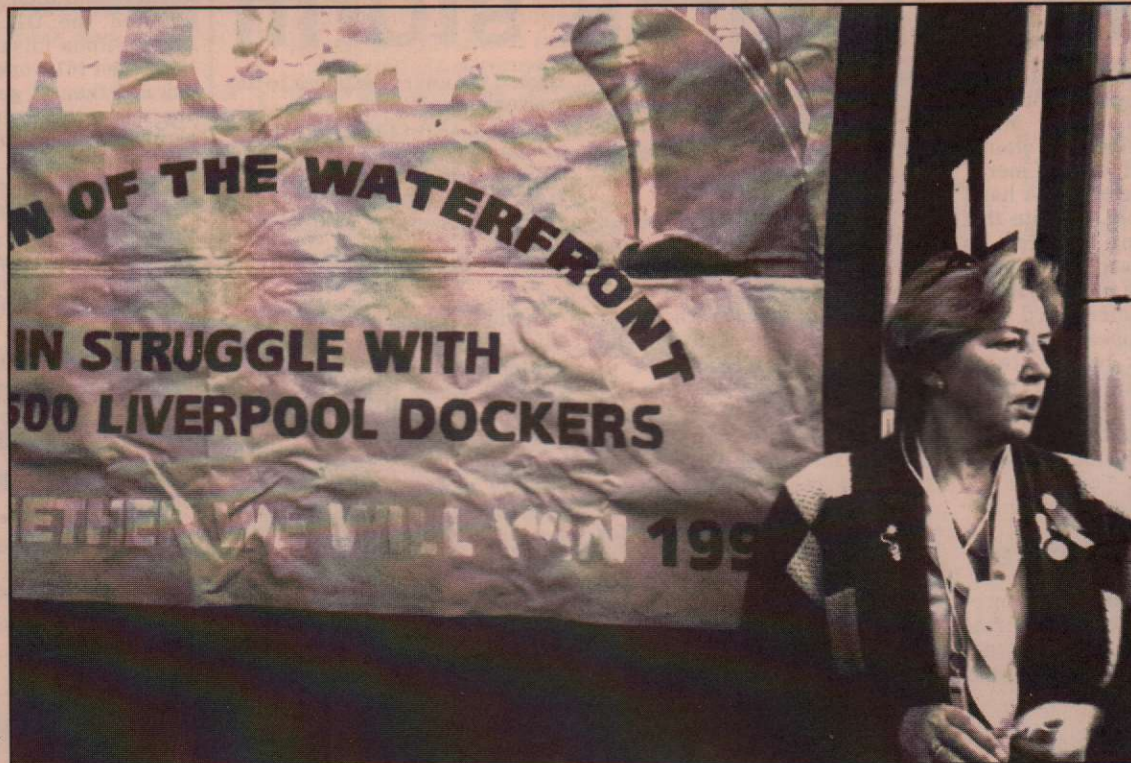
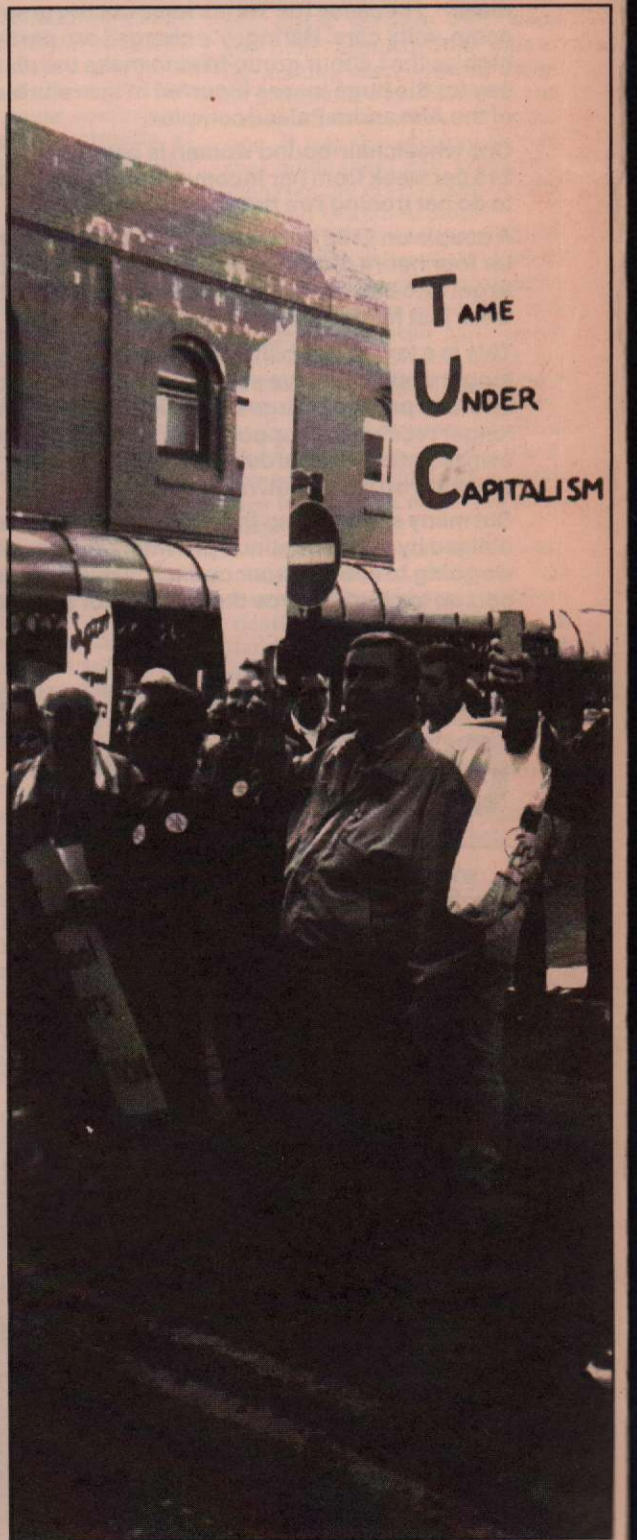
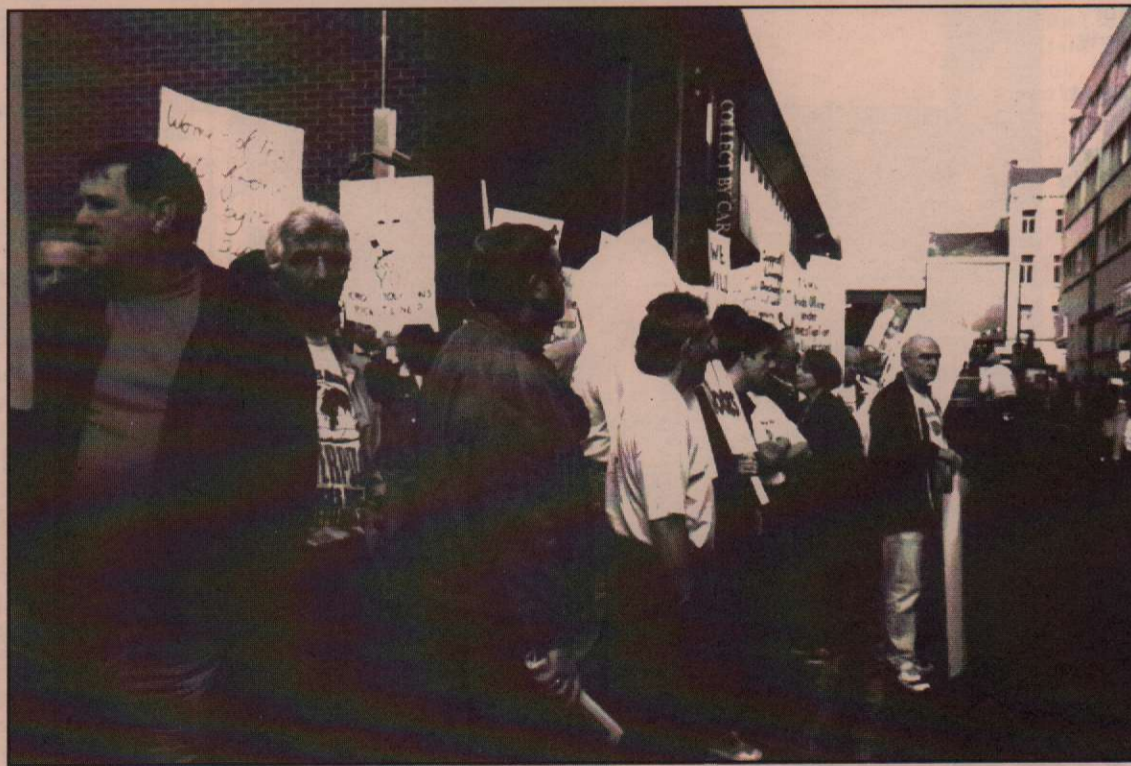
The general council agreed to an official collection on the last morning of the congress.

