WEEKLY PAPER OF THE WORKERS REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

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# WORLD'S WORKERS RALLY TO DOCKERS

INTERNATIONAL support for the 500 sacked Liverpool dockers fighting against casualisation is building up.

Already the 36,000 tonne 'Atlantic Conveyer' has been turned away from Liverpool by the International Longshoremen of America's (ILA) East Coast sector, and the West Coast ILA has pledged solidarity.

From Canadian dockers has come a 'first donation' of £5,000 with more to follow and pledges of practical support. They are urging Mon-

BY DOT GIBSON

extremely well and have a lot of

good news to impart on their

return... Your struggle has been

an inspiration to our members

and you can be assured of the con-

tinued support of our members

and members of other Australian

trade unions.' wrote Jim Donovan

and Robert Coombs, joint secre-

taries of the New South Wales

(NSW) branch of the Maritime

Solidarity

representative of ABC Contain-

erline NV to inform him they

would be taking action in solidar-

ity with the Liverpool dockers

and asking the shipping company

to take a firm line with the Liver-

ceedings of yesterday's meeting

to my principals in Antwerp who

were very much aware of the cur-

rent events in Liverpool. This is

causing us extreme concern and

my European colleagues are

closely watching the situation. I

regret that I do not have any-

thing more constructive to offer

28 November: 'The response [from

ABC management] has been

rejected by the portworkers out

Coombs and Donovan faxed on

at this point...'

'... I have passed on the pro-

pool employers. He replied:

They met Ken Moore, Sydney

Union of Australia (MUA).

'Your lads are performing

treal-based companies to end business links with the port of Liverpool until the dispute is settled.

The powerful Federation of Labour in Quebec has stated that it will put pressure on shipping companies which encourage 'archaic labour relations'.

Francisco Ramon Bagos in Tenerife has invited a Liverpool delegation to meet his members who are starting a series of 24-hour strikes against casualisation. These strikes will also take place in other Spanish ports.

Japanese dockers, who were informed of the Liverpool dispute by seafarers, have sent greetings to the dockers and asked for more information about their action.

Australian dockers have already detained the 'Correlis Verolme' in Sydney and are threatening more drastic action if ABC shipping lines do not end business links with the Mersey Docks and Harbour Company while the dispute is in progress.

This worldwide support is causing alarm among the directors and shareholders of the Mersey Docks and Harbour Company. They promised the shipping companies that Liverpool would be a full-working union-free port within two weeks!

The dispute is in its ninth week. The sacked dockers' representatives are touring the world.

placed on "Zim Line" ships. Maritime Union looking for delegation to Melbourne and New Zealand.'

In a separate communication

In a separate communication to the Liverpool dockers they say: "The "Cornelia Verolme" has arrived at an opportune time in Sydney and be assured that the Central NSW Branch will ensure that it does not start on time for at least 24 hours and then will receive a "good serve" when working (i.e. a go slow) and then another 24 hours before its departure. If this does not convince the ABC Line of our intention to continue our utmost support, then the next vessel may rust at the berth.'

here. Addressed mass meeting of

terminal workers this morning -

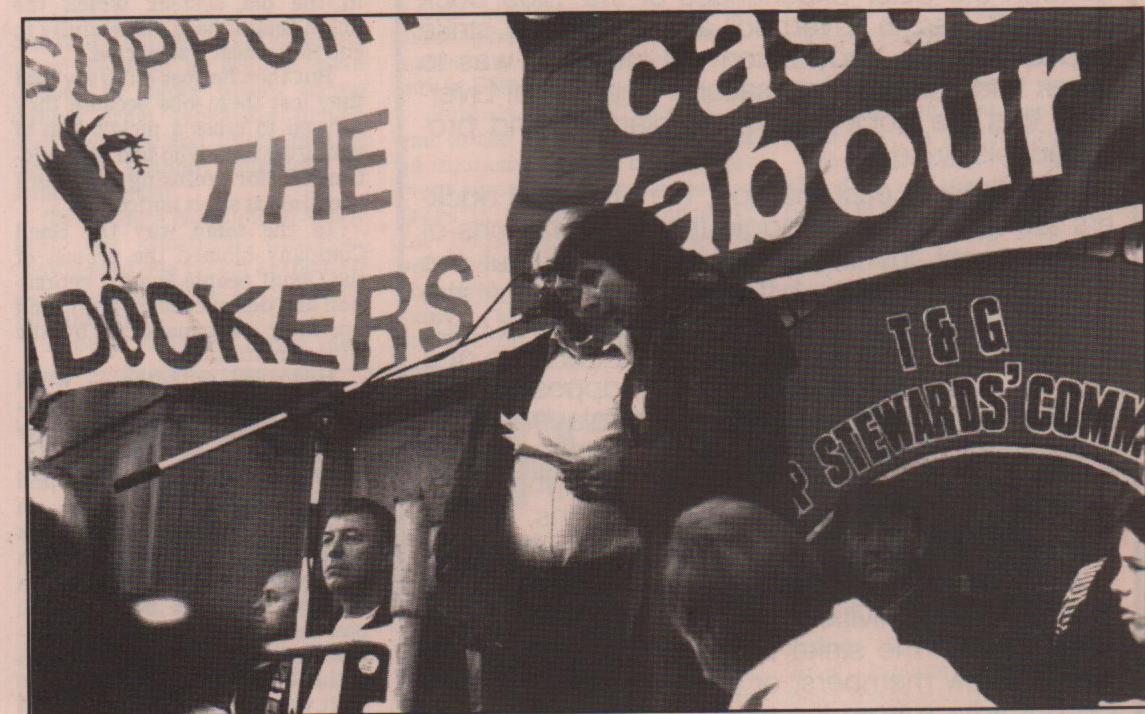
looking for similar action to be

This is the powerful response of the working class to the attempt of the Mersey Docks and Harbour Company to break the dockers' union organisation and introduce casual work.

In an interview which will appear in next week's Workers Press, Jimmy Nolan, chairman of the Merseyside Dockers Shop Stewards Committee says:

'The campaign we've made on an international level proves beyond any doubt that we never saw ourselves in isolation. It proves that dock workers all over the world recognise the continuing exploitation by ship owners and port employers that has been going on for generations.

'When 500 of us were sacked it created support amongst dock workers internationally because over the past 20-25 years we have always participated in the international conferences of dock workers. We already had relations with these dockers. They know us!'



Striker from Pall Mall cleaning services speaks at Liverpool dockers' rally

## 'Enough is enough...' Strike movement grows

THE Tory boast that the British had 'kicked the habit of going on strike' looks increasingly hollow as industrial militancy rises, facing the government with a possible 'winter of discontent'.

The press has tried to black out the eight-week unofficial strike action of Merseyside dockers but their action is part of a mounting strike wave across British industry.

The unofficial walk-out of Scottish postal workers may for the moment have been settled but this week Vauxhall workers prepared for an overtime ban and a weekly two-hour stoppage over hours and pay. Vauxhall management are threatening to challenge the action in the courts.

This follows the walkout of Ford workers at Dagenham and Southampton in protest against management's pay and hours offer. As we went to press thousands of JobCentre staff were ready to stop work in protest against a 2.7 per cent government-imposed pay deal. This

comes after last month's successful challenge to a strike vote in the courts by the Employment Service.

There have been months of industrial action on British Rail and London Underground.

The majority of these disputes, as well as the rash of regional strikes that have been mounted over the last months, are not simple wage disputes. They have been concerned with hours of work and/or the employment of part-time and casual workers.

Liverpool's dockers are striking at the same time as city firefighters have been taking action against a management-imposed reduction in the labour force.

In London Unison has called for official strike against Pall Mall, a private contractor at Hillingdon Hospital which has sacked 56 mainly Asian women after they refused a pay cut in their hourly rate to £3.58.

This upsurge in industrial action comes from a low of 1994 when 278,000 days were lost as a

result of 205 disputes, the lowest figure recorded since 1891.

Even before this year's rail

walk-outs, 350,000 days had already been lost by April and there is no doubt that the 1995 total will be sharply up.

