

NHS DESTRUCTION STEPPED UP

THERE may be a new Minister of Health, but Tory plans to break up the health and social services are proceeding without change.

They include the privatisation of individual hospitals, or groups of hospitals. Such hospitals would contract to provide services at an agreed price to the NHS.

Only three weeks ago John Moore, until this week in charge of supervising the dismantling of the NHS, presented a paper to Thatcher arguing for people to be able to contract out of the National Insurance system, if they took out private medical insurance.

Rich

This would bring right out into the open a two tier system in which the rich would get the treatment they paid for and the rest would get second class care or none at all.

Thatcher's response to Moore's proposal is not known, although it was rejected by the committee set up to review the future of the NHS.

Letter

A letter in last week's 'South London Press' vividly illustrates the plight into which the health service has fallen. It was written by Mr D Bernstein of Streatham Hill:

'Over forty years ago, in 1947, I was chairman of an advisory committee that helped to set up the foundations of the NHS.

'Never would I have dreamed it would be allowed to deteriorate to the disastrous situation that exists today.

'A small example is my own experience. I broke my thigh over six months ago and, after four weeks in hospital, I was sent home as beds were at a premium.

'Unfortunately I am unable to get into my bath without assistance and so ease the pain of my injury, which has developed arthritis in the hip and knee.

I have made numerous phone calls for "help" to all the various services set up to help the disabled and elderly (I am nearly 70), but without success.'

'The result is I have been unable to have a bath for six months.'

This is just one of countless thousands of cases, the product of health and social services that are now chronically under-funded.

Shortfall

Even the Tory-controlled Social Services Select Committee has estimated that the NHS is now suffering a £2,000 million financial shortfall. Last winter's cuts alone brought the closure of 3,000 hospital beds.

The Thatcher government has reneged on its promise to fund the nurses' pay increase.

Instead of the expected 16 per cent rise many nurses will stay on their present grades and receive a paltry 4 per cent rise, inadequate to keep up with an inflation rate, even on official figures, expected to top six per cent by the end of the year. In towns throughout Britain social services are reaching a state of near-collapse.

Sacked

Latest example comes from Labour-controlled Brent council in north-west London, whose Director of Social Services, David Divine, was originally sacked following his support of an independent report which accused councillors of interfering in the running of the department and neglecting the area's 'dreadful' old people's homes.

Brent's Labour council have demanded a £3.2 million cut in social services spending. Two weeks ago Divine warned the council that he

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Workers Press

The swift taming of Jesse Jackson

AFTER the Atlanta, Georgia Democratic Party Convention, the US Presidential Circus is now well under way.

In a few months, US voters will have the opportunity of choosing between George Bush, backed by Big Business, and Michael Dukakis, backed by Big Business. Everything else is public relations and ballyhoo.

More than ever before, the Convention was put on as a multi-million dollar TV spectacular, produced by Dukakis' well-oiled machine. The extras - known as 'delegates' - were radio-controlled to respond with wild cheering or spontaneous laughter at the appropriate moments.

Rehearsed

The stars were even more carefully rehearsed, with an army of script-writers, make-up men and cheer-leaders. (Even this slick machine ran into trouble when Governor Clinton of Arkansas, billed to nominate Dukakis, overran his scripted time. He had to be forced to an emergency stop by means of tumultuous applause from the ranks, before the TV audience switched channels all over the country.)

Exercise

What political decisions were taken by this massive exercise in democracy? Absolutely none. Before it all began, Dukakis had made quite clear that all his hints of radicalism were just part of the game, by selecting Senator Lloyd Bentsen for his vice-presidential running mate.

On every single issue - Nicaragua, Star Wars, abortion, health care - Bentsen is at one with Reagan's deputy George Bush, or even slightly to the right.

And where in all this was the Rev. Jesse Jackson? He had led his Rainbow Coalition in a fight for the Presidential Candidacy, surprising many with the success with which he gained white working-class support.

Snubbed by Dukakis's decision to run with Bentsen, Jackson got a share of the spotlight in Atlanta, made his usual populist noises - and knuckled under to the Democratic Party bosses.

Demagogic

In other words, after all his demagogic ranting, he has been easily tamed by the Big Business machine. In return for the provision of a DC-9, he will work to bring in the black, union and radical vote behind Dukakis and Bentsen.

The lesson is clear. Only the building of a class party, establishing the independence of the mighty US labour movement, can break the political domination of the two great parties of US monopoly-capital.

This issue, which has faced the US since the beginning of this century must still be confronted. Perhaps the sight of the Reverend shuffling along at the rear of the Dukakis-Bentsen Circus will help to teach that lesson.

WORKERS PRESS FIGHTING FUND

In so far: £4040.96

We have set ourselves a target of £10,000 by 30 September and we must say frankly that our Fund is growing too slowly! We must step up the collection of money from our readers and supporters. We now need an average of £600 per week if we are to carry into practice the plans we have for the expansion of Workers Press and our Party.

On page four we outline the plans of the London District for political activity this coming autumn. Similar activities for other Party districts will be announced shortly. We want to recruit new members into the Workers Revolutionary Party and build on the gains we have made over the last three years since the old corrupt leadership of the movement was expelled.

An ambitious programme of lectures, meetings and seminars, centred on the struggle to rebuild the Fourth International, is planned. We are sure this will appeal to many workers, students, youth and others involved in the struggle for socialism.

In addition we will resume a tabloid newspaper style for Workers Press and launch a theoretical journal.