The determined and unremitting pressure kept up by the dockers all week in the visitors' gallery, in fringe meetings and in the foyer of the Winter Gardens conference centre in Blackpool was at least partly responsible for even this very limited recognition of their tremendous and principled fight against the anti-trade-union laws.



Supporters of sacked

Anger and resentment at speed and fe



Dockers (top and right) and Women of the Waterfront (bottom) spent the week trying to get heard

ference'

The relationship between the trade unions and the Labour Party goes into deeper crisis with each passing day. This week we publish a series of personal views on different aspects of what happened at last week's Trades Union Congress and what's happening in the labour movement.



Hillingdon hospital workers make their point to TUC delegates

erocity of New Labour attack

KEITH STANDRING, general secretary International Trade Union Solidarity Campaign:

THE British TUC decided not to invite the leader of the Labour Party to address congress. This is almost unprecedented at the congress preceding a general election.

Whether this decision was based on antipathy towards Blair and the policies of New Labour or to enhance Labour's chances at the general election, by allowing New Labour to be distanced from the trade unions, is a matter of speculation.

What is not in doubt is that New Labour's senior employment spokesperson David Blunkett used the occasion of the TUC congress to announce the intention, if elected, to further limit the ability of organised workers to defend themselves.

Blair himself sought to intervene in and to damage the magnificent struggle of the Communication Workers' Union against proposals to introduce so-called human resource management techniques.

These proposals are designed to produce a compliant workforce to destroy collectivism and marginalise trade unions, as a prelude to their ultimate destruction.

While declaring New Labour's intentions, spokesperson Blunkett made reference to 'armchair revolutionaries'. A very strange phrase for a New Labour frontbencher to use. Perhaps it arose from the briefings of opposition leaders by senior civil servants and the security services about popular unrest in the face of expected crisis?

Brazenly

The speed and ferocity with which New Labour so brazenly announced its intended attacks on trade union activity caused deep anger and resentment among trade union members.

What was the response of the TUC leadership to these attacks?

The following morning, the congress was subjected to a sorry spectacle. Five union general secretaries mounted a sham battle

between themselves. With not one of them earning any less than £25 per hour, they pontificated on whether a guaranteed minimum wage should be set using a formula currently producing £4.26 per hour, or another approach designed to produce even less, or refer the whole matter to a low pay commission, if and when New Labour is elected to government.

Their speeches were designed principally to score points off each other in a most juvenile and unprofessional fashion.

These great leaders not only failed to rebut New Labour's declaration of intent, as harmful above all to the low paid, they wasted much valuable time that should have been used to advance the real interests of those on poverty wages.

The outcome of this posturing was that the congress endorsed all three alternatives, thus leaving the bureaucrats on the TUC general council to do whatever they choose.

The managers of the TUC fudge factory emerged triumphant, having once again snatched defeat from the jaws of victory!

ON THE eve of the delegates' departure from Blackpool, Stephen Byers MP, New Labour's junior employment spokesperson, who had been present all week, decided to establish his own credentials.

Over the dover sole at Blackpool's splendid seafood restaurant, he told four journalists that if a New Labour government was faced with public sector strikes, the party would seek a vote of individual members to sever completely its links with the trade unions.

In any event, he continued, it was the intention of New Labour to introduce state funding for political parties, thus ending the financial link with the unions.

To the experienced worker, this was about as startling as the knowledge that night follows day. Despite this, the media quickly gave it massive coverage.

Stephen Byers' subsequent half-hearted explanations demonstrated

that he is to fraternal relations what Cain was to Abel!

The TUC leaders, many of whom have raised to an art form their desire to appear in a New Year Honours List, gave absolution and swore allegiance to Blair and strongly suggested that Byers should be sidelined.

John Edmunds, general secretary of the GMB, who evidently thought that knowledge of this matter to which he was privy should not be imparted to trade union members in general, was moved to describe Byers' statement as an 'insensitive gaffe'.