What must concern the employers is that many of these actions have been taken against the explicit advice of union officials and often without recourse to ballot and other procedures that the law requires.

There were no ballots at Liverpool on the docks, in the Scottish postal dispute or at Fords.

Little wonder that Fords chief executive Alex Trotman issues a warning from Michigan about the danger of a return 'to the behaviour of the 1970s'. If so, jobs would be at risk, he threatened.

Firefighters' leader Ken Cameron reflects this new mood in the working class when he says: 'There's no doubt people are saying enough is enough and the membership is moving ahead of the trade union leadership.'

## SUPPORT THE LIVERPOOL DOCKERS 2 DECEMBER DEMONSTRATION:

10.30am Assemble at the Roman Catholic Cathedral, Hope Street, Liverpool 11.00am March

12.00noon Rally at St. George's Hall

'Dockers Charter,' 50p (20p for unwaged) from Jimmy Davies, Secretary and Treasurer, 19 Scorton St., Liverpool L6 4AS. CASH WITH ORDER. P&P must be included: 1 copy 20p; 5 copies 50p; 10 copies £1. Orders above this can be arranged. Telephone 0151-207 3388 or 0191-222 0299.

## THE FUTURE OF MARXISM

A Series of 10 Lectures

Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London (Holborn Tube)
Friday 8 December 1995, 7.30pm
(Note: not Thursday like previous lectures)
'What is to be done — now!' (Cliff Slaughter)
Admission: £1.50 (£1.00 concs.)

#### What is to be Done?

THE LAST in the present 'Future of Marxism' lectures will be given by WRP secretary Cliff Slaughter. The Stalinist bureaucracy's collapse throughout the world has created new and favourable conditions for resolving many long-standing problems that have faced the working class and its leadership.

The Stalinist bureaucracy rested on the property relations brought into being by the October revolution of 1917 and its extension in the post-1945 period. For six decades this bureaucracy presented itself as the 'heir of October' and was able to attract many of the best

working-class fighters into its ranks.

We are now in a qualitatively new situation. What tasks does this new situation place before the working class? In this last lecture Cliff Slaughter sets out to answer this question, particularly in connection with the need of the working class to establish a new party.

## Workers Press Meeting — change of date

WE have decided to postpone the 10th anniversary meeting of Workers Press that was scheduled for 9 December. We do so because of a march and rally in London to be held on that day organised by the People's Embargo for Democracy in Nigeria. For details of the demonstration contact

0171-924 9033 or 0956 132143. Details of the re-arranged Workers Press Meeting will be published next week.

## Workers Press

## The significance of the Liverpool dock strike

THE strike of Liverpool dockers involves only 500 workers. But it is a strike of the greatest significance for the whole workingclass movement. Why is this?

I. From day one, this has been a highly political strike. The Liverpool dockers were forced from the outset to confront the anti-trade union laws in the face of a deliberately provoked strike by the employers. They have been obliged to engage in the fight with little or no support from their union leadership.

2. The strike is led by workers who went through the bitter experiences of the 1989 dock strike. It was in Liverpool alone that the strike ended with the trade union still intact. It was to break trade union organisation in the port of Liverpool that the dock employers planned and provoked this strike.

3. In fighting casualisation, the Liverpool dockers are taking up a struggle that faces millions of workers, not just in Britain but throughout the world. As part of the bitter struggle for profit the employers need a labour force that is at their beck and call, able and willing to work at the drop of a hat for poverty-level wages. In opposing this attempt to re-impose conditions of slave labour, the Liverpool dockers are fighting not just for themselves but for the millions throughout the world who already suffer these conditions, as well as the millions more who will face them tomorrow.

4. The leaders of the strike have been obliged to take up the activities of various 'left groups' who have seen in the strike simply the opportunity to recruit a few members, or the occasion for handing out advice from the sidelines. In some cases the stewards leading the struggle have been subject to outright abuse, condemned for their refusal to cross a picket line, or denounced as traitors who will inevitably sell out the fight.

5. Almost from the start, the strike has been international in content. A handful of workers, who the employers thought could been seen off in a matter of days, have shown that working-class internationlism is far from dead and that, with all its problems, the working class is struggling to re-establish that internationalism.

## Giving racists the green light

WORKERS PRESS has no confidence in bourgeois law as a weapon against racism in this deeply racist society. The law can often be invoked with advantage in a particular campaign, but organised struggle and systematic education, not the courts, are in the long run the only sure ways for the workers' movement to combat this scourge.

All the same, we condemn unreservedly the home secretary's decision to block attempts to adopt a common European policy against racism. This policy, vetoed by Britain, would outlaw public incitement to racial hatred.

Michael Howard's veto came on the very day that the Commission for Racial Equality unprecedentedly condemned as 'anti-black and xenophobic' the government's plans to withdraw social security benefits from 13,000 asylum-seekers on 8 January.

With this veto, as with his declaration of war on refugees, Howard, British-born son of a Jewish refugee, is giving the green light to the fascist gangs and their youthful dupes. He is helping to make racism respectable.

Those "liberals' who support Howard's veto on the specious ground that the proposed common European policy would erode free speech are not the lasosis immediate targets. But they should remember that they too are on the hit-list.

## Letters

More on a 'scabby attack'

YOUR editorial in last week's Workers Press was correct in describing as a 'scabby attack', Steve Mumby's scandalous article on the Liverpool dockers' strike, which appeared in 'New Times' — the journal of the Democratic

The advice by the ex-secretary of the now dissolved local Communist Party is in effect advising dockers to 'roll over and die'. And he tells them this with weasel words and historical untruths.

Weasel words — because he says that the struggle has not come out of the blue and is a result of the Mersey Docks Company's systematic work 'to return to the old system, which the union fought hard successfully to end in the post war period.'

But then he goes on to say that they lost their jobs because they refused to cross a picket line of young dockers who had been victimised for refusing to work overtime at short notice.

In the same way the Shell Company blamed the protest of the Ogoni people against repression and destruction of their land for their own massacre by the Nigerian military.

Historical untruths — when he attacks the very dockers' traditions by which they made their advances.

It was the solidarity and strong comradeship forced on them by harsh conditions of work which won them their place in the front ranks of trade union history. This was no 'romantic past' nor was it 'traditional shibboleths . . . an invented tradition of the 1980s.

It was a product of hard grind and sacrifice, particularly for those at the front of the struggle. He says that CP members crossed picket lines in the 1955 strike.

I have had many sharp and bitter arguments with Mersey-

side docker CP members and know the official policy of the Communist Party on the strike for recognition of the Blue Union (the National Amalgamated Stevedores and Dockers' Union) helped defeat the strike.

But Communist Party members on Merseyside remained out with other Transport and General Workers Union members for the full six weeks of the strike.

In my book, 'They Knew Why Fought', I quote from Frank Deegan's autobiography 'There is No Other Way', how he and other CP dockers supported recognition but were against the breakaway.

I wrote that he showed a 'certain amount of confusion on the part of a loyal Communist Party member, caught between the feeling on the docks and the training of the party.'

However, there was no question of Frank Deegan and the others he mentioned, crossing the picket line.

John MacGinnis, whose entry into dock work is recorded in the book, and who was a member of the CP and of the T&G in 1955, recalls that he and other members of the CP were out for six weeks.

> **Bill Hunter** Liverpool

### A sectarian picket line'

A FRAUDULENT sectarian 'picket line' has been mounted at the Frensham Street depot of the Southwark Direct Labour Organisation against the democratic decisions of the workforce.

This provocative action is being carried out by an organisation known as 'The Building Workers Group'. The 'picket line' is comprised of members of this group from other parts of London and two Southwark DLO workers opposed to a majority decision of the workforce, one of whom is a member of 'The Building Workers Group'.

A public statement issued by

the Joint Shop Stewards' Committee-Building Workers of the London Borough of Southwark explains:

'Trade union action against our employer comes from collective decisions of the DLO union members that result from the particular conditions and circumstances that exist at any given time. And not by anyone else. We decide how best to fight our employer. We make our decisions by democratic means and not as a result of any provocative actions.'

> **Dot Gibson** London SW8

There will be a full report in the next issue of Workers Press.