These plans will be realised only if we receive a regular income from our members and supporters. This depends on YOU! August is traditionally a difficult month for finances, so please do not let us down. Do make sure that every friend and contact of the movement is seen and asked to give as generously as possible to our Fighting Fund.

Geoff Pilling

All donations to: WRP PO Box 735 London SW9 7QS

The fate of grasses and supergrasses

SPORTS Minister Colin Moynihan announced last week that three British athletes were under investigation for failing drug tests. His half-brother Lord Moynihan was meanwhile reported under heavy guard at a secret address in America, having been 'supergrass' (no pun intended) in the biggest ever drugs bust.

Ex-MI6 agent Dennis Howard Marks, arrested in Majorca in a dawn raid on July 25 is facing extradition to the United States, charged with heading a worldwide cannabis smuggling racket.

'They were able to buy freighters for cash to smuggle marijuana and hashish to the United States and Canada,' a federal narcotics agent in Miami said. 'Marks had homes all over the world.'

'Some of these people had very high lifestyles. They were able to launder millions of dollars through front businesses.'

'They had their own finance houses. We have seized \$9 million in cash and have targetted another \$30 millions worth of assets which we hope to seize around the world.'

Marks, 43, was acquitted in the Old Bailey of drugs running charges in 1981, having told the court he had been working for MI6, supposedly on the track of IRA gun runners. His career as a drug pusher and an agent both began at Oxford University.

Ex-Coldstream Guards officer Lord Moynihan, who left his seat in the Lords as a Liberal peer for Spain in 1969, when his business activities came under scrutiny, was named as a 'shadowy figure' in a 1980 Australian Royal Commission report on Far East drug rackets.

At the time, he was running the Yellow Brick Road 'girlie bar' in Manila. According to the report, he was involved in smuggling heroin into Australia.

Last week, Philippines police raided a hotel and massage parlour owned by the peer, arresting 11 women for non-compliance with a closure order.

By midweek, some 22 people had been arrested in connection with the drugs ring, and more were expected in Britain, the United States and Canada.

HORROR OF PRISONS

SCOTLAND has 106 people in prison per 1,000 of population - a higher proportion than Turkey, Ireland, or any other European country.

Over half of Scotland's prisoners are either on remand, or serving sentences for 'crimes' - non payment of debts, defrauding the social services, petty theft - directly caused by poverty (Glasgow may have a Garden Festival, but the housing schemes still have 40, 50, 60 per cent male unemployment.)

Eight years ago, a small group of prisoners at Peterhead went on hunger strike against the use of specially built punishment blocks, sensory deprivation techniques and beatings.

One of the protesters, Mick McCallum, smuggled out letters to the press, giving two warnings: that the system was concentrating on building a repressive apparatus for 'subversives' (ultimately political prisoners); and that the mass of prisoners would act violently. On both counts he has been proved right.

In recent months every Scottish prison has had hostage-taking protests, roof-top demonstrations or attacks on warders. The SAS joined prison officers to quell the largest protest.

At Glenochil Jail, Governor Gordon Jackson has introduced 24-hour-a-day use of riot gear by ward-

ers. Allegations of prisoners being locked in cells for over two weeks, and of the use of valium as a 'liquid cosh' are answered with evasions. (Where are the Labour leaders, who are so fond of telling us that Scotland voted for them, not for Thatcher?)

Asked earlier this year at a public meeting whether the ultimate responsibility for violence lay not with prisoners but with the system which built prisons and put people in them, Labour Lord Morton of Shuna answered emphatically, 'no'.

Lothian Labour Councillor Tom Darby - a supporter of the pseudo-Trotskyist Militant Group, which regards prison warders, along with policemen and soldiers as 'workers in uniform' gave his view on TV this week.

He was concerned 'above all' for warders in Glenochil's 'A Block' who have to work in riot gear. He expressed no concern for prisoners who face six wardens to one, on the rare occasions that their cell doors are opened.

Labour and Trade Union activists cannot take the prison system's side. Support the prisoners' relatives' demand for the sacking of Governor Jackson. Demand that Scotland's Labour and Trade Union organisations inquire into the whole prison crisis themselves.

Thatcher is a liar

LABOUR leader Neil Kinnock and others joined with the Tories in voting 180 - 28 to suspend Labour MP Tam Dalyell from the Commons, for calling Prime Minister Thatcher 'a liar'.

Dalyell, referring to the Westland helicopter affair, and the appointment of Leon Brittan (who had to resign as Trade and Industry Secretary over it) to the EEC Commission, said Thatcher had told 'an indefensible lie to the Commons.'

Disgrace

Later, Labour MP Frank Dobson demanded that the prime minister make a statement on 'the remarkable circumstances, in which a member of the House who resigned in disgrace from the Cabinet is now being put forward as one of our nominees in the European Community.'

He suggested that the Brittan appointment was a 'payoff' for keeping quiet, and demanded Thatcher make a statement on 'what she is up to.'

Slaughter of Iran-Iraq war

AS PEACE looms nearer in the long-drawn mutual slaughter between Iraq and Iran, the masses of both countries will be hoping that, at last, the bloody and futile sacrifices to which they were condemned by their governments are over.

But for the Kurdish people whose homeland straddles the Iran-Iraq-Turkey borders, and who suffered some of the worst of the war, the immediate concern is that Saddam Hussein's Iraqi regime will use a ceasefire as a respite to throw its full weight against them.