Mugging

From a trade union activists' point of view, anything which terminates union funding of New Labour must make sense. As I said in an interview I gave to Workers Press (28 October 1995) last year on this very subject, 'You don't pay people to mug you!'

Trade unionists witnessing the antics of the TUC leaders at the congress quickly concluded that, with capitalism in advanced terminal decline and mounting and increasing attacks on the working class, the leadership qualities of these self-serving social-democratic bureaucrats are as much use as a chocolate fireguard.

Organised workers in Britain and throughout the world are beginning to devote their energies to rebuilding their trade unions and their leaderships around a perspective which recognises that capitalism is in a structural crisis and a revolutionary transformation of society is required if humanity is to avoid being pitched into the abyss of barbarism.

The International Trade Union Solidarity Campaign's international workers' conference in January 1997 will seek to hammer out a worldwide programme of action, which will contribute to the building and rebuilding of the trade union movement, and make it an effective political/industrial weapon with which the working class and its allies can confidently face their future tasks.

Mind-boggling proposals

TONY O'BRIEN, Southwark and Bermondsey branch secretary, building workers' union UCATT:

BLUNKETT's proposals to extend the Tory union-bashing laws are mind-boggling. They indicate the depth of the major and dramatic moves that are taking place.

We are clearly seeing the beginnings of a huge historical change between the working class, the trade unions and the Labour Party.

The bulk of the working class has always perceived the Labour Party

as their natural political ally. But these changes now mean that workers will be forced into seeking new political representatives and new solutions.

They have always looked for people to represent them politically and they will continue to do so.

It puts existing 'lefts' in the Labour Party on the spot. Those in such groups as the Campaign Group, Socialist Organiser and Labour Left Briefing have to ask themselves why they are still in the Labour Party and what their role is.

Blair pushing for British version of US Democrats

RON HAYCOCK, secretary Waltham Forest Teachers' Association (NUT), in a personal capacity:

THE breaking of the relationship between the trade unions and the Labour Party has been happening for some time. Blair has been pushing for a British form of the US Democratic Party with the unions providing loyal support and some money for elections but with no influence on policy.

In some ways this is bad for the working class because it will be left without political representation.

Ironically, although the NUT is not affiliated to the Labour Party it has provided some of the most loyal support for the Blair leadership within the TUC.

It must be remembered that in 1926 the Labour Party leaders said not a word in parliament about the General Strike. The current leadership is in that tradition.

There was some difference in 1945. The government had wanted cooperation from the working class during World War II and some concessions were made. Socialists at the time said this was awful since it created the illusion of a community of interests between capital and labour.

During the 1950s this process of incorporation of the trade unions in

decision-making continued with the creation of quangos like the National Economic Development Council (NEDC).

Now the capitalists are saying to workers: 'You're shit!' This makes life difficult for the trade union bureaucracy.

After the election of a Labour government workers will be cashing in some 'rain checks': nurses, doctors, teachers, railway workers, and so on.

Labour will have to make some settlements with them.

In recent times governments have come into office because they were perceived as being able to deal with strikes. In 1974 Labour came in because of the miners' strike under Tory Prime Minister Ted Heath. In 1979 it was Thatcher that came in because of Labour's 'Winter of Discontent'.

In 1996 it there doesn't seem to be major movements of that sort, but there are signs of coming struggle. To workers Labour seems more reasonable in its approaches to strikes.

The collapse of Stalinism underlies the present weakness of the trade union bureaucracy. However mistaken, Stalinism gave a sense of direction to the leadership of the trade union movement. That's gone. Now they can only hold on to Tony Blair's coat tails. That gives some opportunities to the rest of us.

Struggle for the mike

JOE EYRE, Educational Institute of Scotland TUC delegate:

THE lecturers' union NATFHE, seconded by the Scottish teachers, managed to convince the congress to reject and oppose profit-related pay in the public sector.

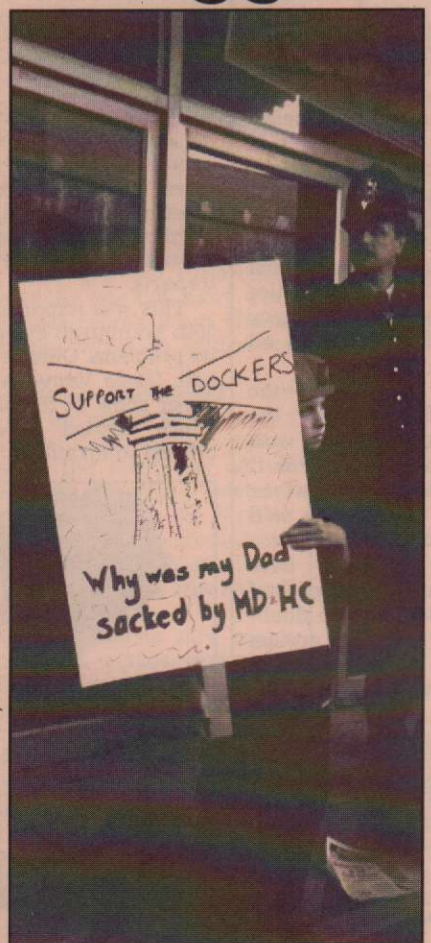
In their contributions, both unions stressed that the public services must not be run on business lines for profit and that the public services exist to provide for social needs.

They stressed the need to oppose the cult of possessive individualism and to reassert collectivist principles and social solidarity.

In seconding the motion, the EIS speaker claimed that the time was right for this and further that the Liverpool dockers had provided the whole movement with an essential lesson in insisting that jobs represent social goods which are not the property of individuals.

The enthusiastic response of the conference to the dockers' stand was in marked contrast to the TUC and TGWU officials' attempts to marginalise and silence the dockers' case.

Despite continual discussions and lobbying, the officials did everything in their power to prevent a docker getting to the congress microphone.



TUC lobbyist

A week in hospital

PERSONAL COLUMN

done to them. Though their English is sometimes rudimentary, they too know how to crack a joke, how to bring a smile to the lips of those who are enfeebled by illness and perhaps scared and lonely and fractious.

They cook and distribute the patients' food, clean the floors, remove the soiled bedding, get rid of the rubbish, fetch and carry, perform a thousand and one filthy and thankless tasks every day, do innumerable little unostentatious and unremarked kindnesses that find no place on those balance sheets drawn up by market forces.

Without their labour, without their contribution, without their human warmth and compassion, the NHS trust hospitals could not function for a single hour.

