



Workers Press

WEEKLY PAPER OF THE WORKERS REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

SATURDAY 10 DECEMBER 1994

NO. 435

PRICE 30p

Lobby Labour Party NEC ALL OUT FOR CLAUSE 4!

THE Labour Party leaders have thrown down the gauntlet to the working class.

■ They want to scrap Clause Four from the Labour's constitution, — the clause that sets out the principle of the 'common ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange'.

■ They want to break the historic tie between the trade union movement and the Labour Party.

Blair has set out to transform the Labour Party into an openly capitalist party along the lines of the US Democratic Party.

Mobilised

The whole of the working class movement must be mobilised to defeat Blair, Prescott and the rest of the Labour Party leadership.

Why? Because Clause Four is a matter for the whole of the working-class movement.

■ Privatisation of the na-

BY THE EDITOR

tionalised industries has meant the sack for hundreds of thousands of workers, but has meant the City speculators have raked in millions of pounds.

■ Only this week Mercury — the private company formed after the privatisation of the telecommunications industry — announced that it is to get rid of one in four of its workers

■ The contracting out of public services to private

firms by local authorities has meant the same result — the sack for workers and juicy profits for the Tories and their friends.

The great majority of such workers are not members of the Labour Party.

Millions of workers are understandably fed up to the back teeth with the Labour Party. They see a Tory government ready for the taking, but the Labour leadership refuses to lift a finger, in any meaningful way, against Major and company.

While the Labour leaders play their game of words in Westminster the working class is under the hammer every day.

It was announced last week that in London, not the poorest city in the country, one in three children now rely on subsidies for their

school dinners because of the poverty of their families.

This is the capitalism that Blair and company defend.

But the Labour Party is not the plaything of Blair and his friends. Its fate cannot be decided in drawing rooms in Islington.

It was the fight of the working class at the time of the 1917 Russian Revolution that forced the Labour Party leaders to insert Clause Four into the constitution.

They were forced to promise that a Labour government would nationalise major industries — but they had no intention of carrying out this programme.

Sacrifices

The Labour Party was built by the sacrifices of millions of workers and their

families over the last 90 years and more. It is financed through the political levy paid by millions of trades unionists, many of them not individual members of the Labour Party.

The socialist aim of the means of production, distribution and exchange is written into many trade union rule books. But only the National Union of Mineworkers was prepared to flout the anti-trade-union laws and take strike action in defence of jobs and nationalisation, against closures, sackings and privatisation.

In their 1984-85 strike the miners brought forward the fighting spirit of the working class — thousands joined committees in towns and villages throughout the country to support the miners. It is no accident that today the

NUM headquarters is the centre of the campaign to defend Clause Four.

Let us ask two simple questions:

■ Would the further privatisation of the nationalised industries benefit the capitalists?

Strengthen

■ Would the further privatisation of local authority public services strengthen the ruling class?

The answers have to be 'yes'. The bosses would be given another green light to attack the working conditions and wages of yet more sections of the working class and to further undermine trade unionism.

In which case the whole movement must unite to defeat the Labour leadership.

Defend Clause Four! Defend Socialism! Lobby Labour Party NEC

Wednesday 14 December

9.15am

John Smith House
Walworth Road
London SE17

More attacks on unemployed Get your hair cut — or no benefits!

DOLE officials will stop unemployment benefit to people who refuse to behave in ways acceptable to potential employers.

From next April they will be able to tell people to get their hair cut, and change their dress and appearance. Those who refuse will have their benefits stopped.

Save

These draconian powers are part of the new Jobseeker's Bill issued last week by the Tory cabinet. The government is hoping to save around £140 million in 1996-97 by the scrapping of unemployment benefit and income support for unemployed people.

Much of this saving will be made from those losing benefit as a punishment for breaking the stringent new 'contract' under which benefits are to be paid.

The Jobseeker's allowance will be paid only to those both available and actively seeking work who sign an individual written contract to that effect. The agreement will be binding and any breach will lead to the loss of benefit.

Officials will be able to direct claimants to do community work in return for benefits. They will be able to make such directions where they think it will be a means of 'improving the claimant's prospects of being employed'.

Workers Press

Clause 4: Blair confirms U-turn

THE headlong retreat by the Labour Party leaders from any pledge to renationalise the industries privatised by the Tories accelerates every week.

And the rapidity of Labour's retreat is matched only by the speed at which the profits of the privatised monopolies soar. Only last week consumers of water in east Surrey faced increased charges of 24 per cent. It was revealed that two directors of the east Surrey water company paid themselves a dividend of £1.17 million. This scandal was exposed not by the leaders of the Labour Party but . . . by a Tory MP.

Tony Blair has now underlined earlier statements that the pledge to renationalise the coal industry after it has been sold off by the Tories will not be honoured.

Challenged by Labour MP Lew Smith to clarify the party's attitude to coal renationalisation, Blair said his policy was identical with that of his predecessor, John Smith. He then sent Lew Smith a statement from the late leader which said that Labour would not renationalise the industry but would make sure it was a safe industry.

* * * * *

NOW the Labour leaders are about to announce that they will renege on an earlier promise to take the rail industry back into public ownership. They say that their attitude will depend on the success of the government's proposed £6 billion sell-off of Railtrack.

The dropping of the commitment to renationalise Railtrack is particularly scandalous, coming as it does alongside a demand from British Rail chairman Sir Bob Reid for a guarantee of public money for the industry once it is privatised.

Reid last week insisted that plans to sell off Railtrack would fail unless the government guaranteed a regular stream of subsidies to the new train operators, which in turn provide the income for the track operator.

Reid said money from the Treasury was the key to the sell-off process. 'They have got to say that a franchise lasting for seven years will be funded by the government for seven years.'

In other words, to create conditions where private investors can make a killing out of the rail sell-off . . . the taxpayer will have to provide money for the speculators!

* * * * *

HERE is indicated the measure of Labour's betrayal. The policies of Blair and company, if they form the next government, will in no way be determined by the needs of the working class but directly by the needs of the City and big business.

Without of course intending to do so, Blair, by his attack on Clause Four and abandonment of any pledge to renationalisation, has raised a real question in the working class.

What sort of Party is now needed by the working class if it is to unite in struggle against the employers and the attacks of the government?

This is a matter that Workers Press has been raising for many months. It is a question that takes on greater significance with each passing day.

Intimidation on sites grows

JOHN SULLIVAN has been sacked from the British Library site at King's Cross, London, after expressing his unhappiness about the lack of safety there. His name, together with the names of two others, was read out at a mass meeting, on 17 November, that was supposedly called to discuss safety questions.

This practice of management-called mass meetings to intimidate workers is growing throughout the construction industry.

Pressure

The British Library job is well behind schedule, and there is great pressure on the contractors to finish the job by the latest planned completion date in 1996.

A protest meeting was planned for Friday by the Construction Safety Campaign. A leaflet issued in defence of brother Sullivan



and the other two sacked said:

'This abuse must not be tolerated. Contractors are becoming more brutal to workers as they seek to increase their profits with an ever-de-

creasing market in construction work. We say this appetite for profit is at the expense of workers' safety. It is blood money. As such all workers must support John's fight for reinstatement.'

One in three can't pay for school meals

ONE in three children in London now qualify for free school meals because their parents are so poor.

And the number of such children is growing in every borough, including some of the richest. In two London boroughs — Tower Hamlets and Hackney — more than half of all children are entitled to subsidised meals, while one in four can claim them in seven others, including Kensington & Chelsea and Westminster.

Outnumbered

The chair of the Association of London Authorities, Sheila Knight, says: 'Everyone can remember when children who took free school meals were the exception. Now children whose parents can afford to pay are outnumbered in London's poorest boroughs. But even in wealthier boroughs there are large pockets of poverty.'

Defend Clause Four Campaign

'An attack on the very idea of socialism'

The following statement has been issued by the Tower Hamlets Defend Clause Four Campaign:

TONY BLAIR's announcement at the Labour Party conference that he intends to replace Clause Four of Labour's constitution is an issue that concerns every Labour Party supporter, trade unionist, pensioner or community organisation activist — everyone, in fact, who has suffered under the 15 years of Tory rule.