'We expect Iraq to move more weapons into Kurdistan,' said veteran nationalist Jalal Talabani, of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) last week. 'We will suffer more, and will probably have to withdraw into the mountains.'

The Kurdish movement took advantage of the war to step up its guerrilla struggle and establish its power in Iraq-Kurdistan. The regime hit back barbarously, using chemical weapons to slaughter 5,000 Kurdish civilians in the town of Halabcheh in March this year.

With the Khomeini regime announcing its willingness to make up to Baghdad, people are remembering how in 1975, Mustafa Barzani's Kurdish followers were stranded when the Shah (and the American CIA) abandoned them for a treaty with Iraq.

However, younger Kurds argue the situation is different today. 'The Kurdish movement is prepared, whatever the outcome of peace talks,' one activist told Workers Press. 'The movement has matured enough, militarily and politically, to stand on its own feet.' He argued that the Iraqi regime was weak now. It had regained

ground only because the Iranian soldiers were quitting it.

'Neither regime is strong. Morale is very low in both armies. People are fed up with the war.' According to Jalal Talabani, the Iraqi forces have only been able to regain positions in Kurdistan through saturation chemical bombing.

He says the Kurds will now change tactics, and 'set up fast-moving small units in cities and elsewhere, while training regular units for possible larger scale fighting.'

'We are not trying to conquer Baghdad,' Talabani says, 'we are just trying to force the central government to observe our rights.' He has just returned from Washington, where he claims State Department officials were sympathetic to Kurdish rights within the Iraqi state.

He is hoping the US will put pressure on the Iraqi regime to stop its use of chemical weapons against the Kurdish people. Talabani's PUK, the Barzani-led Kurdish Democratic Party, and other groups have overcome past rivalries to form a united front for the past two years. More left-wing younger Kurds do not rule out the possibility that Washington may put pressure on its reactionary allies - whether in Baghdad or Ankara - to offer some kind of concessions to the Kurds, for fear of the growing strength of their revolt.

But they aspire to full self-determination, including the right to re-unite their homeland, and to social revolution too. And they prefer to rely on their own strength, and call on international solidarity, rather than trust in promises from Washington, Tehran, or Moscow - all of which have betrayed them too often.

NHS DESTRUCTION

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would close seven establishments, including nurseries and old people's homes, unless the council took action about the appalling conditions in them.

The latest report, by the Social Care Association, charges the council with having allowed care for the elderly to collapse. The council has refused to decide anything about the worst of the old people's homes, one of which has been condemned as unfit by environmental health officers.

Last week nearly 1,000 Brent staff went on strike in defence of Divine, neither of his two deputies would act for him and the local government union NALGO boycotted the post. At a stormy meeting last ednesday the crisis deepened when councillors were forced to reinstate Divine.

The picture in Brent could be repeated throughout the country with savage cuts in services being carried through by Labour councils.

The Labour and trade union leaders prayed that Thatcher's bogus offer to the nurses would get them off the hook. They even hoped that the appointment of Kenneth Clarke as Health Minister would bring a change in Tory policy.

These cowardly leaders were wrong.

Millions of old people, the chronically sick and the unemployed are suffering at the hands of Tory butchery and the refusal of the Labour and trade union leaders to fight the Thatcher government.

The NHS is back at the centre of the struggle against Thatcher.

The defence of the health and social services must be forced onto the agenda of the coming TUC and Labour Party conferences.

- Full support for the health workers!
- Full funding for the NHS!
- Drive out the Tories!

**AUTUMN PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES
LONDON DISTRICT OF THE
WORKERS REVOLUTIONARY PARTY**

- Sep 1 - 3...Cadre School for members only
- Sep 5.....Lobby of TUC (details to be arranged)
- Sep 18.....A day's seminar on the Spanish
Revolution-Tom Owen (details later)

Oct 2.....

**50 YEARS OF THE
FOURTH INTERNATIONAL**

3.00 p.m. - 8 p.m.

The Place Theatre, Dukes Rd.
Camden (opp Shaw Theatre)

Video showing of 'The Bolsheviks' plus Eye-witness
account of developments in the Soviet Union

TICKETS £2.00 (£1.00 unwaged)

- Oct 3.....Lobby of the Labour Party (details to be
arranged)

The following series of 8 meetings will be held in the
Conway Hall, Red Lion Square starting at 7.30 p.m.

- Oct 6.....Tom Kemp lecture on: COLONIALISM,
DEVELOPMENT AND UNDER-DEVELOPMENT

Oct 13.....Tom Kemp 2nd lecture

Oct 20.....Tom Kemp 3rd lecture

Oct 27.....Tom Kemp 4th lecture

- Nov 3.....**THE WRP - THREE YEARS SINCE
THE EXPULSION OF HEALY**
(a meeting for recruitment)

Nov 10.....Simon Pirani 1st lecture on Ireland

Nov 17.....Simon Pirani 2nd lecture

Nov 24.....Simon Pirani 3rd lecture

- Nov 27.....Seminar : **CRISIS OF CULTURE
UNDER THATCHER** (details to be
arranged)

The and

1.The decision of the Seventh World Congress of the Comintern, according to which socialism in the Soviet Union has 'finally and irrevocably' triumphed - regardless of the low level of labour productivity as compared with the advanced capitalist countries and independent of the course of development of all the rest of the world! - is a crude and dangerous lie. The reference to the fact that the Soviet Union covers 'one-sixth of the earth's surface' is all the less decisive in this question by virtue of the fact that only 8.5 per cent of humanity has settled upon this area. It continues to be a question of the struggle between two irreconcilable systems - socialism and capitalism. . . It will be possible to decide the question 'finally and irrevocably' only on the world arena.