And, just like the nurses, these people who are indispensable in a way that politicians and pop groups and even star footballers and NHS chief executives are not, are paid peanuts. Their treatment is indecent. It is a howling disgrace to a supposedly civilised country.

Having been progressively degraded, year in and year out, by a series of parsimonious pay awards, the health workers have now been insulted by the miserable increase suggested for 1996. All they are asking for is a decent pay increase, so that they can live their lives with some semblance of human dignity.

But the worm is about to turn. So much was clear from those leaflets to be seen fixed to walls all over the hospital, from the union stickers on tunics, from every conversation I had. I didn't need to ask a lot of questions, or do interviews, or even try and steer the conversation. Once they sensed I was on their side, they poured out their hearts.

My Old Etonian neighbour was right. The staff are indeed 'pretty militant'. They are not just angry: they are boiling with rage at the way they have been treated by insensitive management who themselves are doing very nicely, thank you.

This international workforce is ready for a struggle, and is determined to win that struggle when it comes.

AND let's be clear on one other thing. Once the strike starts we shall have Tory and Labour politicians, as well as the *Daily Mail* and the rest of our degenerate press, vying with each other to denounce the strikers, to hound and witch-hunt the strike leaders, to deploy all their old weapons of slander and vilification.

And the main thrust of their attack will be on the issue of patients' needs and patients' safety. This is a time-honoured device. It is of course a downright lie to say that patients will be put at risk or made uncomfortable. The Unison leaflet states clearly: 'If you vote YES for industrial action the TUC Code of Practice will be observed and emergency cover will be maintained at all times.'

This time, I predict, the weaselly cry of 'What about the patients?' will cut little ice with the public. Least of all will it sway the patients themselves, most of whom know quite well what is at stake.

We shall, I'm sure, have patients' petitions in support of the strikers. We shall no doubt have patients' support groups. We shall even see patients displaying solidarity by joining the picket line.

I know one patient who, if he is still in hospital and still mobile when the strike begins, will certainly do so.

Peter Fryer

Edinburgh International Festival

BY TERRY BROTHERSTONE

LIKE all great plays, Anton Chekhov's *Uncle Vanya* is about many things. One is the way in which people destroy each other when they cannot see how to relate their essentially social activity as human beings to society beyond their own immediate circle.

This makes the play, first staged a century ago and set very specifically on a remote estate in contemporary Russia, supremely relevant today. Chekhov goes to the periphery, not just of his own country, but of the emerging modern world itself, dramatically to examine the mentality of those being left behind.

German director Peter Stein's unsurpassable production, seen at last month's Edinburgh Festival, is performed by an excellent company of Italian actors, led by Roberto Herlitzka as Vanya. It relies on a very theatrical style of realism (you get a detailed glimpse of the estate, you hear the birds and the crickets, but you also see the stagehands changing the sets) to draw the audience agonisingly close to the characters and their tragedies.

Sonya's unrequited love for world-weary environmentalist Dr Astrov, the ageing Vanya's impossible passion for the insensitive Prof. Serebryakov's beautiful young wife (a seductively enigmatic performance by Maddelena Crippa), and the play's other relationships, seem, for the three and a half hours of this measured production, to matter terribly. But Stein does not delude us into substituting the lives we see on stage for our own.

Despite (because of?) the production's realistic style, it sets up an almost Brechtian relationship with the audience. Elisabetta Pozzi delivers Sonya's dramatically extraordinary, affirmative, closing speech beautifully. The effect, however, is not to console us with the idea that there is a personal, poetic or religious, resolution to our own ordinary tragedies.

Instead, by a simple device, Stein ruthlessly cuts off theatrical illusion; and forces us to think about the play in context, and to follow through our sympathy for the characters by considering the difference between their social crisis and ours. As Sonya's words fade, the stage manager enters from the auditorium and snuffs the lamps.

We are in 1996, not the 1890s; in crisis-torn capitalist Britain not late-19th-century Russia. We must learn from history (including the fictional insights into the past provided by great art), not wallow in the self-perpetuating generalisations of those critics who harp on about art's responsibility to celebrate 'our common humanity'.

LEAVING *Uncle Vanya* I found myself walking home amidst the annual Fireworks Concert. It takes over the Edinburgh sky, creating an inescapable sense of carnival — reminding you that a festival is more than the sum of its parts.

This was important since the 50th Edinburgh Festival had had its problems. Outside the concert hall, *Uncle Vanya* was the only major show in the official event which created a consensus of critical admiration.



Uncle Vanya (Roberto Herlitzka), besotted with Maddelena Crippa's seductively enigmatic Yelena Andreyevna

Photo: Keith Brame

Stein, Steiner and socialism



Inés de Castro (Helen Field), the 14th-century Spanish princess who was mistress to the heir to the Portuguese throne, caught up in anti-Spanish feeling when war breaks out between the two Iberian nations. James Macmillan's opera, based on a John Clifford play, was premièred at Edinburgh

Photo: Keith Brame

The opera programme was rescued by German choreographer Pina Bausch's production of C.W. Gluck's *Iphigenie auf Tauris*; but it might more appropriately have been listed under dance — the performing art which, over the period of Brian McMaster's directorship of the Festival, has had the most consistent record of achievement.

Another choreographer — now annually popular in Edinburgh — Mark Morris directed *Orfeo ed Euridice* (also by Gluck), notable particularly for Michael Chance's transcendent counter-tenor singing.

And, while Scottish composer James MacMillan's debut opera *Inés de Castro* is certainly operatic, it never, in Scottish Opera's rather static production, convinces you of its relevance to the concerns, or sensibilities, of the late 1990s.

Huston Grand Opera's revival of a 1934 Gertrude Stein/Virgil Thomson collaboration *Four Saints in Three Acts*, on the other hand, is definitely of our times, but is little more than an inventively staged, and entertaining, joke.

It was left to the Festival itself to be the star turn. In a surprisingly non-British way, it turned itself into an intellectual event by generating a theoretical discussion about itself, started by the internationally famous literature professor, George Steiner.

THE professor's keynote lecture had two main ideas. The first was that the Edinburgh Festival, established in the aftermath of

World War II, had been conceived as an instrument through which cultural internationalism could secure civilised values in a Europe recovering from Nazism.

Conflict from Northern Ireland to the Balkans (Bosnia particularly sprang to mind) showed this aim to have failed. The Festival, proposed Steiner, might therefore have outlived its usefulness. It certainly needed to reassess itself.