#### Virulent **VIruses**

J.J. PLANT has recently made some sceptical comments on my views on the dangers of highly virulent viruses emerging from the destruction of the rain forests (18 November).

He questions the evidence that the collection of monkeys for experimental purposes has resulted in the introduction of new killer viruses to humans.

In fact the disease Marburg is named after the German town where this virus was first encountered in 1967 - amongst laboratory workers preparing vaccines from African Green Monkeys imported from Uganda, the monkeys being the source of the disease.

Four people died out of 31 who contracted the disease. It was highly pathogenic, but confinable due to its low infectivity.

The first outbreak of Ebola outside of Africa was in a monkey laboratory in Washington in 1989 - not far from the White House! This disease spread readily

amongst the monkeys through aerial propagation, but left humans virtually untouched. It originated in monkeys imported from the Philippines.

Human HIV is closely related to viruses in monkey species and seems likely to have jumped recently to humans from this

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source. HIV appeared at the time that the trade in African monkeys to European laboratories got underway resulting in large numbers of monkeys being captured and stored in close proximity.

Richard Preston's 'The Hot Zone' (Corgi Books) is an eyeopening, if rather sensational, account of the Washington outbreak.

This new group of 'filoviruses' that includes the similar groups of Ebola and Marburg to date has been characterised by either high pathogenicity/low transmittability or lack of pathogenicity towards humans/high transmittability.

The danger is that there will eventually be a highly virulent/highly transmittable variant. This could occur through mutation of an existing species, the emergence of an unknown species or malevolent genetic engineering.

(The military machines of the world have shown interest in the many newly emerging virus species as biological warfare agents.)

The appearance of such a virus would be a disaster. It would spread rapidly around the world and cause innumerable deaths. I agree with his comments

that science cannot provide answers to moral or ethical questions. But as a scientist I am aware that certain laboratory procedures that involve sacrificing animals are necessary at present to protect human well I look forward to the day when

these procedures are no longer necessary. It is a human, not scientific decision that they should be replaced by more humane methods.

I have tried to cover areas not often discussed by socialists and greatly value feedback such as J.J. Plant's.

> **Daniel Robertson** London E5

## They Knew Why They Fought Bill Hunter

**Unofficial Struggles &** Leadership on the Docks 1945-1989

Available from Index Books (0171-2748342)

No Frontiers/The Rain Trust present a Bosnia fund-raiser

### The Troggs The Animals/The **Yardbirds**

Wednesday 6 December, doors open 6pm, London Astoria, 157 Charing X Road, London WC2. Tickets £9.50 advance/£11.50 (£9.50 concessions) door. Astoria box office (0171-434 0403, credit cards 0171-434 0404). By post enclosing SAE from The Rain Trust, c/o Janice Findlay, 52 Deptford Broadway, London SE8 4PH. Cheques payable to The Rain Trust'. Part of the proceeds to go to AIDS/HIV support and rape counselling.

A conference sponsored by Workers Press

## Crisis in the labour movement The need for a new socialist party

Manchester Town Hall

24 February

11.30am-5.30pm

Please send me further details of the 'Crisis in the labour movement' conference.

Name		 	 	 

Address	

Photocopy and send to Workers Press, PO Box 735, London SW8 1YB.

## Royal Mail pulls back from provocation in Scotland

BY HILARY HORROCKS

SCOTTISH postal workers joined the recent wave of unofficial industrial action at the end of last month with a determined weeklong strike. The action forced Royal Mail management to pull back from a provocative programme of arbitrary changes to working practices.

Mass meetings in Edinburgh and Glasgow last weekend voted overwhelmingly to return to work. In Edinburgh the action followed an earlier strike in May, and there was satisfaction that management had again been forced to call off their provocation and return to the status quo before the strike.

But the agreement was criticised for its bureaucratic vagueness by some strikers and was regarded by many as acceptable

only in that it allowed the union to 'live and fight another day'. Regional official John Keggie and Communication Workers Union general secretary Alan Johnson had tried to claim a 'magnificent victory'.

The strike started when Royal Mail management at a small sorting office in Portobello, Edinburgh, arbitrarily imposed new arrangements for working the second delivery. These would have meant traditionally fulltime jobs being done by parttime workers - something which Royal Mail has been trying to impose for several years, and a long-running source of friction between management and CWU members.

All the staff at Portobello immediately walked out, and were followed over the next 24 hours by other important sorting offices in Edinburgh. When Royal

Mail tried to shift the growing pile of unsorted mail to other areas for handling, postal workers there joined the dispute. By the end of the week, no mail was moving in Glasgow, Perth, Dundee, Fife and Aberdeen.

Delivery workers were at the heart of the dispute: they are the lowest paid section, with no opportunity to participate in the bonus schemes which have been accepted by Union of Communication Workers (now the CWU) leaders over the years in lieu of proper increases in basic wages, and which now form a large part of the postal workers' pay.

#### **Pressure**

Continually under pressure to carry heavier bags and to use cars on their rounds, delivery workers have borne the brunt of onslaughts on working condi-

tions in the postal service. Their reaction to this latest attack won the immediate support of indoor sorters, van drivers, technicians and all other sections of the union, who have seen Royal Mail employers increasingly adopting a 'privatisation agenda'.

Sorting offices have been centralised in the main urban areas, and smaller ones closed; part-timers and contract staff are forming a larger and larger percentage of the workforce, of which once they only made up a handful.

The Royal Mail has become massively profit-making, while the pay of employees has decreased.

All this meant that the unofficial strike spread rapidly: pickets were mounted at all the main depots, in many places facing danger from recklessly driven scab vehicles, and flying pickets deployed without reference to what was 'legal'.

with the unofficial situation,' commented one picket at the new APC sorting office in Sighthill, Edinburgh.

Reports that the Royal Mail

had tipped off police well in advance of possible industrial action at this time, strengthened the conviction that the Portobello provocation had been planned. Union members had no choice but to take on the management.

#### Exploded

Workers at Hamilton, Lanarkshire, were already balloting on a strike before the situation in eastern Scotland exploded, and were able to come out on official action at the same time. Hundreds attended a rally there organised by the Scottish TUC in the middle of the week, and afterwards beseiging a negotiating meeting between union and management at Royal Mail headquarters in Edinburgh.

Publicly, the CWU urged an end to the unofficial action, and an injunction sought by management against local union leaders 'Everyone's completely happy failed in the Scottish courts. At the Edinburgh meeting which voted to accept the deal - reinstating previous working conditions at Portobello committing management for the

time being to go through procedures in any attempt to change practices — some union members criticised their leadership's tac-

The action, they said, should have been extended to England and the pressure stepped up on Royal Mail management, who in the pre-Christmas period were especially unpopular with small businesses in Scotland and with the public, who undoubtedly supported the postal workers.

The leadership's tactics, said one critic, were designed to tailor the workers' militancy to the 'Blair political agenda'.

The delivery man or woman has a special place in the community (now being whittled away, they complain, by speeded-up working conditions), and no witch-hunting campaign against the strike even got off the ground.

National talks, to be completed by mid-January, are supposed to tackle the wider issues highlighted by the dispute. If they are unsuccessful, the CWU is already committed to hold a national strike ballot on 1 February for industrial action.

## It's your rights they're after!

From several education correspondents

SIXTY lecturers, members of NATFHE, the National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education, gathered outside the front door of Bexley College in south east London to lobby a meeting of the governing body on Monday 27 November.

At this meeting the governors voted to derecognise the union. They allowed two NATFHE branch committee members to speak before a substantial majorty took this decision.

But to 'avoid trouble', the prinipal seems to be relying on a lause in the existing agreement which says it cannot be changed except when one side gives six nonths' notice. This is taken to nean that industrial action would not begin immediately.

#### **Battle**

Since 1993 NATFHE has been ngaged in a running battle with he managements (read 'proprieors') of the four hundred 'incororated' (read 'privatised') local olleges of further education in ingland and Wales, and with the ollege Employers' Forum (CEF), quango appointed by the Tory

government to cut costs and otherwise 'reform' further education.