2.The principal mass of the means of production of the industry of the Soviet Union has grown tremendously and remains in the hands of the state; in the field of agriculture - in the hands of the collective farms, which stand between state and private property. But not even state property is as yet socialist property, for the latter has as its premise the dying away of the state as the guardian of property, the mitigation of inequality, and the gradual dissolution of the property concept even in the morals and customs of society. The real development of the Soviet Union in recent years has followed a directly opposite road. Inequality grows and, together with it, state coercion. Given favourable domestic and international conditions, the transition is possible from the present state property to socialism. Given unfavourable conditions, however, a reversion to capitalism is also possible.

3.Every workers' state, in the first period, will, in the interests of raising the productive forces, retain the system of work-wages, or as Marx puts it, 'the bourgeois norms of distribution'. . . Given the isolation and the backwardness of the Soviet land, the bourgeois norms of distribution took on a crude and meretricious character (enormous differentiation of work-wages, bonuses, titles, orders, and more of the same) and engendered retrograde tendencies which imperil the very system of state property.

4.Low productivity, with high capital investments, with tremendous military expenditures and the enormous wastefulness of the uncontrolled apparatus, signifies the continuous salient lack of the most important objects of personal consumption for the masses of the population. The economic successes, which are much too modest for a significant material and cultural elevation of the whole people, are already proving adequate for the emergence of a broad, privileged stratum. . .

5.Playing upon the manifold social antagonisms. . . the Soviet bureaucracy has acquired an actual independence from the toilers. Like every bureaucracy, it regulates the antagonisms in the interests of the stronger, of the better provided, of the privileged. Like every bureaucracy it levies a significant portion

Fourth International the Soviet Union

This article written by LEON TROTSKY in 1936, is of direct relevance to the present crisis engulfing the Soviet Union. Trotsky outlines the attitude of the Fourth International to the Soviet state. Its low level of productive forces, trapped within the national boundaries of the Soviet Union, made the realisation of socialism impossible, despite claims of the Stalinist bureaucracy. At the same time, Trotsky explains why the Fourth International stands for the unconditional defence of the gains of 1917. These gains consisted of the nationalised property established by the revolution. It was for this reason that the Fourth International rejected the ultraleftist 'theory' that 1917 had resulted in a new form of capitalism.

of the national income for itself and thereby becomes the most privileged of all the privileged strata.

6. . . Soviet society already now presents an enormous hierarchy: from a vagabond child, a prostitute, a slum proletarian - to the ruling 'ten thousand' who lead the life of Western European magnates of capital. In contradiction to the contentions of the Seventh Congress of the Comintern, socialism has not yet triumphed; neither in the objective economic conditions of the USSR (the criterion of the productivity of labour) nor in the consciousness of the producing masses (the criterion of personal consumption).

7. . . All the social relationships of the USSR, the privileges of the Soviet aristocracy included, base themselves in the long run on state and collective farm property, acquired by the expropriation of the bourgeoisie, which, in distinction from capitalist property, opens up the possibility of the growth of industry and of culture. The historical gulf dug up by the October Revolution still continues to separate the Soviet state planned economy from capitalist 'state-ism' which signifies state intervention for the purpose of saving private property and which 'regulates' the obsolete economic system by putting the brakes on the development of the productive forces and by lowering the standard of living of the people.

. . . The victory of the Bonapartist bureaucracy of the USSR over the proletarian vanguard is by no means equivalent to the victory of the capitalist counterrevolution, although the former blazes the trail for the latter.

8. To assert (like the anarchists and all sorts of ultraleftists) that the Soviet Union deserves, on

the part of the revolutionary proletariat, the same attitude as do the imperialist states is to assert that it is a matter of indifference to the working class whether the state industry and the collective agriculture in the Soviet Union is to be preserved and further developed, or the economy is to be flung back into the conditions of decomposition and, by means of a civil war, to fascist capitalism. Such an attitude is worthy of the disappointed idealistic 'friends' of the Soviet Union, that is, of the dilettantes and political windbags of the liberal and anarchist type, but by no means of Marxian revolutionists who never leave out of consideration the basic factor of history: the development of production.

9. As has been said, the social stratification of Soviet society is developing mainly in the field of distribution and only partially, above all in agriculture, in the field of production. But distribution is not separated by an impenetrable wall from production. By deliberately stimulating the appetite of individuals and groups and enhancing it to the point where it becomes unbridled, the bureaucracy directly discredits the idea of social property. The growth of economic privileges engenders among the masses a justified doubt as to whom, in the long run, the whole system will actually serve. . .

10. The possible roads to the restoration of the bourgeois system are revealed with particular clarity in the question of the family, since the bureaucracy, as a consequence of the low material and cultural level of the country as well as consequent upon the throttling of the initiative of the masses, has not succeeded in fulfilling the tasks of social maintenance and upbringing, it has begun to

reestablish and to glorify the petty bourgeois family, including its narrow private economy - that fostering soil of all species of social idiocy. . . The bureaucracy itself, which endeavours to base itself politically upon the conservative family, feels its own domination to be defective and incomplete, for it is not in a position to bequeath its material privileges to its successors. The question of the right of inheritance leads, however, to the question of the further extension of the bounds of private property. This is one of the possible channels of restoration of capitalism. In all the fields of social life, the bureaucracy imperils everything that is progressive in the Soviet system. Instead of the guardian of 'socialist property', it becomes its gravedigger. . .