The second idea was that the Festival must pay greater attention to developments in the sciences.

The humanities, suggested Steiner, are in a cul-de-sac: our times will produce no new Shakespeares or Mozarts; but 90 per cent of all the scientists there have ever been are alive today.

It was as stimulating as it was unexpected to hear Steiner raise such issues at the outset of Britain's biggest annual cultural jamboree — which is normally discussed publicly only in the context of what it can do for the tourist trade.

Yet he left unaddressed the essence of the crisis — which lies in the inability of capitalism today to unite historically accumulated human cultural achievements (in both the humanities and the sciences) with the real life, and the real needs, of the great masses of people.

The relationship between social development and the humanities and the sciences (the 'two cultures' as novelist and government adviser C.P. Snow called them) was last widely discussed in something like a theoretical way in this country in the 1960s.

Many then believed that there could be a specifically British approach, based on the ongoing expansion of higher education. This would be sustained by, and would sustain, economic growth, planned along Keynesian lines.

That illusion is dead. A generation on, our *fin-de-siècle* crisis (very different from Chekhov's) is both global and revolutionary. Steiner was right to make clear that this crisis appears in some of its sharpest forms in the realm of culture. His questions are profound.

But his suggested answers betray the incapacity of liberal humanism to go beyond the conception that the highest achievable form of human existence is the cultured individual (sponsored either by the state, or, increasingly once again, by pri-

ivate patronage) setting out to educate the masses.

This necessarily leaves the historical and socio-economic roots of the present crisis, and the revolutionary, truly human, potential of the working masses, unexplored.

SO Steiner, when he spoke of what a festival is, underestimated the significance of the now huge, independent, Edinburgh 'Fringe'.

It began in the late 1940s, in opposition to the idea that a cultural event must be something primarily for the educating classes. And even today, increasingly incorporated (in most people's perception) into the Festival as a whole, and often dominated by commercialism, it creates possibilities for the officially excluded to take over and set their own agenda.

Steiner explained something of the history of festivals, but not how they can be subverted, or indeed independently created, by oppositional forces in society.

In the Middle Ages, carnival-time could become the occasion for social revolt; and look today at how the Art for Freedom Festival (in line with the cultural relationships established — even as the bullets flew — between Edinburgh and Sarajevo) recently brought Western European theatre and music to the halls and streets of Tuzla (see John Davies, 'Mozart and Fire-eating', Workers Press, 24 August).

Clare Cowen's exuberant letter ('Edinburgh on the streets', Workers Press, 31 August), too, conveyed marvellously how the once-staid Scottish capital is transformed by the Festival and its offshoots... and what social tensions this brings to the surface.

The issues raised here are important ones for the new party for socialism to which this newspaper has dedicated itself.

Discussion about Steiner's questions, will, I am confident, go far beyond that generated by the professor at the 50th Edinburgh Festival.

It seems appropriate nonetheless, at the end of the last Festival to be covered by Workers Press (at any rate as the paper of the WRP), retrospectively to dedicate our Festival reports, which have appeared consistently for ten years now, to the future of this discussion within, and around, the new organisation.

After Dayton

With the elections in Bosnia — the result of the Dayton agreement that supported ethnic cleansing — Workers Aid for Bosnia must consider what activities it should now carry out. Workers Aid secretary BOB MYERS gives his personal view on the way forward

WORKERS AID FOR BOSNIA was set up to defend a united, multi-cultural Bosnia-Herzegovina (BiH) by rebuilding the international spirit of practical solidarity among working people, unemployed, young people, etc.

To do this it was necessary for people to see that the future of an undivided society depended on their actions, their ability to organise, in support of the defenders of multi-cultural BiH and against the nationalists and their backers — the British, the US, and other governments in the UN.

Our main activity has been the convoys which aimed not just at taking food, but the uniting of people and organisations inside and outside of BiH.

Since the Dayton agreement the situation we have been working in has changed.

■ In public opinion outside of BiH the problem is more or less solved, or at least governments are now doing something about it.

■ Inside BiH Dayton gave support to the ethnic cleansers. Every action carried out by the Great Powers, including the elections, consolidates division.

The 'peace' has weakened the bonds of an unofficial alliance between all different kinds of people held together during the war by the 'defence of an undivided BiH'.

In the BiH government there are a growing number of people willing to accept partition in return for power and privilege. But there remain a large number who are opposed to ethnic division now, as they were in 1992. They remain defiant and do not feel that they have been beaten.

Workers Aid must now make

as big a step into the unknown as we did in 1993 when we knew no one in BiH and knew nothing about convoys or what kind of response our proposal would get.

The defence of a united BiH was at the same time, in the circumstances that prevailed, the defence of the spirit of unity across the region established by the partisans in World War II.

Many on the left refused to support BiH and used the argument that Yugoslavia represented a higher unity and that Bosnian independence was a break up of that unity.

In fact it was Serb nationalism that broke whatever Yugoslav unity that existed. (And that unity had over the years become a very inadequate thing with its discrimination against Muslims, political suppression, etc.)

But it was only the people in BiH who were able to stand firm

■ All those who tried to divide BiH are now working together despite their own different self interests.

The Croatian and Serbian regimes, the superpowers, the western banks, elements within BiH itself, are all collaborating to carve up BiH and develop new effective forces of social control throughout the region and turn public property into private property.

■ Given the huge military and political forces arrayed against a united BiH, its unity will only be restored if the forces of division can be weakened within their own power bases, i.e. in Britain, the US, but most importantly in Serbia and Croatia. This is where the alliance for the division of BiH is at its weakest.

In Croatia and Serbia there is great opposition to the nationalists from people who always

people will be met with opposition from nationalist parties and their backers.

The regional collaboration must be built on firm principles, especially the right to self-determination of an undivided multi-cultural BiH. The aim of the collaboration is the defence of the interests of ordinary people of the region.

There are a number of immediate clear purposes for co-operation.

■ Rebuilding of effective, independent trade unions to defend the rights of working people. Across the region many social gains made by the partisans are now being destroyed — public ownership, workers' self-management, pensions, maternity care, health and safety, etc.

■ Cultural, media, academic and sport, especially the activities of young people.

■ Freedom of movement, right of return of refugees, restoration of housing, etc.

■ Full accounting of the main war criminals, especially the UN.