The attempt to replace Clause Four is not something of academic or historical interest. An attack on the very idea of socialism, it signals as clearly as it is possible that a Tony

Blair-led Labour government will operate totally within the limits of the capitalist 'market economy'.

What this means in practice for the living standards and aspirations of ordinary working-class people can be seen from the proposals in the report on the welfare state by the Labour Party's commission for social justice.

These are justified by its supporters on the grounds that 'this is what the global market requires'.

Something affecting everyone

WHAT these market 'requirements' include, according to the commission, are, amongst other things, for a Labour government to:

- Raise the state pension age for women to 65, to save £3.4 billion a year;
- Encourage private rented accommodation to make 'the housing system more flexible, more efficient and more just';
- Introduce compulsory insurance for everyone to fund their own long-term care, including nursing and residential home stays;
- Compel students to pay

back their entire maintenance grants and 20 per cent of their tuition fees;

■ Expect everyone to take out an additional private pension scheme, while guaranteeing a 'minimum' state pension.

Is this what the Labour Party was established for?

Not all those who believe that Clause Four should be abolished would endorse the social justice commission's full report. But it is precisely these arguments — on how to end unemployment, on whether there will be a welfare state, what type of society will Britain be in the decade ahead — that are at the heart of the debate on Clause Four.

COMING SOON

SATURDAY 10 DECEMBER Workers Aid for Bosnia Bazaar, 2pm Bryant Street Community Centre, Stratford, London E15. Get your bargains and support the people of Bosnia!

TUESDAY 13 DECEMBER 'No Arms to Indonesia. Stop the Hawks' public meeting to launch a year of action against the sale of Hawk military aircraft to Indonesia and for a military embargo. 7.30pm, Friends' Meeting House, Euston Road (opp. Euston station), London NW1.

THURSDAY 15 DECEMBER We

make the emblems for Rolls-Royce cars costing £50,000. They pay us £1.50 an hour.' Banner Theatre presents the voices of Britain's low-paid, super-exploited workers in 'Sweat Shop', entertainment for a change, brought to you by Southwark trades council. Kennington Enterprise Centre, 42 Braganza Street, London SE17. 6.45pm for 7.30pm, bar open 7-11.30pm.

Advance Notice:
SATURDAY 28 JANUARY 1995
For the right to belong to a trade union!
GCHQ Cheltenham

Anniversary protest march and rally. Contact GCHQ Trade Unions, 22 Clarence Street, Cheltenham, Glos. Tel: Cheltenham (0242) 570958. Fax: Cheltenham (0242) 572975.

SATURDAY 4 FEBRUARY 1995
National Assembly Against Racism 10am-5pm, York Hall, Old Ford Road, London E2 (Bethnal Green tube). John Monks (TUC), Diane Abbott MP, Ken Livingstone MP, Kumar Murshid (Tower Hamlets Anti-Racist Committee). Workshops, £10 registered delegates, £7/£4 individuals. Details Tower Hamlets Anti-Racist Committee (THARC), 22 Hanbury St, E1.

Letters

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CHRISTMAS comes but once a year, and the following week is New Year. That is the opportunity for you and your organisation to put your New Year's greeting in the **SATURDAY 7 JANUARY 1995** edition of Workers Press.

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Labour prepares for workfare

THE Labour leaders are getting ready to force young people onto compulsory 'community care' programmes.

New Labour education spokesman David Blunkett has unveiled a plan whereby young 'volunteers' would be paid 'up to £50 a week' for nine months' work on community programmes.

Payment

'Up to £50 a week!' For some unemployed people this would mean payment of £5 a week above the present level of dole money.

The well-paid Blunkett

PETER JEFFRIES

would have young people cleaning the streets, clearing derelict sites, painting old people's houses for the equivalent of £5 a week.

As Blunkett well knows, the next step is to make such slave labour compulsory. Those refusing such 'service' would have their benefits withdrawn.

This is what the Tory cabinet, led by Peter Lilley and Michael Portillo is about to enact.

Believed

Writing in the 'Guardian' last week, Blunkett said: 'I have long believed that such a scheme would give young

people social skills, develop a new sense of responsibility and increase their employability.'

This policy is identical to that of the Tories. Prime Minister John Major and his advisers are currently discussing the possibility of setting up a body called Community Service Volunteers.

This would run a national programme of voluntary service in collaboration with the Prince's Trust, the body

headed by that well-known friend of the working class, the Prince of Wales.

Warns

Blunkett warns that unless attention is paid to the 750,000 unemployed people aged between 16 and 25 years there will be 'social and economic disaster'.

But it is types like Blunkett, loyal servants of capitalism, who help prepare just such a disaster. Little wonder that 2.5 million young

people failed to vote in the last election.

They are apathetic to all the established parties, including the Labour Party, which they rightly sense has nothing to offer them.

The only way to avert the disaster that even Blunkett must believe is coming is to bring young workers into a common struggle with older workers against the capitalist system and its supporters, including the Labour Party leaders.



Acting up over criminal justice

THERE was widespread anger at the antics of members of the Socialist Workers Party at a demonstration held in Leicester last Saturday against the Criminal Justice Act. As our picture shows, members of the SWP came

along with banners saying 'Stop the Criminal Justice Bill'. As many demonstrators pointed out to them this is no longer a bill before parliament but an act. The SWP were evidently so keen to get themselves in the picture that they were prepared to use banners and placards that are now out of date. To make matters worse, they insisted on chanting 'Kill the Bill'.

The 350-strong march was organised by the Coalition Against the Criminal Justice Act. Speakers at the rally following the march included a representative of the Hunt Saboteurs Movement, a speaker from the M11 campaign, and Paul Henderson, secretary of Leicester and District Trades Union Council.

Photo: Mark Salmon

Lothian anger at bitter blow of VAT on fuel

BUDGET day last week was marked in Edinburgh with a protest organised by the Lothian Communities Campaign against VAT on fuel and water privatisation. Demonstrators burned electricity and gas bills at The Mound in the city centre.

The Tory government on Tuesday lost the Commons vote on its proposal to increase value-added tax on fuel to the full rate of 17.5 per cent. The Tory defectors were responding to pressure from their constituencies, fearing for their seats.

Worse

But the tax remains a particularly bitter blow in Scotland, where the average winter fuel bill is much higher than in the south. The campaign points out that heating bills of over £1,000 a year are not uncommon, made worse by the poor conditions of many homes.

Over half a million Scottish homes suffer from damp and condensation. And well over half of Scottish pensioners have an income at or barely above income support level.



No wages for six weeks

ROY THOMAS

A PICKET of Croydon town hall, south London, is being held this week by 70 members of the public sector union, UNISON.

They will collect cash from passing Christmas shoppers, as their employer has failed to honour pay cheques issued at the end of November.

The workers are employed by Contemporary Leisure, the company which took over maintenance of sports grounds and swimming pools in the borough when they were privatised.

Croydon council provided £44,000 so that the company could meet the November wages bill, but still the workers' pay cheques were returned by the banks. The workers are now asking what that money was used for.

Bounced

For some weeks local UNISON branch officers have been warning that Contemporary Leisure was likely to go bust.

They organised a legal postal ballot for industrial action, but before all the procedures had been completed the cheques bounced and the workers walked out.

Workers Aid for Bosnia Bazaar

Saturday 10 December
2pm, Bryant Street

Community Centre, London E15

Items required are: cakes or other items for the homemade stall, toys, books and records, prizes for the tombola, bric-à-brac, plants, good jumble, small toys for the lucky dip.

Contact: Jill Oxley on 081-555 7045.

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Inside left

'Star' hero

FIKRET Abdic is a Bosnian Muslim who found it profitable to treat with the enemy who were butchering his people. He became millionaire warlord of Bihac, till he was ousted by the Bosnian army. But Abdic has won admirers.

'Where are we going?', demanded the 'Morning Star' (24 November), after the NATO bombing of a Serb-held airbase, from which planes carrying napalm and cluster bombs had attacked Bihac. The cluster bombs were probably British-supplied.

But the British Stalinist paper displayed more concern over a couple of holes in an airstrip than it had ever shown for the Bosnian people.