15. The working class of the USSR has been robbed of the last possibility of a legal reformation of the state. The struggle against the bureaucracy necessarily becomes a revolutionary struggle. True to the traditions of Marxism, the Fourth International decisively rejects individual terror, as it does all other means of political adventurism. The bureaucracy can be smashed only by means of the goal-conscious movement of the masses against the usurpers, parasites and oppressors. If a social counterrevolution, i.e. the overthrow of state ownership of the means of production and of the land as well as the reestablishment of private property, is necessary for the return of the USSR to capitalism, then for the further development of socialism a political revolution has become inevitable, i.e. the violent overthrow of the political rule of the degenerated bureaucracy while maintaining the property relations established by the October Revolution. The proletarian vanguard of the USSR, basing itself upon the toiling masses of the whole country and upon the revolutionary movement of the whole world, will have to batter down the bureaucracy by force, restore Soviet democracy, eliminate the enormous privileges and assure a genuine advance to socialist equality. . .

18. Is the USSR a workers' state? The USSR is a state which bases itself upon the property relationships created by the proletarian revolution and which is administered by a labour bureaucracy in the interests of new privileged strata. The Soviet Union can be called a workers' state approximately in the same sense - despite the vast difference in scale - in which a trade union, led and betrayed by opportunists, that is, by agents of capital, can be called a workers' organisation. Just as revolutionists defend every trade union, even the most thoroughly reformist, from the class enemy, combatting intransigently the treacherous leaders at the same time, so the parties of the Fourth International defend the USSR against the blows of imperialism without for a single moment giving up the struggle against the reactionary Stalinist apparatus. In war as in peace, they guard their full freedom of criticism of the ruling Soviet caste and the full freedom of struggle against their agreements with the imperialists at the expense of the interests of the USSR and of the international revolution.

**The Fourth International and the Soviet Union is in 'Documents of the Fourth International: the formative years (1933-40), Pathfinder Press, New York, 1973, pp 101-107*



Personal Column

Peter Fryer

Naked lies and naked truth

EVERYBODY knows that the Thatcher government's normal expedient when it gets in a jam is to lie its way out if it can. This is a government of seasoned and shameless liars.

The latest example to come to light of an insolent lie being told by a minister to the House of Commons - something that used to be rather frowned on in the best circles, but we've entered a new era now, when regard for truth is dismissed as namby-pambyism - the latest example, I say, goes back to 1984 and concerns the strip searching of women arrested at Greenham Common.

In May 1984 the Labour MP Tom Pendry asked John Stanley, then Minister of State for the Armed Forces, for what purposes Ministry of Defence police were carrying out strip searches at Greenham Common; how many strip searches had taken place there; what was found; and if he would make a statement.

'No such strip searches have been carried out at RAF Greenham Common', was the reply.

Now, six months earlier, a 32-year-old Wigan woman called Stella Cairns, a member of the Liberal Party, had been strip searched at Greenham Common and then interrogated while almost naked. She was charged with criminal damage to the perimeter fence and released; when the case came to court the

prosecution offered no evidence against her.

Following Stanley's reply, Cairns decided to sue the Ministry of Defence for false imprisonment and assault by strip search.

She found it uphill work. At first she was refused legal aid, on the ground that she had not been assaulted or injured. She also had a hell of a job to get the Ministry to give her the documents she was entitled to.

Four long years went by - years of persistent evasion and time-wasting tactics. And then, this month, her case against the Ministry was heard.

The Ministry's advocate insultingly suggested, in cross-examination, that since Cairns shared a tent with Greenham women, nakedness in front of others should not upset her.

A former woman police constable testified in writing that she had strip searched 'about 750 women' in the years 1983 and 1984.

She had worked out a 'routine' for it, she said. She admitted that some of her victims had been totally naked. Her purpose in strip searching them was to find potential weapons and marker pens that might be used for writing slogans on walls.

Two other officers, confronted with their own notebooks, were forced to admit in cross-examination that their oral evidence had been 'misleading' and 'unreliable'.

Cairns won her case and was awarded damages totalling £2,001. The Ministry of Defence was ordered to pay her legal costs in full.

But when Pendry again raised the case in the Commons, saying the minister had 'misled' the House four years ago, he was told the

minister stood by his answer, which was based on an investigation that 'had found no evidence to support the allegations of strip searching at Greenham Common'.

So, caught out in yet another lie, this government acts true to form by trying to brazen it out.

The naked truth of the matter is that strip searching is a 'routine' device designed, not to find possible weapons or marker pens, but systematically to degrade and humiliate - above all, to degrade and humiliate political opponents.

It is, of course, against the law. But those who are supposed to be upholding the law don't give a damn about that. And the practice of strip searching is customary, not only at Greenham Common, but also in prisons, at immigration and (as Workers Press has several times revealed) in British-occupied Ireland.

There was a time when such a disgraceful practice would have given rise to a storm of protest; and when ministers venturing to lie to the House of Commons about such matters, and then blandly persisting in their lies when found out, would have been called to account.

Calling them to account was once the job of the press. But Britain's prostituted press is no longer concerned with democratic traditions or the defence of civil liberties.

Its job is to support the Tory government. It takes its line from the 10 Downing Street press office.

And it knows better than to cast the light of investigative journalism on the growing number of hushed-up public scandals, of which strip searching is only one, and far from being the most outrageous one.

AS I SEE IT...