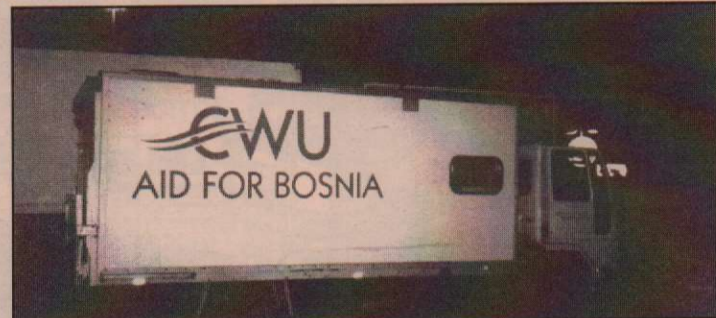
But if we agree to this general perspective, how does it translate into action? This will need discussion throughout Workers Aid and with people in ex-Yugoslavia.

The Dayton sponsors want to 'reunite' the region. David Owen and others always supported Milosevic's plan to maintain 'Yugoslavia'. They know that economically the prospects for Western exploitation are best served by a fairly integrated region. But they want the people divided and unable to exercise common will.

After Dayton all kinds of people, like Western trade union bureaucrats, are also working to restore inter-regional organisations, but their purpose is the creation of organisations of social control.

Our aim must be to move working people and young people internationally to assist their sisters and brothers in ex-Yugoslavia to develop their own unity and self-organisation for their own interests.

This perspective is possible only because the defenders of the simple right of all Bosnians to live and work together have survived the onslaught of nationalist barbarism.



Until now Workers Aid's main activity has been convoys

on the principle of multi-cultural society and unity. In doing that they were acting as a barrier against the Croatian and Serbian nationalists and the Western powers that backed their efforts to break up resistance to the West's political and economic penetration.

Bosnia's defeat would see the strengthening of reaction across the region.

Despite Dayton, despite the growing consolidation of division, opposition to division has survived and the work conducted by Workers Aid was a part of that. The survival of this resistance now means that the conditions are good for going on the offensive. Now our general perspective should be to campaign to help restore co-operation and unity among the ordinary people of ex-Yugoslavia.

Two things are clear.

opposed them and now from people who feel betrayed by them. The unbroken resistance in BiH can play an important role in uniting and strengthening the anti-nationalist opposition throughout the region.

It is the responsibility of the international workers' movement to assist this and Workers Aid should be at the centre of this work.

For four years the defenders of unity could only try to hang on to the multi-cultural society of BiH but the survival of this resistance has now created the situation in which the horizons can be lifted despite all the problems.

It is obvious that the atrocities of the nationalists and the antics of the old Yugoslav bureaucrats have left many people bitterly divided and antagonistic. Calls for regional unity of ordinary

Dockers and dreadlocks

BY PADDY McCLOY

'THE oppression we all experience is from the same source... so let's resist it together!' An inspiring statement sending ripples of excitement to all parts of Britain where many small previously isolated groups are realising not only the collective cause but also the collective power.

Uniting the struggles is nothing new. Many have worked tirelessly at it, achieving a great deal, and it is in no small way a result of their work and openness to diversity that the struggles are now uniting themselves.

It was very open-minded, forward-thinking dockers who took part in the London 'Reclaim The Streets' festival on the M41 in July saying 'these are the people

we need in Liverpool.' And likewise it takes something more than 'single-issue Crusties' to recognise the value of unionised workers who refuse to unload hazardous waste at the Merseyside docks.

A pattern is emerging, some people recognise it, and believe that soon the single-issue myth, the death-of-left-politics myth, and no doubt many others, will be

laid to rest forever. In the meantime, however, there's still talk of two distinct groups working in parallel never to meet.

One is old, full of jargonised theories and laborious, antiquated practices; the other immature, devoid of historical analysis and exploding thoughtlessly all over the place.

These, their respective generalised stereotypes, indicate at the very least genuine differences between the two but, more worrying, that there's many among them who refuse to bridge the gap.

Dolphins, dreadlocks and drugged-up ravers are elements of an outsider-imposed stereotype in the same way as are trade union dinosaurs, meetings about meetings and the People's Front of Judea. Why accept them? There's no such thing as a single issue, only people who haven't discovered the links.

Pollution equals cars equals consumption equals capitalism. Capitalism means low wages means no unions means pollution (and a few other things). In other words we must give dialectics a chance, or better still, help them along.

Come and check out the whole living process for yourself in Liverpool next weekend during three days of party and protest.

Defy the Powers, Create Diversity. You bring your pamphlets and I'll bring my dog on a string.

Science focus

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

Mad cows fading away?

RECENT research that demonstrated that the incidence of mad cow disease will naturally disappear by the year 2001 is being used as evidence that nothing needs to be done to cull diseased cattle to keep them out of the human food chain.

This is a distortion of the real meaning of this work, recently reported by a team at Oxford University. This has demonstrated that proposed levels of culling will have minimal impact on the decline of the disease.

This is not a natural decline, but the result of removing BSE contaminated food stuff from cattle, offset to some extent by the finding that BSE can be transmitted from cows to calves.

Some predictions suggest that it may be 2010 before the disease has been really eradicated.

The original claims made by the government were that BSE would disappear by 1995. As this has clearly not happened this latest work is actually very bad news.

The only rational conclusion must be that the rate of culling should be increased until the disease has been removed. Only then will British beef be safe to eat.

This is not politically inspired Euro-nonsense as one Tory spokesperson has claimed, but simple fact.

Recent research at the Institute of Animal Health in Scotland has shown that infection by BSE can be readily transmitted by contamination of cuts, with probably a much higher risk of infection than eating.

This may suggest a means of transmission between animals that may make it more persistent in infected herds than previously believed. It may also explain the higher than normal incidence of BSE-associated CJD among farmers and butchers.

They also found that the disease appears to be transmitted through the animals' body in the lymphatic system, suggesting that it may be present in all animal material, rather than just brain or associated tissues.

More recent BSE news causing concern is the revelation that mechanically-recovered meat (MRM), which is essentially waste junk meat removed from bones with high pressure hoses, was used in baby food in the 1980s.

This is despite denials by manufacturers, who appear to have been caught lying by independent testing. This material would have been high-risk for BSE content.

News on the BSE front continues to seem bleaker, but the ultimate test of the enormity of this crisis will be human deaths. The spate of incidents of BSE-associated CJD reported earlier this year does not appear to have been sustained and we must hope that this decline is not reversed. But only time will tell.

Environmental crisis deepens

CLAIMS that the corner may have been turned on some aspects of the environmental crisis have taken a knocking.