'The other NATO allies have capitulated to the US and joined it in open warfare,' screamed the 'Star'. It argued: 'the safe haven was first violated by the 5th Corps of the Muslim-led Sarajevo army, when it launched its assault against Bihac to remove Fikret Abdic, its elected Muslim governor, who had been prepared to face reality and reach an agreement or modus vivendi with the Serbs . . .'

'[T]he fighting began as part of an internal struggle among Bosnia's Muslims, with Abdic and his supporters in the role of dissidents being suppressed by the Izetbegovic government in Sarajevo . . . In the circumstances of Bosnia today, it is hardly surprising that the Serbs should join in.'

Forget two years of war and 'ethnic cleansing', forget Serb dissidents who are opposed to the war, and forget Bosnian workers who remain united against fascism; 'At least Abdic recognised the reality . . .', said the 'Morning Star': 'The international community should be denying all its efforts to achieve this.'

Where's the 'Morning Star' going? In the bin, where it belongs.

Departures

TWO years ago Steve Kaczynski was very upset over the Labour Party's defeat at the general election, seeing it as a calamity for the working class.

Last year, apparently, he got over his upset sufficiently to join the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB), which had campaigned vigorously against the very Labourites for whom Kaczynski and his friends had gone out canvassing.

Coming out to comment on the defection of 'Socialist Outlook' editor Phil Hearse to 'Militant Labour', ('Trotskyite's new outlook', 'Weekly Worker', 17 November), Kaczynski explains:

'I was myself a member of "Socialist Outlook" from 1990 until 1993. I became a supporter of the CPGB in the Summer of 1993 because I had come to the conclusion that the events of 1989-91 in the USSR and Eastern Europe had been counter-revolutions.

'I hoped to fight for this political position inside "Socialist Outlook". However, a "control commission" of "Socialist Outlook" expelled me. Phil Hearse took a prominent part in its proceedings.' I can imagine.

There's a consistency in mistaking the fate of the working class for that of one or other of its misleaderships. Hearse and Kaczynski were miseducated by Ernest Mandel.

For Trotskyists, support for Labour, or defence of degenerated workers' states, is subordinate to the struggle for working-class leadership, and the defeat of the bureaucracies.

Trotsky was for political revolution in the USSR. Has Kaczynski discussed that in the CPGB? He does raise an interesting question, of why Hearse, a leading member of Mandel's 'United Secretariat', didn't try to take others with him.

Charlie Pottins

The article below is a moving account by an Angolan comrade of the bloody terror unleashed on her people by the Stalinist-backed ruling MPLA following the declaration of independence in Angola in 1975.

At that time the author was a 16-year-old schoolgirl. Her account of the activities of the MPLA throws a grim new light on the role of Stalinism, especially in Africa. It was Stalinism that was responsible for similar brutal killings of freedom fighters in Namibia and South Africa.

The comrade's heart-rending statement was given to Workers Press. For obvious reasons, the name and whereabouts of the author cannot be revealed.

IN 1974 the workers of Portugal rose up and removed the despotic, fascist regime in their country. By this act they also removed Portuguese imperialist rule from the backs of the Angolan working people. And so, in 1975, we celebrated Independence Day.

For many years before that the mass movement had been prepared by many underground groups and committees organised in the factories and in every sector of the population. I was a 16-year-old schoolgirl, and active on a committee called Amelcai

(Independence of Angola), got their support from the US.

The division was clear: imperialism on one side and the perpetrators of terror against the people in the name of socialism, the Stalinist bureaucracy, on the other. Both acted only in their own interests — to ensure that their power bloc was protected and enlarged.

The thousands of freedom fighters, the workers, the peasants, and the young could be starving, sick, homeless, wounded and forced to flee their homes — that did not bother them.

Cause of socialism

NATURALLY the vast majority of the people chose the MPLA, and were proud that the USSR — which embodied the great cause of socialism — was giving its support.

In those days our understanding of Stalinism was not so clear. The FLNA and UNITA marched on the capital, Luanda, and there was a battle with the MPLA forces, which were victorious. Throughout Africa and the world, including Angola, the workers and peasants hailed the new government of Marxist-Leninists.

But what was the truth? Within the MPLA there was conflict. For years, it was the leaders of the armed struggle within the country who had had the main influence on the people. Now many exiled leaders were returning, and it was they who became the ministers in the new government under Agostinho Neto, the president.

Most Angolans thought that the great Soviet Union would help their country overcome its economic and other problems; that there could now be a peaceful transition to democracy and socialism.

But this was not the role played by the leaders of the Soviet Union. Instead they exacerbated the differences in the MPLA, and advised the government to clamp down on the people. Instead of encouraging

Pride to fight in Africa

the mass movement, and all the committees that had been built throughout the country during the liberation struggle, they acted to behead this mass movement.

First they stopped the right to strike. The first people in the prisons were the leaders of the main textile factories in Luanda. Then the students were dealt with: the student leadership was imprisoned.

By 1976 the situation had become really volatile. The three most radical groups of committees — Amelcai Cabral, Active Revolt and Committees Henda — realised that the main question was how to build the vanguard party. We were well known throughout the mass movement, but we needed to consolidate the vanguard workers and students into such a vanguard party.

Everyone agreed that a real communist party had to be built, one that had its roots in the mass movement and was not the servant of the authoritarian Soviet bureaucracy. We founded the Angola Communist Organisation.

Opposition organised

WE STARTED to organise opposition throughout the mass movement. We were very successful. The MPLA had one government-run newspaper, but we had at least six newspapers. We were young and naive. We were exhilarated by independence, and we thought we could build a socialist future. We had no idea about what would happen.

We came under attack. Our papers were closed down. Those who were not imprisoned continued the

fight. There was unrest and revolt among the whole population. The people were looking for some alleviation of their hard lives.

This put pressure on the warring factions in the MPLA leadership. Nito was leader of one faction, and those in the other, who were closest to President Agostinho Neto, had been educated and trained by the Stalinist bureaucracy during their years of exile.

Nito was much younger and he had been fighting inside the country. But neither of these factions had the interests of the working people at heart. Both were trying to prove to the leaders of the USSR that they were their most reliable allies to contain and defeat the mass movement. Nito was the interior minister and was responsible for the security forces, which were attacking any action by the workers, peasants and students.

Nito thought that he had the support of the USSR when in May 1977 he and his faction, supported by the armed forces, carried out a coup. On the night before this action, Nito told me that he had had discussions in the Soviet and Cuban embassies and they were supporting him. He had assured them that he would allow the president to remain in office, but arrest other government ministers.

Nito's forces took over the national radio and television stations, and the main political prison, and arrested members of the government. Thousands of people were already marching in the streets and on the government building. The people thought that they would get a government that would really represent their interests — a government composed of those who had been in the forefront of the armed struggle for liberation.

Defeat of the coup

BUT the leaders of the USSR had other ideas. They broke their agreement with Nito. On 27 May 1977, tanks — commanded by the Cubans — were on the streets to defeat the coup. The masses of people around the national radio station were fired on and many killed.

The link between the president and the Soviet leadership was Lara, who had come back from exile already in the Stalinist camp. He was the political organiser of the MPLA. In fact both factions in the power struggle were Stalinist, but the bureaucracy in the USSR knew that Neto, Lara, and other MPLA leaders who had also lived in exile, such as Iko and Onambwa, were completely in their hands.

Nito had to run for his life. He lived in the bush until he was finally arrested and killed. A clean-up operation started in the city. From then onwards anyone who spoke against the MPLA was imprisoned



Liberation fighters: after independence, the MPLA's repression was worse than under colonialism

turns Fear Angola

and killed. It was impossible to speak.

There was no free speech, no public meetings. People were arrested on the spot. Millions died — it was worse than anything known under the old colonial rule. On the border with Namibia people were thrown off the mountains to be eaten by the lions. Fear overtook everyone. In fact Nito was handed over by the population. Even inside your own family, your own home, you were never secure.

Lara boasted that, after the defeat of the coup and the clean-up of the mass movement, the MPLA would not have to worry about any opposition for another 20 years. They were secure — all opposition was eliminated.

Anyone who showed the slightest opposition to the MPLA government was taken away and killed. And all this was carried out under the supervision of the Soviet Union through the army, the government, and the security forces.