BY TOM OWEN

Name your poison

AS I'm staying in France for some time I thought that I would enter the Workers Press wine controversy.

Wine and tea have common cultural attributes. Both, for instance, are addictive, one usually a mild stimulant, the other an alcoholic depressant. As can be witnessed in these columns, both can also provoke deep-rooted national prejudices outside their own cultural contexts.

This results in either crude national stereotyping - Southern European wine drinkers or the English cup of tea, that panacea for all catastrophes - or the snob/connaisseur, whose over-refined senses can trace a particular infusion or vintage to the square yard of earth from whence they originated.

Both drinks also yield super-profits, distort national economies and are the product of the super-exploitation of poor workers and peasants. Tea, of course, has played a special role in the development of British imperialism just as wine production plays a crucial role in the economies of

Southern Europe.

At the moment, I'm in the middle of one of France's better known wine growing regions - Beaujolais. It is just north of Lyons, France's second city, on the hills that flank the broad Soane valley and reach into the Massif Central.

Lyons holds a special place in communist history: the insurrection of the silk weavers in the early nineteenth century was the harbinger of the new revolutionary class and the brutal repression of that insurrection provided grim warning of the ferocity of the bourgeoisie when its power was challenged.

Beaujolais has not this central historic importance for us but it does offer an interesting insight into the social relations and productive processes that put bottles onto shop shelves and the tables of thousands and even millions of homes.

But Beaujolais is especially interesting because it still preserves unique and archaic social relationships of production that pre-date the French Revolution.

The majority of 'vignerons' or winegrowers are landless peasants, who traditionally tend the wine crop for a number of chateaux. As well as rent for their small farms, they hand over half the crop each year to their landlord and then process, bottle and market the rest themselves.

The rest of their agricultural activity remains little above the subsistence level. Many of them have even to hire out vats in the cellars of the landlord.

It is only quite recently that relative prosperity has come to the 'villages' because the light red wine has become something of a cult. The farmers in the higher areas do

not fully share in this because their wine is not regarded as equal to that of the lower slopes.

Many younger farmers are beginning to invest in their own modern vats and bottling plants through the time-honoured credit systems. These younger 'vignerons' are now becoming the majority of the production force as there is an 'imbalance' in the age groups. This 'imbalance' is a euphemism for an epidemic of arsenic poisoning of nearly a generation of peasants from the use of toxic sprays to protect the vines.

Before the Northern European Yuppies send their wine dealers hurtling down the French motorways in October, to boast the earliest 'Beaujolais nouveaux' at their dinner parties, a different migration has taken place a month earlier. Migrant workers from Poland, Italy, Yugoslavia (and increasingly the UK) come to do the back-breaking work of grape picking by hand on the steep slopes from crack of dawn to dusk, for what the shrewd and hard pressed peasant 'vigneron' offers.

A friend of mine, a CGT printing worker, told me that during the events of 1968, the Beaujolais peasantry came down to Villefranche, the regional centre, with lorry loads of vegetables to give to the striking workers of Lyons and the region.

The young communists were organising the distribution of food when the party intervened. The CGT officials told them that the free distribution of food between workers and peasantry was Revolution and the party was opposed to that!

The contrasts between town and country here are deeply embodied in French history. So, should someone, in early November, ask you to tipple some 'Beaujolais nouveau', ask them for their poison: arsenic and old sweat!

Changing the rules- one strike and you're out

THE TORIES have done excellent work undermining workers' rights and weakening trade union power during the past ten years, according to the right-wing academic think-tank, the Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA).

Its latest research paper, 'Striking out strikes' examines approvingly the government's record since 1979 in making secondary picketing unlawful, removing immunity for strike organisers, applying a massive labour 'shake out', especially in manufacturing, and removing all legal obligations to maintain full employment.

Injunctions

The IEA crows over the fact that from May 1984 to April 1987, 77 injunctions have been sought by employers against trade unions of which 73 were granted. It especially applauds the encouragement towards self-employed and part-time work to the extent that 3 million people are now covered by those two categories.

However, the authors believe that there is still much for the Thatcherites to do. They are concerned that at a time of few strikes the government will rest on its laurels instead of pressing ahead quickly with more debilitating legislation.

Flexibility

The next step, they say, must be to destroy all remaining trade union immunities, effectively ban strikes, undermine collective bargaining, renew the onslaught on the closed shop, break up the remaining public services and quash the political levy. This they believe is the road to the fully flexible and mobile workforce, working as directed, with hours and wages that can be raised or cut according to the needs of the employer.

An end to trade union immunities

The IEA report calls for new laws removing all legal protection for trade unions from prosecution for damages under common law. It reserves its main onslaught for the 1906 Trades Disputes Act which provided trade unions with immunities from proceedings for civil action; for example for being in restraint of trade (such action - 'shall not be entertained in any court').

The IEA researchers see it as 'an outdated superfluous and damaging encumbrance to industry'.

Monstrous

They note that even the Fabians, Sidney and Beatrice Webb, saw it as 'monstrous'. Removal of all such protection would virtually end all strikes without directly banning them, the authors say, because employers or users of services could sue for loss of business, inconvenience, loss of pay, libel etc, even where a strike ballot

BY BERNARD FRANKS

had been properly conducted.

The report recommends a two-stage end to immunities beginning with essential services then moving on to all industry. It suggests that a statutory duty to maintain a supply of services might also be enacted.