An apparent downturn in the rate of destruction of the rain forests in the late 1980s to early 1990s appears to have been only a reflection of the capitalist business cycle. An upturn in economic activity in the last few years has resulted in a sharp escalation of forest burning in South America.

The rate of deforestation has increased by 34 per cent in the last three to four years, consuming an area the size of Denmark. This makes nonsense of the hot air generated at the 1992 Earth Summit. This probably did more to support global warming than bring about real improvements!

The worst offender in this global rape of the forests is the Japanese company Mitsubishi, according to the Environmental Investigation Agency.

The EIA clearly highlights multinational logging companies steeped in corrupt practices, and totally immoral in their lack of concern for their impact, for this growing disaster.

The British government has made much of ambitious energy and emission reduction targets in Britain. In reality these have mostly reflected changes in energy use as the coal industry has been destroyed, and drives the industry to cut energy costs.

Now some recent investigations by the Association for the Conservation of Energy have demonstrated how privatisation of the energy utilities has led to collapse of energy conservation measures. Bill-cutting schemes introduced to tempt big companies to switch suppliers have knocked the ground from under the need to reduce energy consumption. The result has been sharp increases in CO2 emissions.

Annual emissions have been calculated to be 9.3 million tonnes of industrially generated CO2 per year more than if price reductions had not been introduced. Domestic CO2 generation is calculated to be 2.7 million tonnes more.

The market economy is clearly leading us towards a global disaster.

Hairy chests mean more brains!?

US scientists have launched 'Human Brain Project' that will seek to find the biological source of human intellect in a detailed study of brain functioning.

This exciting project will undoubtedly lead to great breakthroughs in our understanding of both normal and aberrant brain functioning. But I hope that will avoid the fashionable biological reductionism that seeks to explain human intellect in purely biological terms.

Two recent examples of this will amuse Workers Press readers.

Psychiatrist Aikarakudy Ali recently claims to have found correlation between chest and back hair growth and intellectual prowess. He claims that the brightest are always the hairiest.

He even has a 'scientific' explanation of this based on levels of a male testosterone species that promotes hairiness and, he claims, aspects of brain functioning.

By pure coincidence the hairiest people on this planet happen to be white middle-class men. Women and men of other races are less hirsute.

This 'evidence' will no doubt be used to 'prove' the natural superiority of the white middle class male.

Another 'breakthrough' is claim that brighter people have more alkaline brains. A group at John Radcliffe University claim to have found a correlation between brain pH and IQ although their claims have been widely dismissed. They claim that measures that alter brain pH may lift IQ.

As someone with a pathetic level of body hair I have been considering investing in some hair restorer for my chest, maybe supplemented with a diet of indigestion tablets, but then I read that Albert Einstein had a total hairless body!

Brain pH may be linked to diet, which almost certainly can affect brain functioning, suggesting that the brain pH study may have some value.

Recent research, reported by the City University Social Statistics Research Unit, has demonstrated a correlation between stature and unemployment. This is undoubtedly related to the effect that the poor nutrition and disturbed sleep associated with childhood deprivation can have on brain development. This line of research seems to me to have much more promise than the nonsense of blaming inequality on the lack of a hairy chest!

**STOP THE CLAMPDOWN
RECLAIM THE FUTURE**

PARADE

**SATURDAY 28th SEPTEMBER 1996
at Myrtle Parade, Liverpool, 12 noon.**

**WORKSHOPS & CHILL
SUNDAY 29th SEPTEMBER 1996**

**MASS ACTION
MONDAY 30th SEPTEMBER 1996
at Seaforth Dock, Liverpool, 10am.**

Info lines:

0181 450 6929/ 0171 582 3474

Liverpool: 0151 207 3388/

Transport info line: 0171 281 4621

**3 days of party and protest
in support of the
Liverpool Dockers.**

**NEVER
CROSS A
PICKET
LINE!**

DEFYING THE POWERS CELEBRATING DIVERSITY

UNITING MINORITIES RESISTING OPPRESSION

German cuts steamrollered through parliament 'Social' state FLATTENED

THE GERMAN parliament, the Bundestag, has voted huge cuts in the provisions of the 'social market economy'.

Chancellor Kohl and finance minister Theo Waigel won an absolute majority which steamrollered a 'programme for growth and jobs' onto the statute book, avoiding a threatened rejection by the Social-Democratic majority in the upper house of parliament.

Every single MP in the government coalition voted for the measures. Conservative, Liberal and Catholic politicians, whose whole careers had been bound up with 'social policy', all answered the roll-call vote in favour of a grand restructuring of German society.

Even government MPs from the 'new territories' in the east, who had promised to oppose the measures, joined in the vote for cuts.

While some Free Democrats (Liberals) claimed the cuts were not enough to cover the budget deficit, at least one Liberal MP warned the cuts would create social discord, before he too voted for Kohl's programme.

Social Democrats (SPD), Greens and former Stalinists of the Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS) impotently opposed the cuts package. SPD leader Rudolf Scharping horrified his own benches with a pathetic reply to the budget proposals.

Gregor Gysi of the PDS pointed out that the weakest in society were being made to suffer while the number of millionaires was almost doubled. He added it was 'pure hypocrisy' to talk about the protection of unborn children when money for perinatal care was being cut.

Nevertheless, nobody in the opposition has an alternative to offer that will cut the huge deficit in government finances without at the same time raising even more taxes and charges on incomes.

Social Democrats in the upper chamber are probably secretly relieved that they will not be expected to try and hold up the new measures.

They are all in charge of local and regional governments which are desperately making cuts in order to balance their own budgets.

The trade unions have held a rotating vigil in a marquee near the parliament building in Bonn since the cuts were proposed. Delegations of unionists from all over the country have demon-

BY BOB ARCHER

strated and lobbied politicians in the run up to the vote.

But the union leaders have organised nothing to match the mass demonstration in Bonn last June (see Workers Press, 22 June). While many activists are now demanding a general strike in opposition to the cuts, it seems that some workforces have been demoralised by their leaders' mixture of rhetoric and inactivity.

One engineering worker from Passau in Bavaria said he could only persuade 45 of his 3,500 workmates to join the lobby. He reported many were disappointed when the massive June rally failed to change the government's mind.

A steelworker from the Ruhr said many of his fellow workers would only act when the cuts in sick pay began to hit them personally. 'Just wait till they have to come in to work with a temperature in case they lose pay,' he said.