Bexley College is one of the few that has not been at any time a member of the CEF, and the NATFHE branch at Bexley settled the main dispute with its own management as long ago as

There is a collective agreement covering contracts with built in safeguards, and although teaching hours are longer than they used to be under the 'Silver Book' national agreement, there has been a local pay settlement 'which will do for now', as one member of the branch said.

Now the principal, Dr James Healy, has decided that the 'management spine', that is, all lecturers other than the main grade it covers what used to be separate grades of head of school, principal lecturer, and senior lecturer — no longer needs a union. Hence his sucessful proposal to derecognise NATFHE.

At a meeting of a governors' committee two weeks ago the only vote against came from the staff representative.

The Bexley NATFHE Branch met and decided that there would be a dispute with the governors if they voted for derecognition.

It was cold and wet outside the college but the NATFHE members, including some from Greenwich University, and a significant number of management spine members from Bexley, stood there with placards, leaflets and candles in bottles.

'It reminds me of the pickets in 1972 all over again!, one ex-NUM lobbyist said.

#### **Placatory**

But the principal came out and adopted a placatory tone. This was quite unlike his behaviour earlier in the week when his manoeuvre made the front page of the local paper!

He asked the lobby to 'Come inside, it's warmer!'

Some lecturers told Workers Press that he was very confident and thought he had already won the argument. The branch had agreed that the lobby would be dignified and orderly, and, a spokesperson said: 'In its way, that was a good thing. With one exception, the governors were prepared to talk to the lobby.'

Ken King, the Regional secretary of NATFHE, told us that he believes the events of Monday night were of national importance, and that derecognition of the union may be the biggest threat yet to lecturers' jobs and conditions.

A MASS protest against a new environmental threat to the Mendip hills in Somerset will take place on 3-4 December. Organised by the 'Earth First' campaign, it will be directed against plans to double the size of Whatley Quarry near Shepton Mallet in Somerset.

Whatley, owned by Amey Roadstone Corporation (ARC), is one of the biggest quarries in Europe and produces 14,000 tonnes of aggregate a day for the building of roads in Britain.

ARC is owned by the multinational conglomerate Hanson Trust, one of the world's mining vultures. When the government was trying to sell British Coal, Hanson's was listed as a potential buyer. Among Hanson's international holdings is the US Peabody coalmining company.

If the ARC application to double its operations in the Mendips gets the go-ahead it would be possible to see the hole from the

Such an action would further endanger historic beauty spots in the area, including the 6,000 year old Asham Wood and the historic springs in Bath and Wells.

The water supply to 300,000

### Fight expansion of Whatley quarry! people in Bristol and north Somformer Environment minister erset would also be put at risk,

say local campaigners. Earth First has been fighting ARC and its owners Hansons since 1992 when application for expansion of the quarry was first made.

Under intense pressure from groups locally and nationally John Gummer was forced to block the application.

Organisers are asking everyone to turn up on Sunday at midday so that the action for Monday can be properly planned.

For further information please ring 01935-825074.

## Determined action at JJ Fast Food

FORTY sacked workers at JJ Fast Food, Tottenham, north London, are out picketting at 6am every day to fight for reinstatement and union recognition.

They are supported by Turkish, Kurdish, Cypriot and British workers from the trade unions and political organisations.

The Transport and General Workers' Union members are in the third week of their dispute and have received messages of support, solidarity and almost £6,000 from hundreds of unions, organisations and individuals throughout London and the rest of the country.

'We would like to thank all the unions, organisations and individuals who have supported us on our picket, sent us messages of solidarity and helped us financially,' says a leaflet from the strikers.

Many JJ Fast Food clients, particularly schools, have been visited and have given their support to the strikers and promised

that as far as possible they will not buy from the company. Protest demonstrations outside one of JJ Fast Food's biggest clients, Jenny's burger restaurants, have been very successful. The company has been taken to court by the union.

Pressure is mounting and the company is suffering. Fewer lorried leave to make deliveries every morning and many are clearly not full.

The owner Mustafa Kamil thought the business would be over in a day or two. His hired thugs attacked the picket line. Many have been individually threatened by the boss and his henchmen.

But the workers are solid and determined!

Join the protest at Mill Mead Lane, Tottenham (off Ferry Lane) every morning at 6am.

Send money payable to 'JJ Fast Food Committee', c/o 72 West Green Road, London N15 5NS.

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

Please send me information about the WRP date ...... Name

British section of the Workers International (to Rebuild the Fourth International)

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

Send to: PO Box 735, London SW8 1YB

#### Ireland's blow to Catholic church This latest victory — albeit to relationships that had broken of the 'No Divorce Campaign' BY JOHN STEELE with the closest referendum down, the Irish hierarchy's

HE vote in Ireland's divorce refrendum has to be seen as nother blow to the power and thority of the Catholic church. his is despite the tiny majority favour.

It comes only weeks after the cople of Poland broke from eir traditional acceptance of e church's position and rejected ch Walesa in the presidential

In referendums in the last few ars the Irish people have now ted — in the face of virulent position from the church -

■ The right to remarry; ■ The availability of contraptives; and.

For the right to distribute formation and to travel outside e country for an abortion.

result in the history of the state, 818,841 votes in favour and 809,731 votes against - represents a serious weakening of the Catholic hierarchy's position as the once unquestioned authority on moral issues for most Irish people. The change to the Irish consti-

tution is still very conservative - spouses who have been separated for at least four of the previous five years can now apply for divorce.

But this did not deter interventions and warnings of how the availabilty of divorce would 'destroy the family' from a wide range of Catholic experts on family life including Mother Theresa, the Pope and the Irish bishops.

As part of the vote 'no' campaign, and in an attempt to frighten Catholics still clinging

spokesman, Bishop Thomas Flynn, said that any divorced Catholic would be refused all sacraments of the church.

The decision to remove the ban on divorce from the constitution marks a startling reversal on the previous referendum in 1986 when 63 per cent voted 'no' to any change. Although there was a solid

swing in all 41 constituencies, ranging from 10 to 20 per cent since the 1986 referendum, the biggest changes were in the urban areas. This was particularly notice-

able in Dublin where the size of the working-class 'yes' vote will have caused bishops and priests to offer prayers for help.

Or perhaps they can find consolation that they still have the support of people like the leader

who, when questioned by journalists about the sources of its funds, especially the 'Hello divorce, goodbye daddy' billboards, stormed off with the memorable line: 'G'way, ye wifeswapping sodomites!' The Catholic church in Ireland

and throughout the world has, of course, been seriously discredited with the continuing revelations of sexual abuse of children by priests and their attempted cover-up by the bishops.

These scandals will have played some part in the Irish people's rejection of the church's position on divorce. But the real causes lie in the

isolation of the church's ideology from the material problems of every-day life and the growing self-confidence to conduct human relations without 'Divine' interference.

## Inside left

## rong . . .

been known to make the odd take in this column. ('Never!', cry ders around the world, 'we don't leve it!').

to point out once, I'd referred to mia as though it were under oman rule before World War I, ereas of course it had been exed by Austria-Hungary well ore that (hence the unfortunate ident with Archduke Franz Ferdi-

Rajani Palme Dutt had visited ian Communist Party prisoners in to persuade them to change their on the war. As his former colue Monty Johnson told me later, wasn't allowed to enter India in se years. (I'd like to trace the ree of my misremembered 'fact' on

wrote that Independent Labour ty (ILP) MP John McGovern had ted fascist leader Sir Oswald ley in prison during the war. On reading McGovern's book Without or Favour, I found it wasn't him, ILP leader Jimmy Maxton, who

nce, in a letter to the Guardian, I cised 'your diarist Maeve Binchy'. as well they didn't print it. Their we Kennedy was flattered, but elist Maeve Binchy might not been! My Schadenfraude was fified when the aforesaid 'Guardiarist wrote about Labour

hten up the London borough of the whereas I knew he was mayor arnet.

through into the consciousness spectable Britain, wrote Social-Vorker's Paul Foot rather pretendy on 17 November, aproposimel Four's documentary 'EddVIII — The Traitor King', about Duke of Windsor's links with Nazi

ddly, writing for a paper whose bach is frequently economist, didn't mention factory speed-up Charles Bedaux, who arranged bake and Duchess's visit to Hitler, industrialist Axel Wenner-Gren, whom the Duke remained in after becoming governor of Bahamas, nor did he refer to the isor's post-war friendship with Mosleys (see Workers Press, 18

the problem' about the Royal mage was that 'She worshipped Hitler'. (Actually, quite a lot of British Establishment were med that way). He referred to 'Ed-Hyams's extraordinary book, is' Edward Hyams wrote about ing and the soil, and had a colin the New Statesman. I expect Foot meant American author les Higham's book Wallis.

err is human, but to forgive is

### lersey Beat

DARITY from the longshorein the United States; Liverpool ars addressing fellow trades mists in Belfast and Bilbao gh not, apparently, allowed to to a rally in Nottingham, for reason); flying pickets' flown to Zealand...

mention the Liverpool and to mention the Liverpool and struggle. Is there a D-notice?