Advisers from the Soviet Union, east Germany, Cuba, Bulgaria and Rumania ruled the country. Even methods of torture, of tracking people down, and of making people speak were the methods and techniques perfected by Soviet intelligence — the KGB. The security forces were trained by Cuban intelligence and the KGB.

We were all overwhelmed by the scale of the repression. None of us was prepared for this. My sister was arrested. Her husband was arrested and killed. My sister was not even political — she was a

they are buried alive. The regime is barbaric and the conditions are inhuman.

My sister was in Casa da Reclusao prison. When I visited her I saw South African and Namibian prisoners in there. And we heard that they were from the liberation struggles in those countries. When I first visited my husband his face was bruised, bloody and swollen. He was covered in blood. We visitors were helplessly trying to wipe the blood off our loved ones.

Security forces' threats

I WAS not in prison, but life was terrible. There were threatening telephone calls from the security forces. I was followed and checked everywhere. I nearly committed suicide.

That was when two security men came to my home. They were brutal, rude and arrogant. They took food and drink from the cupboard and sat at the table talking and laughing loudly. They asked me: 'What does a nice young woman like you do now that your husband is in prison?' I knew what was to come. They grabbed me and threatened to rape me. I fought as hard as I could. My face was all bruised and swollen.

Then they said that they wouldn't even think of touching me themselves, but they would use their revolver inside me. I tore myself away and rushed to the balcony of the flat to jump out and kill myself. Luckily for me a crowd of neighbours appeared and

this. After the coup he had made a speech on television, saying that those involved in the coup would be shown no mercy. Some of the families received death certificates. But the majority did not even have the deaths confirmed. My sister still has no death certificate for her husband; according to the Angolan state she is still married to him. It is a very difficult thing to live with. Her children are now 18 and 19 years old.

In 1979 Neto died. There were many rumours surrounding his death. Some say that the USSR needed to remove him because he was 'going soft'. He died on a hospital operating table — he was not an old man, only in his 50s.

At the time of his death Neto appeared to be trying to change some of the policies within the country. There was some talk of amnesty for prisoners. He had started visiting different parts of the country, and seemed to be retreating from his hard line.

The new president, Dos Santos, was appointed from within the MPLA. He is a man in the true Stalinist mould. He is president of everything and the MPLA controls everything — the state, the party, the lives of everybody. Dos Santos is even president of the peasants' association, the women's association, the writers' organisation, and he is commander-in-chief of the armed forces and every other department of state.

This kind of bureaucratic centralisation of the government means that the country has become paralysed. It is impossible to do anything. You must get the president's signature for everything. If he doesn't sign, then nothing happens. The functioning of the state is

'Anyone who showed the slightest opposition to the MPLA government was taken away and killed. And all this was carried out under the supervision of the Soviet Union through the army, the government, and the security forces.'

frozen. The economy is paralysed. All funds are used to buy arms from Russia, while the people starve, are homeless, are without hospitals, schools and even the most basic necessities of life, and everybody lives in fear.

Dos Santos, on the basis of his organising support for the liberation struggles of the South West Africa People's Organisation in Namibia and the African National Congress in South Africa, won the support of the working class in the African countries and internationally.

The main question was to get rid of the system of apartheid. Anyone who was in the front line of that battle won support from the workers. But behind this smokescreen, and under the leadership of the Soviet Stalinist bureaucracy, the MPLA government was carrying out atrocities against the people of Angola.

In the 1970s and immediately after independence, UNITA was almost finished — the MPLA had the people's full support. Now, after such repression, many Angolans started to support UNITA, even though it was organised and led by their enemies — the apartheid capitalist government of South Africa and world imperialism.

In the main battle in the post-independence civil war, at Kuito Kuanavale, the Cuban-backed MPLA fought it out with the South African-backed UNITA. Thousands of young Angolans were killed. At the end of the battle the MPLA had to abandon the fight, and UNITA

was left in control of the area. Thousands of young South Africans and Cubans also died. The Stalinist bureaucracy and the Cuban leadership, together with the Stalinist leadership of the MPLA, are to blame for UNITA's resurgence, and for the bloody war that continues in Angola.

Movement for peace

BUT by the mid-1980s the mass movement was again coming forward — this time for peace. Everybody was tired of the war. Luanda had been under siege for almost 16 years. There had been a curfew in the city ever since Independence Day! Nobody could walk free. Life was not normal.

The social infrastructure has been almost completely destroyed, including the hospitals and schools. People are dying without treatment. Hospitals are now places to go, not for treatment, but just to die. The schools are running out of any kind of support — there are no books and even no chairs for the children to sit on.

There is no electricity in most

selling to the party elite goods not generally available.

Everybody needs to belong to the party because only by being a member can anybody get anything. If you want your children to get reasonable schooling, with a teacher actually there, then you can only get it if you are in the party.

Everything has a price. If you want documents and papers stamped and signed, you must pay. If you are 'lucky' enough to have a state or local government job, then you are in the business of taking money for such signatures and stamps.

But the whole population is not in the party, and so one in ten of the people is a refugee within their own country. All the hopes of the people for revolution, for socialism, have been completely destroyed. Many of the prisoners who were released in the 1980s were so disturbed that they could not cope with life outside. A close friend and comrade of mine committed suicide in front of his family — he set light to himself. I could give you many examples of such tragedies.

But even with all this destruc-



MPLA unit training: after liberation opposition grew

areas. There is a marked difference between the huge complex around the oil wells, which have their own generators and are flooded with light, and the villages where the poor people live, which are in total darkness.

I was a teacher. It was terrible. The children came to school without having had anything to eat. They would sit there with dry mouths, and that awful gaze in their eyes. They would just sit there and then fall down. Starvation is taking its toll everywhere. The markets have closed because there is nothing to sell. The only way to buy anything is on the black market. But that is expensive and the wages of those who are lucky enough to have work are very low. A worker could probably buy one fish with his/her monthly wage.

The huge gap between low pay and the cost of black-market goods has increased corruption. Everybody has to live by buying and selling something. The MPLA, which was hailed by the masses during the liberation struggle, has now become the party which centralises everything that is corrupt and rotten. It has become a means of survival in the very worst way. Everybody tries to get into party positions, local government and state jobs. There are special shops

tion, the voice of the workers can be heard. There are strikes of teachers and hospital workers. And the oil workers of Angolan nationality went on strike because, even though they are a privileged section of the working class, they were not getting the same wages and conditions as the oil workers in the multinationals from Britain, France and the US.

Workers in the Soviet Union fought for their rights and have now changed the whole situation there. The Stalinist bureaucracy cannot ever again present the USSR and eastern Europe as being socialist, or themselves as leading the world's working class towards socialism.

They cannot ever again dupe people into believing that they are Marxist-Leninists. Their puppets in the MPLA, in SWAPO, and in the ANC stand exposed. Now we must build the real international workers' party.

There is one last thing, and it has to do with the way we must build this international workers' party. Even though I have explained that the Cuban tanks and advisers were used against the Angolan workers, peasants and students, I believe that Cuba and the gains that were won against imperialism must be defended.

MUTINY IN THE ANC, 1984

As told by five of the mutineers

1988, where ne probably still
The James Stuart Commission concluded its work after more than a week. What followed were interrogations conducted by the security department under two of the most notorious security officers, Itumeleng and Morris Seabebe. These interrogations were conducted not in a way that the ANC security was characterised by open denunciation of the leadership and a call to investigate the crimes of the security department and Quatra. It was a great shock to the entire leadership of the ANC to learn about their unpopularity within the army. They therefore had to exercise caution in dealing with those arrested so as not to confirm the allegations of atrocities that they were accused of, an
before had to

In 1984, some ANC fighters who mutineered against their leadership were detained in a Luanda prison. The security forces of the ANC and the MPLA were trained in eastern Europe

housewife and mother of two children, who were one and two years old at the time. On the day they arrested my sister, they left these two children completely on their own in the house. And the state never acknowledged the death of the people they killed — they were just 'missing'.

Many were incarcerated in the notorious Estrada de Catete, a prison near Luanda built by the Cubans. It is the worst prison you could imagine. The cells are below ground level, so the prisoners feel

the security men backed off.