Engineering workers and many other trade unionists are exempt from cuts in sick pay because they have legally-binding wage agreements. Nevertheless, engineering employers in the south west have threatened to override the agreement and introduce the cuts.

Klaus Zwickel, leader of the huge IGM engineering union, has warned that this will be met by strike action.

In reaction to the overall cuts package, he has called for voters to remove the current government (presumably not before the next election). He accused 'free-market politicians and business leaders' of 'beating a path into a different kind of republic at the expense of the majority of citizens'.

The cuts

DM28.8 billion are to be saved in pensions by the year 2000 and DM4.7 billion is to come off the Federal Labour Institute's budget with its vast responsibilities for employment and unemployment.

The retirement age for women is to be raised progressively to 65. Early retirement will result in only a proportion of the pension being paid. Periods of illness or unemployment when no contributions are paid will no longer be taken into account when setting the level of pension.

Expenditure on visits to health spas and the like is to be cut by DM2.6 million.

Some big statutory pension funds like the Federal Pension Institute for white-collar workers will be forced to sell up extensive housing associations they own in order to cover deficits. Tenants' legal rights are to be protected.

Conditions under which disabled people receive help with training will be tightened. The aid will be set off against unemployment benefits.

Sick pay will be reduced from 100 per cent to 80 per cent of normal pay, although this will not affect the many workers whose sick pay is written into contracts. Victims of occupational hazards and accidents at work are also immune from this cut.

Workers can also avoid this cut if they give up one day's paid holiday for every five days they report sick.

Firms with ten or fewer

employees will now have the right to fire workers who are not needed, although this will only affect future new employees. The very strict order in which workers are selected for redundancy will be changed so that employers can keep workers with essential skills.

Increases in statutory health insurance contributions are to be stopped for the rest of this year. These are one of the major 'hid-

den labour costs' that employers complain of. By January 1997, these contributions are to be cut by 0.4 per cent, with corresponding cuts in services.

Prescription charges will be increased by DM1. Spectacle-frame subsidies of 20 per cent will go. Those born after 1979 will no longer have replacement teeth paid for. Long-term sick pay will drop from 80 to 70 per cent of normal gross income.



IGM engineering union leader Klaus Zwickel addresses a rally last March

Arkan and Europe

AS Bosnians were going to the polls last week, under conditions which many fear will reinforce their country's division, many people were shocked to learn that European taxpayers' money was funding the campaign of Serb war criminal, ex-secret police agent, 'ethnic cleanser' and racketeer Zeljko Rasnjatovic — better known as Arkan.

To cap it all, a letter appeared in the liberal *Guardian*, signed by Arkan (whether he wrote it is another question), justifying himself as 'entirely worthy' of Europe's support. RADE PAVLOVIC, a Workers International comrade in Serbia, gives his view:

IMPERIALIST Europe has shed copious democratic tears of pity for the Bosnian tragedy. But on the military and diplomatic plane it was an accomplice of the Croat and Serb fascists who wished — and still want — to carve up Bosnia-Herzegovina.

We have denounced this complicity from the start, but our democratic friends thought we exaggerated. I would suggest they look at two facts.

The first is a quotation from *Mourir pour Sarajevo* (1994), a book by French writer Gabriel Plisson, a close observer of the Bosnian drama, which describes on page 229 the activities of Arkan, chief of the Serb brown-shirts, at Brcko, at the beginning of the war:

'Arkan's men were unleashed, in Brcko, in front of

the hotel Posavina, in an orgy and massacre that lasted three days and four nights. They then transported the corpses of 300 victims in refrigerated lorries to throw them in the river Sava.'

The other crimes of the Arkanovici, the self-styled 'tigers', unfurled in the war reports from Zvornik, Bijeljina and elsewhere. These things are known in Bosnia and Serbia and internationally.

This does not prevent the imperialist 'peacemakers' from granting no less than DM300,000 to Arkan's party for the Bosnian elections.

The officials of the OECD, who ran the Bosnian elections, knew very well they could hide behind the Hague tribunal, saying that there were no charges against

Arkan. But they were incapable of explaining the criteria by which Arkan's party obtained the aid cited' (*Nasa Borba*, Belgrade, 6 September).

Three hundred thousand Deutschmarks! One hundred and fifty thousand pounds! How many roads, how many schools, how many hospitals could be rebuilt for that? And they gave it to the fascists, in the name of Western democracy! A good match, not at all against nature.

Arkan was not wrong when he exclaimed 'Europe is with us! Capitalist Europe, the accomplice of fascists and racists, corrupt Europe, but not the other Europe, which is ours, the workers' Europe. Between the two Europes there is nothing, if one leaves out the imbeciles, confusionists and con-men.

Aid for Bosnia

Saturday 18 October: Open meeting to discuss the past, present and future of the Workers Aid and Student Aid campaign for Bosnia, 2pm. This meeting will hopefully prepare proposals for future actions.

Saturday 18 October: Fundraising concert and social, 8pm.

Sunday 19 October: Workers Aid meeting, 11am-3pm.

All events at Leeds University Student Union

More information from John Davies, 0113-262 2705

Children of the war

Drawings and paintings by Kurdish and Bosnian children

Until 25 September, Tuesday to Saturday, 11am-5pm

Kufa Gallery, 26 Westbourne Grove, London W2 5RH.

Tel: 0171-229 1928 Fax: 0171-243 8513

Children of the Kurdish and Bosnian community will play music and read poetry

Tudjman widens attack on media

SOLIDARITY WITH CROAT JOURNALISTS!

CROATIA'S President Tudjman and his Croatian Democratic Community (HDZ) party are widening their attack on dissenting media, by filing slander charges against two newspapers, *Novi List*, and the weekly *Nacional*.

Senior editors of the two papers are accused of publishing 'lies and delusions' and defaming the HDZ. The charges were brought under a new law providing for prosecution of journalists who offend top state officials.

Marinko Culic, a senior editor of the satirical weekly *Feral Tribune*, goes on trial under this law on 24 September.

Novi List, published in the

port city of Rijeka, is Croatia's only independent daily, with a circulation of 40,000. *Nacional* is a weekly magazine often critical of top officials. A free media was one of the conditions for Croatia's accession to the Council of Europe.

Pickets were planned for Croatian diplomatic missions in New York and London yesterday, Friday 20 September, in support of Croatian journalists under attack.

The London picket, organised by the Bosnia Solidarity Campaign, was at the Croat embassy, 18 Jermyn Street, SW1 between 3pm and 6pm.

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.