Roger McGough's Radio Four amount on San Francisco last quantied American poet Allen and mountent the centre of the four mountent the centre of the

## CELEBRATE 10th Al

This weekend the South African trade union federation, COSATU, celebrates its tenth anniversary. Today, Saturday 2 December, there is to be a big rally of workers in Durban as part of these celebrations. We publish here a leaflet to be handed out at that rally by our comrades in South Africa

WORKERS INTERNATIONAL in South Africa sends greetings and support to all COSATU members celebrating the 10th Anniversary on 2 December 1995.

This anniversary takes place at a time when the workers in COSATU are facing the biggest crisis in the history of the federation.

Workers who fought against antitrade union laws during the apartheid regimes are suffering the same hardships at work as they did in those days. And now they are witnessing the new Labour Relations Bill of the Government of National Unity (GNU — the so-called people's government) which will make it difficult for workers to strike without being victimised.

Under the GNU, (for which COSATU played a vital role canvassing workers to back them in the 1994 general election) the workers, in the name of democracy, experience the following difficulties:

Truck drivers, taking legitimate industrial action led by International Turning Wheels, have been accused of carrying out a manoeuvre on behalf of the past regime to undermine the ANC-led GNU.

The exemplary action of nurses

— the King Edward VIII hospital
nurses and other general workers —
crushed by the GNU's Ministry of
Health and its Safety and Security
Department. COSATU acts for the
government. The NEHAWU [the

GNU-supporting nurses' union] distances itself from the nurses' action.

Mercedes workers in East London are being victimised by their employers with the aid of the GNU's Safety and Security Department.

Mine workers regularly entombed while carrying out their work, and the National Union of Mineworkers only protesting after the accidents have occurred.

The nurses' strike in the former Transkei homeland, which has cost 7,000 nurses their jobs with COSATU sitting on the fence again.

Many more examples could be listed — these are just a few highlights. And all this is happening with the collaboration of COSATU, its affiliates, the employers and the long arm of the state with its departments of torture, oppression and suppression.

Let us speak out about the departments of the former COSATU assistant general secretary, Sydney Mufamadi, the Labour Department of Tito Mboweni, the so-called Justice Department of Dullah Omar and about erstwhile COSATU general secretary, Jay Naidoo warning workers to stop saying: 'I demand, I demand,' but instead to say 'I shall contribute, I shall contribute.'

The nurses' 'crime' is to fight for living wages, better working conditions and a better health system for all. Now they find themselves on the streets.

END COSATU ALLI

Is this what COSATU is celebrating?

Support strik

We do not believe that this is what the millions of COSATU members want. We therefore call for all workers who are celebrating this 10th anniversary to show solidarity with the striking nurses by calling on the government to immediately end all strike-breaking measures.

Withdraw dismissal notices of those on strike;

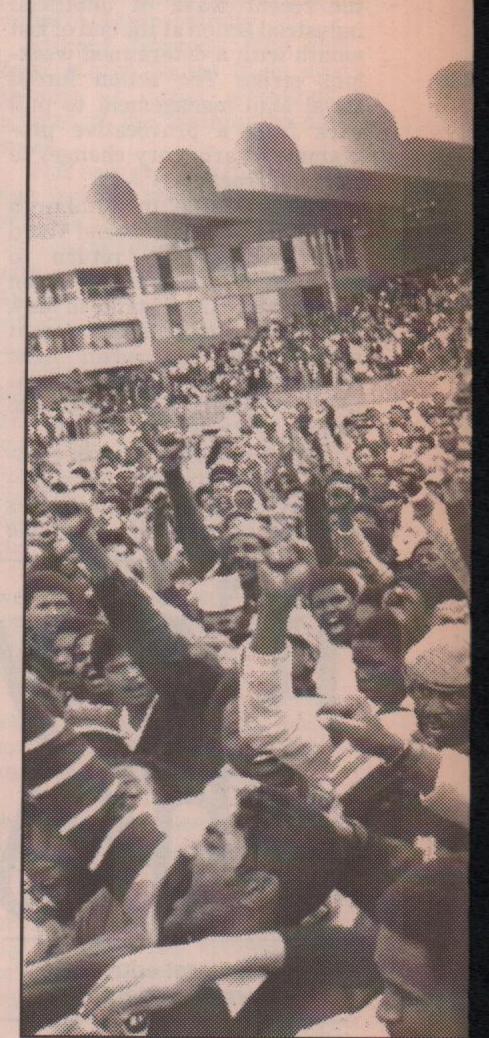
Address the nurses' grievances;

End the strike through a negotiated agreement with the regional body of the nurses' independent union — the National Nurses' Forum.

It is now becoming clear to all workers that the reason why COSATU is failing to defend them is because of its alliance with the GNU, which has clearly demonstrated its willingness to support the bosses against the workers.

Now is the time for workers to demand that COSATU breaks away from the alliance and fights for workers' rights independently from the government. Last, and most important, all workers must ask COSATU: what happened to the Workers' Charter and the fight for a Workers' Party?

Issued by Workers International to Rebuild the Fourth International, PO Box 48764, Qualbert, Durban, 4001



Rally to launch Western Cape divis

# Soviet disintegration dom socialist lawyers' confer

#### BY JIM SMITH

THE disintegration of the Soviet Union dominated the discussion at a conference called to examine the role of the legal system as an instrument of oppression in the former colonies. Organised by the Haldane Society of Socialist Lawyers, it was also sponsored by the African Liberation Support Campaign (ALISC), the London School of Economics Students Union and the Brixton Community Law Centre.

Some delegates saw the USSR's downfall as evidence that Marxism had failed. Others argued that Marxism should be used as a weapon by those resisting in new ways.

cus explained that the society was affiliated to the International Association of Democratic Lawyers (IADL) which had been based in the Soviet Union and had had observer status at the UN. Marcus admitted that the IADL was 'more or less defunct' and also claimed that the working class in Britain was 'all but decimated'.

Those in the past associated with the IADL are now turning their attention elsewhere and have arranged that their next conference will be held in South Africa, where they support the ruling ANC.

Lapido Ogunlana of the LSE pointed out that the execution of Ken Saro-Wiwa and his eight comrades by the Nigerian dictatorship was carried out according to the current legal system of that country.

Taking up this point, Kofi Klu (ALISC) drew attention to the role of

Shell and other oil companies throughout Africa. Shell had been behind the war that had devastated Angola. Where had the lawyers been? He warned that the UN and various governments endorsed slogans for freedom, justice and human rights, but did not implement them.

Mass action to stop Shell from operating was needed, said Klu. He showed that the present-day state structures, armies and police forces in Africa were created by the former colonial powers, who always saw the mass of the people as their enemies.

Former Haldane Society chair,
Bill Bowring, joined Markus in
lamenting the Soviet Union's fall.
With Soviet support, IADL had
helped the UN adopt policies which
had assisted the struggle for national
liberation, claimed Bowring.

Professor Dan Nabadure of Uganda said he had once been a 'Marxist-Leninist' but that the Marxist tradition must now be abandoned. He claimed that in his own country the working class no longer existed due to the devastation it had suffered. Many farm workers had returned to their villages and even state employees earned so little they were forced to rely on food produced in their own villages.