Finally I had to leave the country five years ago because the security forces found papers implicating me in the opposition. In fact we did everything we could to secure certain archives because we knew that sooner or later we would need to write this history. But I do not know whether these will ever be retrieved.

In 1978 the mothers and wives joined together to ask where were their sons and husbands. President Neto began to feel the pressure of

The company they keep

AS MANY as 17 of the researchers cited in the bibliography of 'The Bell Curve', by Charles Murray and the late Richard J. Herrnstein, have contributed to the openly racist journal 'Mankind Quarterly', founded in Edinburgh in 1960.

Ten of these researchers are present or former editors of that notorious journal of 'racial history', or members of its editorial advisory board. They include Hans Eysenck, professor emeritus of psychology in London University, who has hailed 'The Bell Curve' and claims that the majority of experts agree with it, and with him.

I discussed 'The Bell Curve' in two recent columns ('IQ idiocy', 29 October; 'IQ as "make-believe"', 5 November) but make no apology for coming back to it again.

For the facts in the first two paragraphs above are from a review that deals a crushing blow to the pretensions and reputation of 'The Bell Curve', a book which has been taken at face value by naive reviewers on both sides of the Atlantic.

The review, by Charles Lane, senior editor of the US journal 'New Republic', appeared in the 'New York Review of Books' (1 December) under the title 'The Tainted Sources of "The Bell Curve"'. 'Mankind Quarterly' was the brain-child of one Robert Gayre, who edited it until 1978.

A member of the extreme-right Candour League in white-ruled Rhodesia and a supporter of apartheid in South Africa, Gayre was a defence witness at the 1968 trial of five members of the British Racial Preservation Society; black people were 'worthless', this 'expert' told the court.

Other founders of 'Mankind Quarterly' included Corrado Gini, one-time admirer of the Italian fascist dictator Benito Mussolini. Ottmar von Verschuer, a leading 'race' scientist in Hitler's Germany, and an 'academic mentor' of the notorious death-camp experimenter Josef Mengele, served on its editorial board.

Since 1978 'Mankind Quarterly' has been run by Roger Pearson, who set up the far-right Northern League in 1958. In 1980, fellow members of the World Anti-Communist League complained that he was too right wing, and he resigned.

Under Pearson, 'Mankind Quarterly' has published reports on a sperm bank for the superior genetic material of geniuses, as well as accounts of black people's alleged inherited mental inferiority.

The money to publish this journal comes from the Pioneer Fund, set up in New York in 1937 by a Nazi sympathiser called Wickliffe Draper, who advocated that black people be 'repatriated' to Africa.

Over the years this fund has poured out millions of dollars in research grants for so-called 'scholars' who set out to 'prove' that black people are inherently less intelligent than white people; 13 of those cited in 'The Bell Curve' have received over \$4 million in grants during the past 20 years.

One of these, Arthur Jensen of California University, who has received \$1.1 million from the Pioneer Fund, is cited no fewer than 23 times in 'The Bell Curve' and is that book's chief authority on black people's alleged intellectual inferiority.

Another major beneficiary of the fund, J. Philippe Rushton of Western Ontario University, is cited 11 times. Rushton believes that black people, having small heads and large genitals, are genetically programmed to have low intelligence and be irresponsible parents; their genetic predisposition to sexual excess, adds this 'expert', explains why so many black people have AIDS.

Yet another fund recipient — he has been given \$325,000 — is Richard Lynn, professor of

PERSONAL COLUMN

psychology at Ulster University and an associate editor of 'Mankind Quarterly'. He is warmly thanked by the authors of 'The Bell Curve' for his advice, and is cited 24 times.

Lynn, who reviewed 'The Bell Curve' in 'The Times' (24 October; see this column, 29 October), thinks that 'the poor and the ill' are 'weak specimens whose proliferation needs to be discouraged in the interests of the improvement of the genetic quality of the group, and ultimately of group survival'.

Lynn also believes, according to one of his 'Mankind Quarterly' articles, that 'the Caucasians and the Mongoloids are the only two races that have made any significant contribution to civilisation'.

Eysenck, a frequent contributor to 'Mankind Quarterly' and the leading British champion of 'The Bell Curve', has received \$250,000 in Pioneer grants. In 1990, two years after London University had forbidden Professor Eysenck to accept any more money from Pioneer, Professor Lynn kindly passed on to Professor Eysenck \$30,000 from one of his grants from that bountiful fund.

Eighteen of the bibliographical citations in 'The Bell Curve' are from 'Personality and Individual Differences', a journal that Eysenck edits.

Summing up, Charles Lane writes that Murray and Herrnstein 'aren't answerable for every belief of every member of the racist crowd they rely on for so much of their data. (And they didn't get any money from Pioneer.)

'Still', he goes on, 'there are two matters on which their book and the intellectual mission of the men who founded "Mankind Quarterly" overlap: both sought to restore the scientific status of race, and to reintroduce eugenic thinking into the public policy debate. . . .

'There is no way to isolate the scholarship of Richard Lynn, and that of the other "Mankind Quarterly" contributors, from their racial and political views. . . .

'The scholarly subcultures on which the authors of "The Bell Curve" depend for information are hardly less biased than those they are summoned to rebut. The bias of the "Mankind Quarterly" contributors, however, is much nastier.

'And . . . some of the scholars Murray and Herrnstein rely on distort the evidence, which in key cases does not support "The Bell Curve's" contentions.'

'THE BELL CURVE' is above all an attempt to make 'race' and racism scientifically respectable again.

The very concept of 'race', and the discredited idea that some 'races' are inherently clever and others inherently stupid, have been shunned by all but a handful of scientists for the past 30 or 40 years.

This book's methodology is, as Charles Lane shows, deeply flawed. It is part of a racist backlash — as much part of that backlash as are savage physical attacks on black people in our streets. When 'The Bell Curve' was published there was a clearly co-ordinated publicity campaign in its favour. Eysenck and Lynn queued up to sing its praises, and Lynn, in 'The Times', called it 'convincingly documented and brilliantly expounded'.

Lane decisively calls his bluff and that of 'The Bell Curve's' authors. Teachers and others professionally concerned with the IQ controversy will welcome the deadly ammunition his review provides.

Peter Fryer

Ten years since Bhopal disaster Safety failing at hazardous sites

BY PAUL DAY

IN THE ten years since the toxic gas leak at Bhopal, India, killed 3,000 people and injured 20,000 others, there have been some 40 major accidents at chemical and petrochemical plants in Britain.

A report in the latest issue of 'Labour Research' (December 1994) suggests that the most hazardous industrial sites are not regulated by proper safety controls.

Britain's hazardous sites are covered by the Control of Industrial Major Accident Hazards (CIMAH) regulations, introduced in 1985. These require the identification of major hazards, the safe operation of sites, and the reporting of all major accidents to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). (Major accidents are defined as emissions, fires or explosions involving dangerous substances and resulting from uncontrolled development.)

The most hazardous plants, the 'top-tier' sites, must also submit regularly updated safety reports to the HSE, prepare on-site emergency plans, and provide public information. There are now 364 such sites in Britain.

A parliamentary question in 1992 revealed that there had been 33 major accidents covered by CIMAH since 1985. Since that time there have been at least six more incidents. The HSE does not publish lists of sites. (The table of information on this page was compiled by 'Labour Research'.)

Avoidable

Most accidents are avoidable. Analysis by the Major Accident Reporting System (MARS) of 69 incidents across Europe showed that 90 per cent were caused by management or



Fire at Texaco's Milford Haven oil refinery, which injured 26

Photo: 'Labour Research'

organisational error; and 95 per cent could have been prevented by the use of existing knowledge.

Slow

But the HSE has been slow to ensure adequate safety. According to a National Audit Office report, the HSE, in four years, managed to complete assessments of only 40 per cent (132 reports) of the 331 cases submitted by July 1989. The Merseyside area office had only completed a third of its assessments.

The HSE expects to receive another 300 reports over the next two years, yet, according to the NAO, it has made no attempt to deal even with existing reports. Furthermore,

according to a parliamentary answer last year, a third of the reports were inadequate and lacking in information.