Deregulation of contracts

The report states 'The axe has not yet been taken to the root of the collectivist tree'. This would be achieved by legalising new forms of individual contracts of employment involving a complete range of flexibility, mobility practices, a ban on strike action and clauses by-passing existing employment protection laws, for example those providing time off to seek work or training, provision of statutory maternity pay and the right to return to work after maternity leave, the right to redundancy pay and protection from unfair dismissal.

The IEA writers say that, naturally, this would need the mutual agreement of both parties - employer and worker. In practice of course workers would as always only have a take-it-or-leave-it option. Meanwhile the 'obligation' on the employer would be to 'up-date' the agreement annually.

Employers

Employers would be only too pleased to agree for, as the report explains: without 'individual contracts regularly reviewed, being able to adjust to a worsening position...the opportunity for a smooth and gradual rundown of staff is lost'. Model 'flexi-contracts' would likely be drafted by business organisations or 'realistic' trade unions, it believes.

True, with the right sort of business union or 'modern' union willing to sign one-union, no-strike deals and 'abandon militant political aims', collective agreements might seem viable. The Nissan deal signed with the AUEW at Sunderland in 1986 is cited in this respect. However, the IEA writers opt for the individual deal by which, in any case, a strike would amount to resignation, a permanent breaking of the employment relationship.

Self-employment

In this respect the Tories are congratulated for their opposition to proposed EEC legislation giving part-time workers comprehensive rights matching those of full-time employees. A far greater spread of self-employment is regarded as even more favourable, in terms of by-passing legally enforceable employment rights. The system of 'lump' labour in the construction industry is mentioned in this respect. Of course such a system also 'by-passes' trade unionism of even the one-union variety.

Renewed attack on the closed shop

Too many managers are said to be condoning informal closed shops. The IEA believes that the government must slap down such misguided individuals through legislation which will apply a £10,000 penalty against companies that allow unions to operate an illegal closed shop.

Continue privatising the public services

Significantly, the IEA sees privatisation primarily as a blow to the organised labour movement; the public services being areas of strongly entrenched trade unions. It states: 'The union monopoly suppliers of railwaymen, teachers and miners - the NUR, NUT and NUM - will not be shorn of their power to exploit the voter/taxpayer until there is a free market in rail transport, in school education and in coal production'.

Putting work out to contract is seen as a necessary step in this direction, but again, these should be only individual agreements in which any form of industrial action would comprise a breach of the contract of employment.

New attack on the political levy

The report sees the 1984 act, requiring unions to ballot on the political levy, as having failed because the huge votes in favour actually conferred a legitimacy on such funds. The only satisfactory solution, it says, is to replace contracting-out with contracting-in for all political fund contributions.

New realism

The IEA report's authors see their plans for further undermining trades unionism as benefiting enormously from the attitudes of union leaders Norman Willis, John Edmonds and others who endorse 'modern unionism', with its no-strike agreements, and Eric Hammond who signs them.

In the latter case the News International dispute which resulted in the sacking of 6,000 print workers is seen as an important victory for IEA ideals. It is also noted that the EETPU is currently in discussion with the Electrical Contractors' Association over the establishment of a jointly run labour agency for self-employed workers.

EETPU

The failure of the trade union movement to act resolutely to expel the EETPU from the TUC has not led to a peaceful restoring of elementary trade union principles but to an endangering of the entire movement, particularly so because there are those on the right who see even the damaging blows to the labour movement of one-union, no-strike deals and 'new realism' as only a half-way house towards the no-union situation.

• The IEA report, 'Striking out Strikes', was written by: Charles G. Hanson, lecturer in Economics at Newcastle University, Member of the Council of the Freedom Association since 1982, Labour Relations Adviser to the Institute of Directors and researcher for the Adam Smith Institute; and Graham Mather, General Director of the Institute of Economic Affairs, former Head of Policy Unit of the Institute of Directors, Industrial Adviser for the Grunwick and Stockport Messenger disputes, and former member of the Tory Think-Tank, the Centre for Policy Studies.

Eat this article before reading it

GCHQ, the Government's electronic spying centre, is increasingly funding research in universities and polytechnics. A report published this week by the Campaign Against Military Research on Campus (CAMROC) reveals the extent and nature of the research. It contains a list of 24 research contracts which have been funded during the 1980's by GCHQ. The contracts are spread around nine universities and polytechnics. They include the universities of Bath, Birmingham, Leeds, Leicester, Loughborough, Surrey, York and the Polytechnic of Central London.

GCHQ is responsible for electronic spying. It monitors military, diplomatic and commercial messages sent by radio, telex, teletype and microwave, whilst it also eavesdrops on satellite communications and private telephone calls. Most of this activity is illegal under British and international law.

The research commissioned is of a high quality. At York, for example, GCHQ is funding research and development into a very sensitive Faraday Magnetometer. Further development of this work will enable GCHQ to use beams of radiation to eavesdrop remotely on conversations.

Thatcher has spoken at some length on her desire to make the universities and polytechnics turn to research projects which have 'practical' application. Let us be clear about what she means - this is part of the whole attack on the education system which is now being largely dismantled. In further education those scientists wishing to undertake research will increasingly find that funding for such research will depend directly on whether it serves the interests of the state. The much cherished notion of 'academic freedom' will disappear.

The CAMROC report, although compiled completely from public records, will be illegal under the terms of the proposed Official Secrets Act. The White Paper currently being discussed in the House of Commons says that the activities of GCHQ and others cannot be reported under any circumstances - it will be a criminal offence, and this article itself would be illegal. These developments are not unconnected with the fullscale attack unleashed against the trade union movement. At GCHQ itself trade union organisation has been eliminated and the few trade union members that remain have been victimised and removed from sensitive work - i.e. spying on fellow trades unionists.