He suggested that new forces for resistance could be found in appeals to traditional ancestral spirits and the revitalisation of traditional secret societies. Calling for 'ethnic cultural revivalism', he suggested that small ethnic or clan communities might be more relevant to people's needs than established states and government parties.

Taking issue with Nabadure,

Josef Odusanya, a Nigerian who had come to Britain in 1947 and was an activist in the Transport and General Workers' Union until retiring, said he disagreed with returning to a 'pre-industrial society'. He said that under capitalism technology was used to enslave human beings, but if capitalism was got rid of, then technology would have the opposite effect. But he accepted that political strategy might involve using traditional institutions.

Guyana-born Terry Leander, who recently left Labour in disgust at Tony Blair's leadership, argued that lawyers in the Caribbean were too self-interested and had assimilated Western values. He suggested that for many purposes informal systems of mediation could replace formal courts, and could assist resistance to imperialism.

Ludo Martens of the Belgian Workers Party produced clear evidence that the French and Belgian governments were deeply involved in the genocide in Rwanda. He provided a historical sketch of how the colonial powers (Germany and then Belgium) invented the artificial division between Hutu and Tutsi, with Belgium first favouring the Tutsi but when they sought national independence using the Hutu petty-bourgeois against them.

Olubisis Kuboni from Trinadad and Tobago talked of the problems of ethnic conflict between people of African and those of Asian origin. As a Pan Africanist he wanted to see a constitution where both groups would respect each other's cultures. He condemned the British-style first past the post' electoral system as one

that perpetuated colonialism's policy of 'divide and rule'.

Dr Kimini Nebusi, representing the Pan African Grassroots Educational Network, said he favoured making alliances with all immigrant groups and with all those against imperialism. He called for resistance to racism to be built on the self-organisation of immigrant communities, in alliance with the working class. He said it was necessary to overcome the racism of sections of the working class who had been bought out by capitalism.

Marie Therese Santana, originally from Angola and speaking for the Pan African Women's Grassroots Network, argued that events in Angola had shown that the theories of Marx and Engels were irrelevant and that attempts to apply their theories there had proved disastrous.

Harpal Brar of the Indian Workers Association caused controversy by saying that Britain had brought 'civilisation' to India; he explained that he meant the replacement of handicraft industries by modern capitalist production and the creation of a working class. Later in the discussion he insisted on defending Stalin and claimed he had evidence to prove that Trotsky was a fascist!

Shegun Sango argued that Africa could only be united on the basis of socialism. This needed a revolution led by the working class, said Sango, who spoke on behalf of the Nigerian section of the Committee for a Workers International, which is represented in Britain by Militant Labour.

He said that many Nigerians rejected socialism because they equated it with Stalinism. We must

Charlie Pottins

## INIVERSARY OF COSATU

## ing nurses of the former Transkei ANCE WITH GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL UNITY





on of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), Cape Town, 1986 (left). In the elections COSATU urged support for the Government of National Unity (GNU)

## inates ence

utilise Trotsky's criticisms of the bureaucracy, he said, but added that the break-up of the Soviet Union was 'not progressive'.

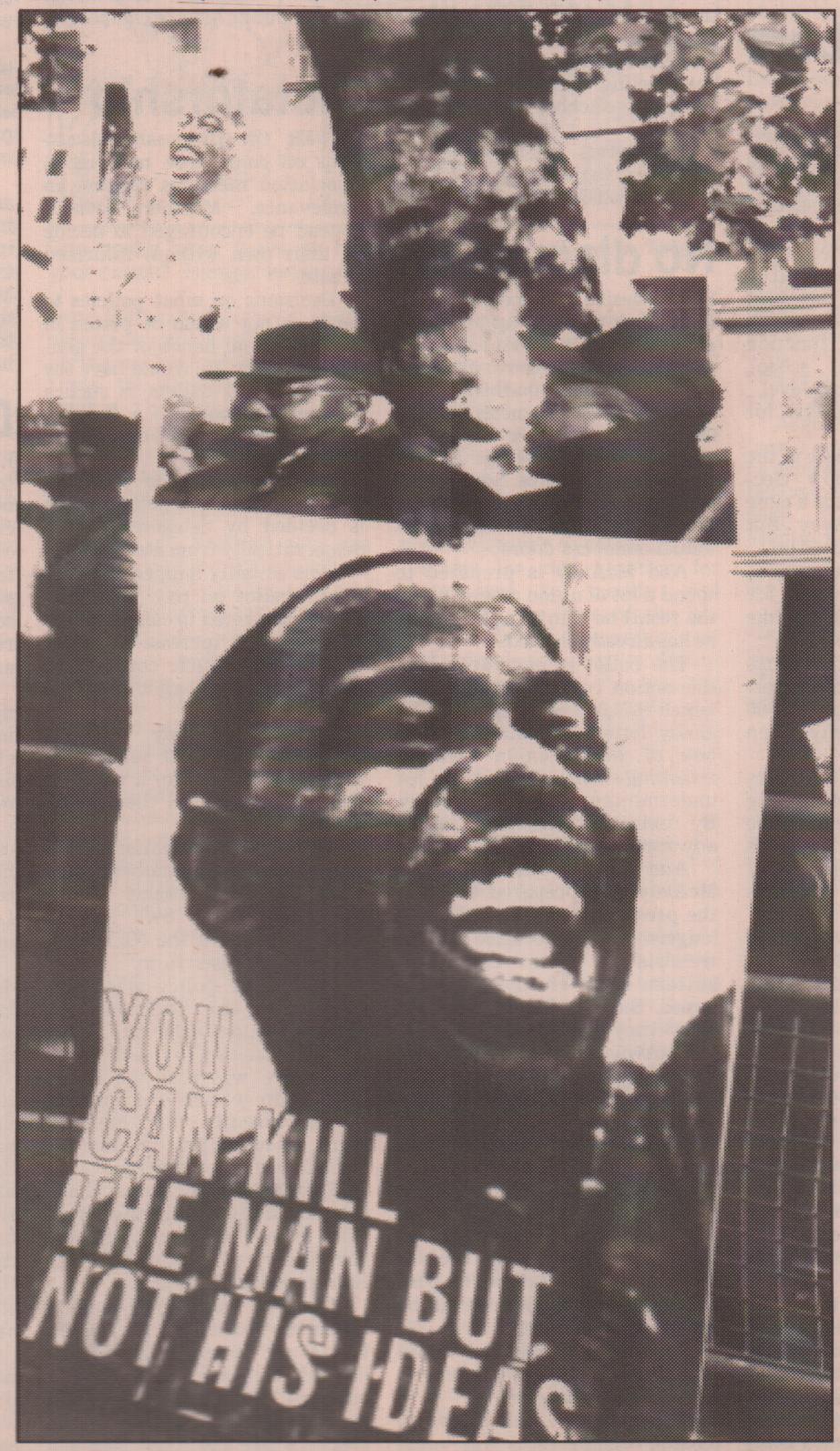
Joseph Ochieno, a Ugandan active in the Southwark branch of the local government union UNI-SON, showed that while the Ugandan constitution purports to defend liberal values it in fact allows the existing regime to delay elections for up to four years; this was akin to the decision of the Commonwealth leaders to give the Nigerian regime two years to 'reform' itself.

A speaker of Sudanese origin called for support for the African majority in Sudan in their struggle against 'Arabisation' and 'Islamisation' being imposed by the Arab minority who had been left as a controling élite by the British.

The conference closed by passing of a resolution moved by Kofi Klu which among other things called for support for the Ogoni people's struggle and for a military and oil boycott Migeria. The resolution condemned the execution of Saro-Wiwa and his comrades and the threatened execution of Afro-American activist Mumia Abu Jamal.

It also demanded the lifting of the British government's ban on the Afro-American activist Kwame Ture (formerly Stokely Carmichael) had been invited to the confer-An additional clause was added modemning enslavement in Sudan md Mauritania.

The conference was urged to supthe vigil in memory of Ken -Wiwa and other Ogoni people Saturday 9 December, 1 pm, the Centre, Waterloo, London.