But companies with inadequate safety reports still occupy 'top-tier' sites, and HSE policy is against publishing the names of those companies that fail to meet CIMAH requirements.

Environmental pressure groups have discovered that not only is it difficult to get information from the companies themselves, but the HSE is also reluctant to disclose information.

Friends of the Earth recently named 11 of the most hazardous sites that had failed to submit adequate safety reports: they had to pay the HSE £200 for the information. After waiting six months for the information they were denied the full safety reports.

The HSE was created to defend the interests of capital and big business. It is unsurprising therefore that it is so reluctant to damage the interests of the companies it supposedly regulates.

Obligation

When Friends of the Earth (FoE) tried to get information on the 26 'top-tier' CIMAH sites in Wales, following the fire at Texaco's Milford Haven oil refinery, the HSE advised the companies concerned that they were under no legal obligation to supply the information.

Most of the companies contacted did not reply to the pressure group. As Guy Linley-Adams of FoE said: 'The public is left to trust information supplied voluntarily by the companies involved — trust that the HSE has shown cannot be justified.'

Access to information could be improved by an amendment to the European Union directive that led to the creation of CIMAH in the first place.

The amendment to the 'Seveso' directive (named after the Italian town where a major industrial accident led to widespread dioxin contamination), if adopted, would mean that safety records would have to be publicly available. However the HSE would still be able to withhold information for reasons of 'security' or 'commercial confidentiality'.

Under those conditions, chemical companies would still be able to get away with murder.

Incidents at CIMAH sites since July 1992

July 1992: Fire at Allied Colloids, Bradford, Yorks. Widespread pollution, 30 people needed hospital treatment.

September 1992: Explosion and fire at Hickson & Welch's chemical plant, Castleford, Yorks. Five workers killed, 12 others injured.

February 1993: Fire at Cox Chemicals, Overley, Telford (now Cox Environmental). Water contaminated with pesticides and heavy metals.

February 1994: Chemical leak and fire at Associated Octel's ethyl chloride plant, Ellesmere Port. Pollution of important wildlife habitat.

July 1994: Series of explosions and fires at Texaco's oil refinery, Milford Haven. Injured 26 people, damaged property up to two miles away.

July 1994: Hydrogen cyanide gas leak from the BASF plant, Seal Sands, Teesside. Eleven people needed hospital treatment.

Friends of the Earth's list of CIMAH sites with inadequate safety reports

Amoco, UK Exploration Co (Bacton, Norfolk).

Severn Trent Water (Frankley Water Treatment Works, Birmingham).

Conoco (Humber Refinery, South Killingholme).

Doverstrand (Stallingborough, nr Immingham, South Humberside).

Shell Gas at Britannia (LPG) (AB West Dock, Immingham, Humberside).

Total Gas (Knowsley, Liverpool).

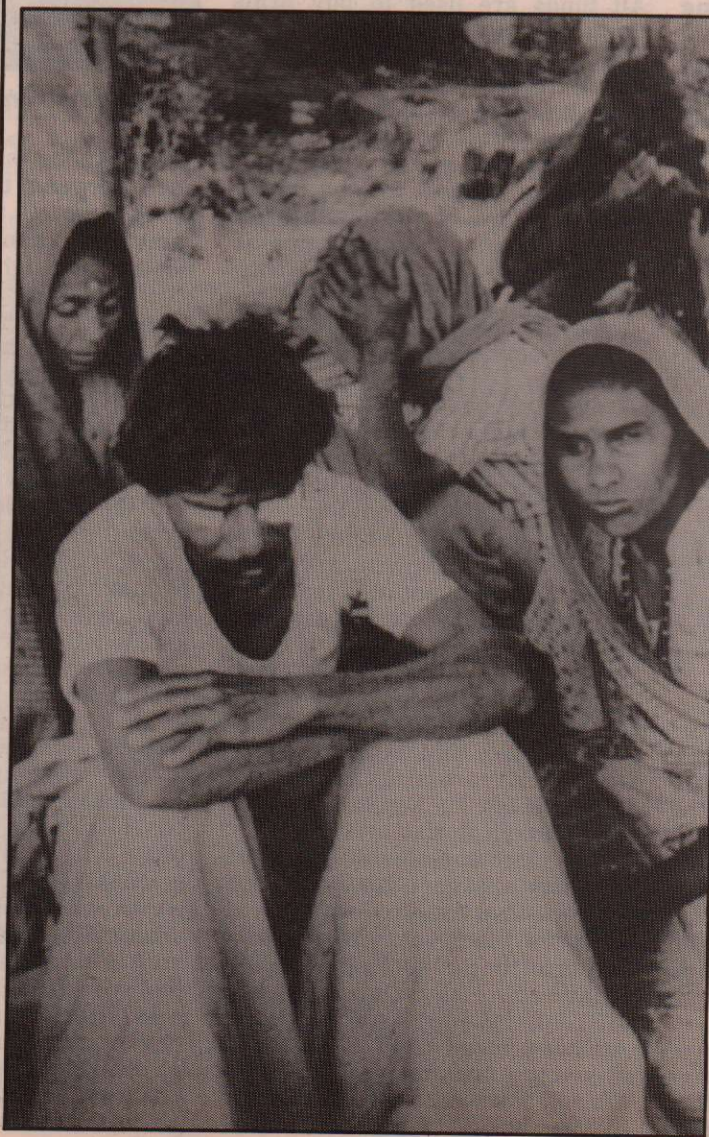
W. Metcalf (Cubington, Leamington Spa).

Shell Gas (Stanlow, Cheshire).

Octel Chemicals (Halebank, Widnes, Cheshire).

BASF (Seal Sands, Cleveland).

Aerosols International (Wellington, Somerset).



Victims of the Union Carbide disaster at Bhopal

Italy's political crisis deepens

NICK LEE looks at the problems mounting for the Berlusconi government and the growing right-wing threat

THE deepening political crisis in Italy in many ways parallels that in Britain: the government staggers along from one day to the next, unable to resolve, to the satisfaction of capital, a single element of the economic or political problems.

The Berlusconi government in Italy, elected last March, heralded itself as a modern government, one free from the massive corruption scandals which had brought down virtually the entire Italian political class. Yet what Silvio Berlusconi illustrates more than anything else is continuity with the old regime, and the complete inability of the Italian ruling class to reconstitute its political wing.

Loan

Succeeding the 'government of technocrats', led by a former governor of the Bank of Italy, Carlo Ciampi, Berlusconi has revealed himself simply as another businessman on loan to the politicians.

Berlusconi finds it impossible to divest himself of involvement in his media empire, Fininvest, with its attendant corruption problems. The consequence is that the magistrates are closing in on him as they closed in on other leading political and business figures.

On 22 November, appropriately enough while he was opening the United Nations conference on international organised crime in Naples, magistrates both in Milan and Rome announced their intention of bringing Berlusconi in for questioning.

The Milan investigators are concerned with bribes to the tax police allegedly paid by Fininvest before he entered politics. And the Romans are concerned with his actions as prime minister. It is alleged that he tried to push the state broadcasting service, RAI, into a revenue-sharing cartel with the TV channels owned by Fininvest.

The key political issue is, however, the state budget. Capital needs to wage a new war on the working class to resolve the astronomical public debt, currently equal to 120 per cent of national income. Berlusconi's plan to cut £20 billion from the state deficit in 1995 was approved by the lower house of

parliament on 21 November. It faces a tougher journey through the senate, where the government has no absolute majority. The brunt of the cuts are to be borne by state pensions.

The proposed cuts have resulted in some of the biggest demonstrations seen in Italy since the war. In October, a one-day general strike brought 13 million out against cuts in pensions. The wave of protests culminated in a massive demonstration on 19 November, with tens of thousands of students taking to the streets to protest at proposals to increase university fees and cut state funding for schools.

Berlusconi's popularity has plummeted as it has become clear that he has every desire to make the working class and the poor pay for the economic crisis, and no desire to pursue the fight against corruption despite it being this that brought him to power in the first place.

Last July he showed where he stands when he suffered the humiliation of having to scrap a decree restricting magistrates' powers of arrest in corruption cases — he was faced down by the popular Milan prosecutor Antonio di Pietro, who went on TV and threatened to resign.