In the past the Workers Revolutionary Party warned of the activities of the secret apparatus of the ruling class as 'the state within the state.' This was a wrong formulation - the work of GCHQ, like that of MI5 is nothing more or less than the work of the state itself.

The need that the ruling class now has to develop the most sophisticated repressive techniques, the way in which it now brings into Britain all of the lessons of its work, especially its counter-insurgency methods, perfected in the occupied six counties of Ireland, expresses the profound crisis of this ruling class.

These developments in scientific research and the drive to incorporate trades unions within the state itself cannot be separated. Therefore in warning of the grave dangers that face the working class through the activities of GCHQ, the main question is the future of the trade union movement itself. The labour movement must launch its own investigation into the role of GCHQ, MI5 and other state agencies. The trades unions must

demand that no research is to be carried out in universities and polytechnics for these organisations.

This is why the battle now engaged with Hammond and others is of such central significance. The deepening of the class contradictions within Britain and internationally mean that imperialism is less and less able to live with trades unions independent of the state. As Trotsky warned in one of his last writings: 'Monopoly capitalism... demands of the reformist bureaucracy and the labour aristocracy who pick the crumbs from its banquet table, that they become transformed into its political police before the eyes of the working class'.

It will be only through the fight for the independence of the trade union movement from the capitalist state, and for the fullest democracy within these unions, that the struggle takes place for the transformation of the trades unions into revolutionary organisations aimed at the overthrow of capitalism.

ARMENIA

AFTER THE Soviet Union's longest and biggest strike, workers in Nagorno-Karabakh began drifting back to work last week. The Kremlin leadership has met the Armenian workers' upsurge with a mixture of promises and repression.

The Stalinist authorities have made dozens of arrests in Armenia, and say they will crush the unofficial 'Karabakh Committee' which organised strikes and demonstrations.

Troops are ready in Erevan, the Armenian capital. Even as this round was apparently ending, however, the ripples were spreading to other Soviet republics with national grievances.

Gorbachev's fear of such repercussions has reportedly made him adamant that Karabakh, with its 75 per cent Armenian population, must remain part of Azerbaijan - under which it was consigned by Stalin in 1923 against the express wishes of the local Communists.

Unity with Soviet Armenia, a long-held aspiration, is being ruled out. A special commission of the Supreme Soviet will consider proposals such as regional autonomy, or direct rule from Moscow.

Azerbaijan Communist Party leader Abdul-Rahman Vezirov met party officials in Nagorno-Karabakh on July 12, to persuade them to drop their support for unity with Armenia, in return for promised improvements in economic and cultural conditions. A special team from Moscow is going to the area next month, supposedly to ensure that a 400 million rouble aid package from the central government reaches deserving hands.

The Armenian Communist Party leadership has stepped into line with Moscow, calling for investigation of those who organised strikes, and a clampdown on 'extremists', Tass reports. Doubtless this is one demand the Stalinist bureaucracy will be pleased to accede to.

The arrests have already begun. Meanwhile, it has been reported from Lvov, in the western Ukraine, that demonstrations more than 20,000-strong there have been calling for genuine national and democratic rights in the Soviet Union, and that Ukrainian, Baltic and Armenian activists met there to form a co-ordinating committee.

News Shorts

Out of the Blue

ALLEGED support for the seafarers' dispute came from an unexpected source when a senior police officer during a television interview, contradicted the High Court judge's ruling that picketing at Dover had been illegal. Mr Justice Davies hit back by saying relationships between police and those 'breaking the law' i.e. the pickets, appeared to be 'too cosy'.

IMF racism

DAVISON Budhoo, a former senior consultant with the International Monetary Fund, claims the organisation is run by 'an overprivileged rampaging group of men and women defying every day the world's conscience'.

Budhoo, who resigned in May, goes on: 'Indeed, racism makes itself felt in a wide range of organisational practices, some of which are eminently inexcusable, given our international stature. While fearing victimisation for the disclosures, he threatens further disclosures about 'the more seamy side' of certain senior fund officials.

Pre-teen pill swallowers

ONE IN eight children from industrial nations are on tranquilizers by the time they reach the age of 12 years, according to a conference of teachers and scientists held in Salzburg recently. Anxiety, sleeplessness and hyperactivity were given as the main causes for this startling situation. Most children, the delegates were told, are unable to cope with the feelings of bitterness and despair they experience.

And so we say farewell

WHAT ON earth is happening to the family? It seems in danger of disappearing fast under Thatcher, despite all talk about Victorian values. Building societies are being besieged by 'cohabitators' attempting to set up home together before the government's 1 August mortgage tax relief deadline which will put an end to double tax relief for unmarried couples. On top of that comes the news that there is a recommendation contained in a Law Commission report that 16 year-olds should not need parental consent before getting married. This last suggestion naturally 'horrified' the government-backed Family Policies Studies Centre.

Happy Games

LOOKING forward to a good Olympics? South Korean riot police arrested nearly 1,400 engineers and their relatives during the week when they carried out a sit-down protest which paralysed the railways network.

Suppressing news

THE BBC's Eastern Service has been sharply criticised for 'distorting' broadcast reports on the situation in Burma where the ruling Socialist Programme Party is undergoing its biggest crisis. One example, where 42 people were suffocated in a police van and another 200 killed by riot police, a death toll of two was given; the 'official' government figure.