One month on ... REMEMBER KEN SARO-WIWA

and all other victims of the Nigerian dictatorship PICKET 1-4pm VIGIL 4-7pm Saturday 9 December

outside SHELL'S HQ, York Rd, Waterloo

## **BOYCOTT SHELL!**

### **End military** rule now!

TWO weeks after the murder of Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other Ogonis, the Nigerian junta is threatening 19 more Ogoni activists with the death sentence.

Thousands have been killed by the police and army for the 'crime' of opposing the military government and Shell's destruction of their land; hundreds are detained without trial.

Shell makes £1 million profit a day, yet they are refusing to pass the benefits of the industry on to the vast majority of the Nigerian population. Instead, they have called in government forces to stamp out peaceful protest by force. Shell has got Ogoni blood on its hands.

The British government have continued to sell arms to the Nigerian military regime, including 80 tanks and supplies of CS gas — despite a European Union arms embargo which was put in place over two years ago. Prime Minister John Major has called for Abacha and his government in Nigeria to go - in two years' time!

How can we trust the military to dissolve their own government? How many more Nigerians will lose their lives within that period?

We support the struggle of the oppressed peoples of Nigeria for liberation from the rule of the military and the exploitation of international big business. We are opposed to 'quiet' diplomacy while behind the scenes it is 'business as usual'. We want:

An immediate end to military government in Nigeria.

Free all detainees. Freeze the assets of all military and civilian collaborators with the regime.

■ International solidarity to support the struggles of workers and oppressed peoples in Nigeria.

An international oil embargo on Nigeria.

An end to ALL arms sales to the Nigerian government. The right to asylum for refu-

gees — end deportations. People's repossession and democratic control of resources in Nigeria.

People's Embargo for Democracy in Nigeria (PEDEN), PO Box 256, London SE11 5TH. Tel: 0181-

202 6292.

### An open letter to the new head of MI5

Dear Stephen Lander,

HAVE no illusions. The job you inherit from Stella Rimington next year is without exception the filthiest job that anyone could take on. It's a vile, shameful, disgusting job. It stinks.

It always has done. Perhaps, having worked at one time for London University's Institute of Historical Research, you have some inkling of how your line of work has been regarded by the rest of us ever since a government cowering with fear of revolution began in the 1790s to organise systematic spying on working-class organisations.

If not, pray spend a day at the Public Record Office examining some of the semi-literate reports that those spies submitted to their masters — reports which often led to brave men being jailed, transported for life, or put to death.

Will these documents make you shudder as they did me when I held them in my hands?

Probably not. After all, you've already plenty of experience of spying on trade unions and other working-class organisations; and you've been in charge of MI5's 'registry', which collects and stores files on its 'targets'. So you're hardened.

Right from the earliest days of our movement, three kinds of animal — I call them that since they had plainly abdicated their humanity — were hated by the mass of common people.

The scab was hated because he took the bread out of a fellow worker's mouth.

The spy was loathed because he delivered fellow workers up to police, magistrates and hangman, and as often as not embroidered or faked the 'evidence' that secured their convictions.

Detested above all was the spymaster: the spider at the centre of the web. This is the unsavoury role you have assumed and are to be handsomely paid for out of public funds.

By taking on this job you have assumed responsibility for MI5's past as well as its present. I wager you wouldn't dare to show your face in any mining village, where your predecessor's role in helping to defeat the 1984-85 strike is well

remembered.

For MI5 is not only a nest of spies: it's a focus also of disinformation, or, to call things by their right names, of lies spread in order to deceive and sway public opinion.

As your stooges bug and burgle their way across London, and you wallow in those intercepted letters and tapes of tapped telephones and other products of violated privacy, you will continue to preen yourself on your 'patriotic' services to this country's ruling class.

But one day the working class in power will call you to account. When that day comes you may run. But you will have nowhere to hide.

## Royal road to ruin

ONE thing this column can't be accused of is jumping on the antimonarchist bandwagon. Indeed, it may truthfully claim to have led where others have since followed.

As long ago as 4 July 1987, in a piece headed 'Court in the act', it woiced a wish to put the royal family out of business — and to send packing likewise that whole silmy parasitic caste of courtiers and hangers-on who crawl amound Buckingham Palace like marging on rotting

mest. Hight years ago this republican position was far from being tibe matther trendy view it has

### PERSONAL COLUMN

since become. And it seldom found expression in journals of the 'left' or even the 'ultra-left'.

In 1987, the royals had lately been detected in the act of packing off an elderly dotty relative into indecent obscurity, never visiting her, and falsifying the reference books to make it seem as if she had never existed.

For many, this was the first hint of what a cold, affectless, dysfunctional family the Windsors really are.

The younger royals had just been playing the fool on television; our gracious queen, whose annus horribilis (sic) still lay ahead of her, was not yet paying income tax; the Prince and Princess of Wales were still fondly supposed to be enjoying a fairy-

tale marriage; Camilla, the prince's ageing paramour, was not yet a household name. Eight years on, 'the ceremony of innocence is drowned', in ways

that would have startled Yeats drowned, that is, in floods of accusations and revelations and telephone tappings and leaked tapes and, above all, sweet revenge.

In her television interview, the would-be 'queen of hearts' and aspirant roving ambassadress showed herself past mistress of the arts of both revenge and publicity.

She, clearly, was in charge. She had briefed her interviewer on what questions to ask, and what order to ask them in — and, not least, what questions not to ask.

In 60 minutes this woman alleged by that toad-shaped prince's toady Nicholas Soames, defence minister of state, to be in an advanced stage of paranoia succeeded in dealing the British monarchy the most damaging blow it has suffered since Charles I had his head chopped off in 1649.

Socialists know that the British monarchy has always played a highly reactionary role. The constitutional expert Sir Ivor Jennings quotes that subtle and extremely right-wing courtier Lord Esher: 'No one acquainted with the inner workings of the Constitution can doubt the enormous powers retained and exercised by the Sovereign.'

When this anachronistic institution comes tumbling down, as it assuredly will, so will the dangerous myth that it is somehow socially neutral, above the class struggle, and therefore a precious symbol of 'national unity'.

This myth was in part the brain-child of Lord Stamfordham, George V's private secrefearful tary, who, working-class revolution soon after World War I, sold a new approach to his monarch with these words:

'We must endeavour to induce the thinking working classes, Socialists and others, to regard the Crown, not as a mere figurehead and as an institution which, as they put it, "don't count", but as a living power for good, with receptive faculties welcoming information affecting the interests and social well-being of all classes and ready, not only to sympathize with those questions, but anxious to further their solution.'

To their shame, generation after generation of Labour leaders, even the 'Lefts' among them, have gone along with this myth not necessarily believing it, but believing in its utility.

Thus Jennie Lee, Aneurin Bevan's wife, told the Daily Herald on 1 July 1952: 'The institution of the monarchy is a valuable shock-absorber.'

No doubt Blair and Newlabour would say the same. Socialists, however, know that the monarchy is an integral part of the capitalist state machine.

So we say to those who are tearing the monarchy apart: right on, royals! Let them continue full tilt along this road to

Peter Fryer

## A fundamental attack on NUT democracy

BY PHIL EDWARDS **NUT** member

THE left in the National Union of Teachers has suffered a serious set-back in a recent ballot on union 'democracy' carried out by the union's right-wing leadership.

But this was still only a 'consultative' ballot so it is not too late for the left to rally its forces and defeat the union's general secretary Doug McAvoy's proposals.

The 'Proposals to Extend Democracy in the Union' are the product of a dictator.

The six questions members were asked utilise the Tory antiunion laws on balloting. These laws in effect suppress members' democratic rights.

McAvoy proposes to conduct ballots for nominations to national office. Motions to conference, the agenda, rule changes and any decisions made would also be subject to a ballot.

The overwhelming majority in favour of McAvoy's proposals has to be balanced against the appalling turnout in the ballot.

Only 21 per cent took part. On 5 of the ballot questions the result was approximately 80 per cent in favour and 15 per cent against.