Weakness

Berlusconi's underlying weakness, however, is that as a businessman rather than a politician he has no real political base. His party Forza Italia is 'vapourware', only a few months older than his government.

The other parties in Berlusconi's 'Freedom Alliance' are Umberto Bossi's Northern League and Gianfranco Fini's National Alliance (which includes the fascist MSI, Movimento Sociale Italiano, together with some non-fascist right-wingers). Though they polled fewer votes last March than Forza Italia, they are using the coalition to consolidate and build their power bases. This is particularly true of the fascists.

The Berlusconi government thus plays the role of a cover for further moves to the right. This was graphically illustrated by the local elections on 21 November when Forza Italia's support haemorrhaged to 8.4 per cent

(compared with 21 per cent in last March's general elections and 30 per cent in the European elections last June).

Bossi's Northern League — essentially a regionalist petty-bourgeois party with a limited base — was also down to 4.5 per cent, compared with 8.4 per cent in the March elections.

This leaves the fascist-led National Alliance vote holding at 12.7 per cent (13.5 per cent last March), and it is now the most powerful party in the coalition.

As Berlusconi's image collapses into the old familiar tale of sleaze and corruption, Fini's status increases — his ratings in the opinion polls are far above Berlusconi's. Anxious to stress his role as a 'post-fascist' and potential European statesman, he is proposing the dissolution of the MSI into the National Alliance.

However, a Fini government is some way off. The party gaining most from the local elections was in fact the Popular Party, drawn from elements of the old Christian Democrats, brought to their knees in the corruption scandals, who are now 'cleansed' and have a new leader, Rocco Buttiglione. Together with various indepen-

dents and Greens, they polled 42 per cent (compared with 19.6 per cent at the general election).

Meanwhile the ex-Stalinists of the PDS (Left Democrats) have paid for their inability to give any leadership to the working class since last March. In the face of rising working-class and popular opposition to the budget, the PDS managed to reduce its 20.4 per cent vote at the March elections to 13.7 per cent. The vote for the 'unreformed' Communist Refoundation held steady at 6 per cent.

The PDS is now contemplating a popular front with the Popular Party as a pole of opposition to the National Alliance.

Berlusconi has managed to stave off an immediate crisis and his own resignation. By a 'stroke of luck' the supreme court has ordered the transfer of the investigations involving bribes to the financial police — in which magistrates wanted to question Berlusconi about the

activities of Fininvest — from Milan to the town of Brescia, and out of the hands of the colourful, and highly skilled, judge di Pietro, who has masterminded corruption investigations over the last two years. But this sort of tactic smells of the old regime and in the long run only increases political tensions.

Deal

Moreover a deal has been fixed up with the trade union bureaucracy by postponing the pension cuts until next April. As a result the union leaders called off a one-day general strike due on 2 December.

Berlusconi has meanwhile been orchestrating his own demonstrations of 'popular support', such as the recent 7,000-strong rally in Turin. Whether the demonstration was actually organised by Forza Italia is not clear.

The prospect of the right

growing stronger, and being prepared to come out on the streets, prompted a response from Buttiglione, leader of the Popular Party, who warned: 'There exists in Italy today an authoritarian threat from the right. I am concerned about the pro-government demonstrations in Turin because now we have a situation of two parties taking to the streets, one against the other. Something similar happened between 1919 and 1922.'

This flash of historical insight from a bourgeois politician should be taken very seriously. What should be taken even more seriously is that Buttiglione is prepared to welcome the PDS into some sort of popular front against the right. The disastrous consequences of such a policy are also a history lesson we ignore at our peril.

The pieces of the jigsaw are gradually beginning to fall into place.



Mafia trials in Palermo last year: Berlusconi's government had claimed to be free of the corruption scandals

Television

Review by Hilary Horrocks

'WE BELIEVE our designs are intrinsically safe,' opined the dreadfully pukka Sir Nicholas Hunt, representative of UK ferry operators, on BBC1's 'Panorama' last week.

If his phraseology had a familiar ring, reminding us of US President Hoover's assertion in the 1920s that 'the economy is fundamentally sound', it was with just cause.

Reporter Jane Corbin, in a programme called 'Fatal Flaw', was investigating the safety record of roll-on, roll-off (ro-ro) ferries, and she partly redeemed the appalling reputation 'Panorama' has won itself recently — most notoriously with the reactionary documentary on single mothers.

But Corbin's investigation still lacked the punch of the best reporting on the independent channels these days (who could imagine the BBC chancing Calum Macrae's provocative study of the role of MI5 in the miners' strike, shown on Channel 4's 'Dispatches' recently?).

than 44 ro-ro vessels have capsized in the last 14 years, and doubts about the basic design were raised as early as 1953, when the 'Princess Victoria' sank in the Irish Sea with the loss of 133 lives.

An inquiry into that incident pointed out that the listing of the ferry had been caused by the inadequate clearing of seawater entering the car deck. The same conclusion was drawn by the official report into the sinking of the 'Herald of Free Enterprise' in 1987 — but the ferry operators did not take steps to modify ro-ro design accordingly.

Capsized

And in September 1993, the same flaw was a crucial factor once more, when the 'Estonia' capsized on her way to Sweden, killing 913 passengers — the worst peacetime shipping disaster in 80 years.

A young Swedish survivor, Mangus Lindstrom, harrowing-

ly recalled how the vessel had been upended and passengers had to haul themselves up the now vertical corridors. Handrails collapsed under the strain and people fell on top of each other. Lindstrom's parents and girlfriend could not make it across the last stretch of up-turned deck, and he never saw them again.

Only the young, fit and strong survived. And, to add to the trauma of relatives, only one body was ever sent back to Sweden — the rest of the Swedish passengers are entombed in the vessel at the bottom of the sea.

The 'Estonia' was in all respects a typical ro-ro vessel, Corbin's report pointed out. The enormous bow visor raised to allow vehicles on to the car deck was secured by three locking devices. All these failed, allowing the visor to be torn from the ship in the heavy seas. The resulting collection of water on the car deck caused the listing of the vessel, which sank

in less than 20 minutes.

Design modifications, including installing divisions in the bulkhead to prevent the collection of a dangerous amount of water, and the fitting of air-tanks or sponsons on each side of a vessel to improve its stability, are perfectly possible and — according to an independent consultant — cost rather less than the Ministry of Transport would have us believe.

Pack

But, of course, these changes would mean less room to pack in vehicles, and increased turn-round time. And this would adversely affect the tremendous profits being made by the ferry companies — P&O more than doubled its profit last year on its cross-channel operations alone.

'Panorama' did find one operator — the Belgian RVMT company — which had incorporated the design modifications in their newest ship, built after

the 'Herald of Free Enterprise' disaster. The company chairman told Corbin he thought 'it was morally unacceptable not to'.

But his scruples are rare in this field: Maurice de Rohan, chairman of the 'Herald of Free Enterprise' families' association, unequivocally blamed ferry operators for disregarding the proven need for modifications and for a basic re-examination of a design that may well be fundamentally flawed.

Increased traffic, particularly on profit-rich routes such as across the Channel, aggravated the risk of yet more horrendous catastrophes, said de Rohan. 'There are far more accidents than are reported,' he told Corbin. 'These vessels are banging and scraping about every day of the week.'

BBC2's series 'Forbidden Britain: our hidden history' (Thursdays) continues to perform the valuable service of quietly de-

monstrating, with contemporary material and interviews, that the 'social problems' Portillo, Lilley and company would like to whip us into a frenzy about today were just as prevalent in the first six decades of this century.

Last week's programme on sexual abuse showed, perhaps more than those on any other topic, that such things did not happen less — they were just better concealed.

The child victims had no sexual vocabulary to explain what was being done to them; the level of proof demanded in court was so high that many cases were dismissed; and the police recorded only a handful of cases a year, mostly in working-class areas where it was tolerable for the unthinkable to take place.

You couldn't help but be impressed by the courage of the women (and one man) who relived their harrowing experiences. As a consequence of the abuse, they have suffered nervous breakdowns, depressions, and eating disorders throughout their lives, and were clearly deeply affected by events that took place up to 60 years ago.

Fight imperialists' Bosnia carve-up!

FOREIGN Secretary Douglas Hurd and his French counterpart Alain Juppe have reached agreement with Serbia's President Milosevic for an international 'peace' plan under which 'Serb' areas of Bosnia could federate with Serbia. It is annexation by another name.

Milosevic started the war to achieve this two years ago. Now, after the period of phoney division between him and the 'Bosnian Serbs' whom he armed, he will not only reap the rewards of aggression, but be hailed in the British media as a peacemaker.

While the statesmen were fixing their dirty deals, Serb nationalist forces and their mercenary allies continued their offensive against the Bihac pocket, deliberately shelling civilian targets and carrying out a scorched-earth policy against villages in their path. Bihac's hospital has been hit, and many civilians killed in this onslaught.

Objectives

The Serb offensive served two objectives.

First, to widen and strengthen the corridor linking Serbia through Brcko to Serb-held territory in western Bosnia and Croatia, with the important railway from Banja Luka to Knin.

Second, the attack on the UN 'save area' of Bihac — which neither the UN nor NATO has done anything to stop — sets a precedent for Gorazde, Zepa, and Srebrenica, in eastern Bosnia, which, like Bihac, are 'United Nations-protected zones'.

The main strategic goal remains a Greater Serbia, and the elimination of Bosnia as a sovereign state. Bosnia is to be carved into three.

The bulk of Bosnian territory would be attached to the 'Serbian motherland'. Croatia would keep a major part of Herzegovina, while the Muslim Bosnians would be left with an economically and politically unviable 'reservation' made up of the leftovers.

This Greater Serbia plan fits the aims set out in EU representative Lord Owen's partition plan at the beginning of the war. It was the prospect of grabbing land this way which encouraged the racist policy of 'ethnic cleansing' and massacres.

BY CHARLIE POTTINS

The Serb Chetniks and their leader Karadzic, with British-trained advisers at his side, can be rude to British UN commander General Rose, knowing between them that they are on the same side. Britain, France and Russia have formed an imperialist alliance, evoking that of World War I.

But their German and US rivals share the blame. The Clinton administration brokered a federation between Bosnia and Croatia, effectively allowing the Croat nationalists to hold on to Herzegovina.

Clinton backed down from any challenge to his NATO allies. US Secretary of State Warren Christopher said NATO was more important than Bosnia. The only policy the UN has consistently enforced in Bosnia is its arms embargo, denying the Bosnians the means to defend themselves.

Far from protecting the Bosnian people, the so-called United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) could not even protect its own troops. Last year Workers Aid for Bosnia helped to expose UNPROFOR's refusal to allow food convoys along the northern route to Tuzla, through the 'Brcko corridor'.

Dictate

The UN force has allowed the Serb nationalists to dictate where and when relief supplies could move. In Bihac, the local people, besieged and starved themselves, had to look after the UN's Bangladeshi soldiers, stranded without food or ammunition by their own command.

Troops from a 'developing' country such as Bangladesh — which is mainly Muslim — are expendable, it seems, just like the Bosnians. Bangladeshi workers should demand these troops be pulled out from the UN command, and allowed to either

volunteer for the Bosnian forces or come home. The same goes for other forces there.

The imperialists are able to get away their policy in Bosnia because most Muslim regimes, even the wealthiest, while using religious sentiment to blind the masses at home, will not allow solidarity with fellow-Muslims to interfere with business-as-usual.

Had the Tory government faced the loss of profitable deals in Malaysia or the Gulf, it might have thought twice about betraying Bosnia's Muslims.

At this week's Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, in Budapest, Bosnia's President Izetbegovic conde-

mned the British and French governments for 'appeasement', and warned that the UN and NATO had both been discredited.

Izetbegovic, who has made compromise after compromise because of his hope of Western support, told the summit gathering:

'Our people are fighting for their freedom and survival. Such a battle is hard to launch but also hard to lose. No liberation war has been lost in 50 years. No one can force 150,000 soldiers to hand over their weapons.'

The 'new world order' being imposed by the great powers in Bosnia is racist apartheid come

to Europe. If Bosnia is carved up into 'ethnic homelands' what will happen to people in Tuzla, Sarajevo, and other cities, with their mixed populations?

Will the thousands of Bosnians already refugees from 'ethnic cleansing' be rendered permanently homeless and stateless, like the Palestinians? And if the imperialists and 'ethnic cleansers' can get away with it in Bosnia, who is to say it will stop there?

Let nobody pretend they are against fascism and racism, and keep their mouths shut about what is being done to Bosnia. The Labour Party's support for the arms embargo against Bosnia is a disgrace.

The issue is not, as some 'lefts' and pacifists pretend, whether there can be a military or peaceful 'solution'. The issue is *whose* solution, for *whom*? The Labour Party must be told to break with Tory foreign policy!

Workers in other countries can help the Bosnian working class, and oppose their own governments: by mobilising practical solidarity such as has been pioneered by Workers Aid for Bosnia; by organising demonstrations against the imperialist UN carve-up of Bosnia; and by taking whatever action they can — including industrial and economic boycotts — against the Serb regime and those helping it.



French UN soldiers look on in Bosnia — while their government, along with Britain's, arranges a carve-up of the country

Buthelezi runs anti-immigrant campaign

CHIEF Mangosuthu Buthelezi, the stooge of white racism who mobilised his armed supporters to divide and terrorise black workers and oppose South African freedom, is at it again — as a minister in Nelson Mandela's government.

Buthelezi, now minister of home affairs in the 'government of national unity', has ordered police to round up alleged illegal

immigrants, blaming them for taking jobs from South African workers.

Two trains were prepared last week to take 1,000 workers over the borders into Zimbabwe and Mozambique. Not only were many South Africans sheltered in these countries during the struggle against the apartheid regime, but Mozambique's economy and social infrastructure

was devastated by South African-backed RENAMO terrorists.

Wealthy

The only 'foreigners' who are stealing jobs from South African workers are the wealthy whites who took the land, and the big companies which have taken the riches from it.

The big mining and business interests which still dominate South Africa behind the shield of the 'national unity' government were happy enough to exploit workers from wherever they came while big profits could be made. Now, with the help of their well-paid stooge Buthelezi, they want to make 'alien' workers the scapegoats for recession and unemployment.

Turkish police raid journals

POLICE from the Turkish anti-terror branch raided the Istanbul offices of four journals on 24 November, wrecking premises, confiscating documents and arresting some 30 people.

The publications targeted were: 'Mucadele' ('Struggle'); 'Isci Hareketi' ('Workers' Movement'); 'Yoksul Halkin Gucu' ('Poor People's Power') and 'Devrimci Genclik' ('Revolutionary Youth'). Journalists, editors and cartoonists were held.

It is feared that the detainees are being interrogated under torture while being held incommunicado, presumably at Istanbul police headquarters.

Workers Press urges journalists and other trades unionists to demand the release, unharmed, of Mehmet Akdemir, editor of 'Yoksul Halkin Gucu'; Yemliha Kaya, editor of 'Isci Hareketi'; and Sabahat Varol, editor of 'Devrimci Genclik', and of all the detained magazine staff in Istanbul.

Send faxes to the Deputy Prime Minister, Mr Murat Karayalcin, on +90 312 417 0476. And/or to the Istanbul chief of police on +90 212 272 8182.

Also write to His Excellency Mr Candemir Onhon, Embassy of Turkey, 43 Belgrave Square, London SW1X 8PA.

People's health declines in eastern countries

DRAMATIC drops in life expectancy have followed the collapse of the regimes of eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, according to a report issued by the World Health Organisation.

Stagnating

'Health problems in the eastern countries include stagnating life expectancy, more premature deaths from chronic disease, outbreaks of communicable disease (particularly diphtheria) and increasing num-

bers of accidents,' it says. The life expectancy of Russian men, which was 65 years in 1987, has plunged since 1991.

Nutrition

A WHO spokesman says that bad housing, nutrition and employment conditions were largely responsible.

Smoking now kills every second Polish man who dies between the ages of 35 and 59, and the total number of European smoking-related deaths is expected to rise to 1.4 million in 1999.

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