But the question on whether or not conference motions submitted by associations should be by individual ballot was 24,041 (62.9 per cent) in favour and 14,176 (37.1 per cent) against.

Clearly the left elicited very little response from the membership.

#### **How members** feel

THE strength of the left at this year's annual conference, which led to McAvoy's maneouvering in the first place, is not reflected at grass-roots level

Members feel isolated from the structures of the union and do not understand even the most basic mechanisms of union democracy which function through discussion at school, association and conference level.

But there is a real desire for change in the union.

The left-wing candidate in the recent general secretary elections, Mary Hufford, made a close run challenge to McAvoy. But this has not been capitalised on.

If only an extra 1 per cent of the membership had voted for Hufford, instead of abstaining, she would have been elected.

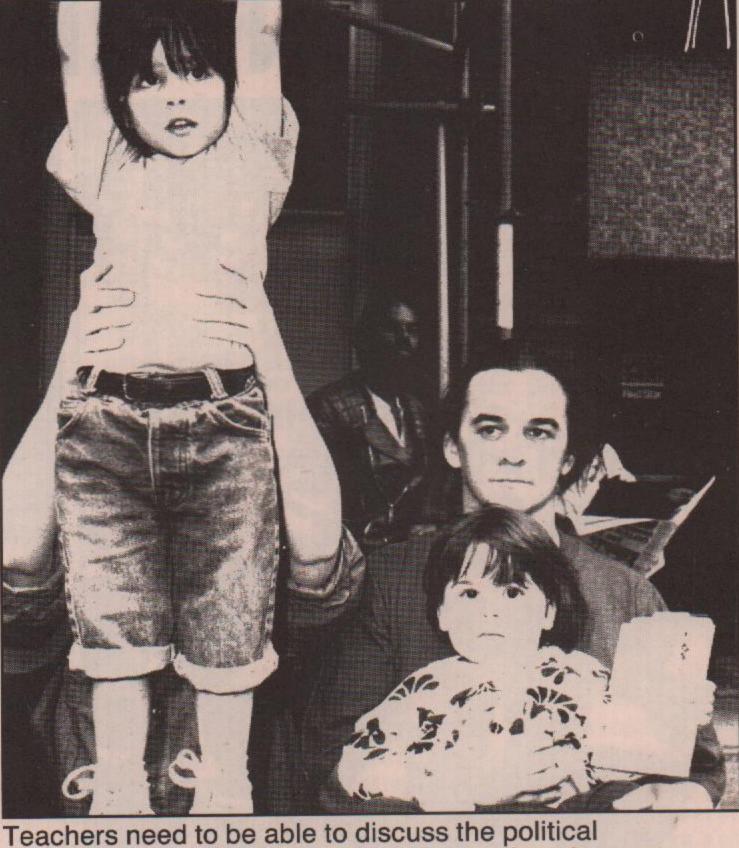
The left failed to mobilise support for her on the scale necessary. For example, an extra 1,000 votes could have easily been picked up in London.

But many on the left, for sectarian reasons, including the Socialist Workers' Party, were unwilling to fully back Hufford's election. This makes them party in some degree to Hufford's defeat.

A defeat for McAvoy would have been a vote of 'No confidence' in the leadership. Hufford's election would have created the conditions for real democracy in the union.

It would have given us a leadership committed in principle to carry out conference policy. If Hufford had won would the SATs testing boycott have been called off? Would the class size action have been squashed? Would there have been no improvement in pay? Would working conditions have worsened?

More important, even had we suffered such reversals, would there not have been the condifor consolidating and strengthening the growing desire for a fight, and wouldn't a proper debate on the way forward been carried out inside the union?



alternatives to sustain and develop the education system

The newly founded united front between the Socialist Teachers Alliance and the Campaign for a Democratic and Fighting Union has not for the moment succeeded in building or strengthening the membership's campaign for democratising the union. They have failed to involve the membership in the debates inside the union.

After years of Tory attacks the membership in general feels betrayed, powerless and disenfranchised. This could become a real feeling of anger, as conditions in the schools further deteriorate.

The actual intention of the ballot was to do just the opposite of democratising the union.

### No discussion

IN HIS desire to 'democratise' the NUT, McAvoy drew up the ballot paper questions without showing them to the full executive or having any discussion on them.

These proposals mean that the democratic process of discussion and voting at meetings and at conference would be replaced by ballot papers worded by the general secretary put through individual members' doors.

And McAvoy is prepared to spend a lot of union money to get the result he wants in the ballots he has already carried.

The ballot to overturn classsize action cost over £155,000 of which £75,000 was spent on a glossy letter through the letter box of every union member attacking sinister 'extremists' for undermining union democracy. By 'extremist', McAvoy means any opponent of his policies.

And in recent officer elections McAvoy was prepared to go to the press to attack his left challengers on the executive (as 'extremists') influencing the outcome of the elections, or so he hoped. Such is his concern for democracy in the union.

McAvoy proposes that a ballot would have to be conducted before an association could make donations or affiliations to organisations 'outside the structure or endorsement of the National Union'.

This in practice would mean any campaign or organisation that he disapproved of because the cost to associations of conducting such ballots would be thousands of pounds.

Therefore, associations would only be allowed to give money to 'approved' campaigns.

The question of affiliation to outside organisations was taken up in order to restrict debate on

broader questions confronting the union members.

The leadership used the question of affiliation to the Anti-Nazi League, arguing that the union would not support 'violence'.

This was in reality a smoke screen for an attack on the rights of local associations to affiliate to other organisations such as trades councils, anti-fascist groups, public service campaigns,

### Dictatorship

UNDER the proposals, discussions on conference motions at association meetings become an irrelevance. Members would instead be encouraged to decide on their own without informed debate.

Decisions on what policies to ratify or not would be placed in the dictatorial hands of the general secretary. He would have the right to word ballots in such a way as to encourage a positive vote on the policies he decides are appropriate.

This he would do irrespectively of conference policy, which is decided by delegates elected democratically from associations.

This actually happened in the recent ballot on pay. Last year conference voted to campaign on an 8 per cent increase in salary plus £1,500, which could have been backed by a ballot for strike

Instead, McAvoy balloted members for a joint submission to the government for a 'substantial increase', by all the teacher unions.

This 'joint' submission fell apart even before members voted when the other teacher unions submitted their own claims, Left stand in the way of this hapsomething which the NUT leadership had refused to do.

Conference policy was overturned by the leadership. So much for union democracy.

The situation at last year's conference was that the Broad Left group, who have a majority on the executive, and McAvoy, were resoundingly defeated by the left on every single issue.

Following this it was necessary for McAvoy to create conditions for a witch-hunt by raising the spectre of 'extremists' with hidden political agendas.

The NUT leadership wants to create the illusion that it is possible to put pressure on a newly elected 'reformed' Labour government rather than lead a real struggle on every front to defend teachers' pay and conditions and improve a rapidly crumbling

education system. It is therefore important for them that NUT members do not shatter this illusion by demanding action or democracy.

#### How democratic?

SO HOW democratic was the decision to endorse this consultative 'ballot' on union democracy itself?

At an executive meeting in October, the Broad Left group brought an urgent item to ballot members on 'greater consultation'. This was taken instead of an

important item on SATs. After a short discussion the meeting ended.

Later an 'inner cabinet' voted 4 to 1 to agree to the proposals. Later that month at a special executive meeting left members tried to obtain more information about the planned 'consultation'.

The only material the executive was presented with was an A4 sheet without any detailed proposals.

Such scant regard for democracy continued once the meeting started.

Left executive member Ian Murch asked McAvoy what questions would be asked in the ballot. Malcolm Horne, a Broad Left member, urged McAvoy to 'keep them guessing'.

McAvoy replied that 'this is all you need to know'. Another member of the Broad Left, George Wiskin, commented that he thought 'meetings may be on the way out' as a form of democracy.

For the leadership any pretence of democracy is on the way out. They now seek to stay in office, by the use of undemocratic practices and keeping members in ignorance.

Such an important issue affecting tens of thousands of teachers, has only been discussed in the shortest time. The executive have never voted to agree to McAvoy's proposals. McAvoy was then free to decide on the basis of this 'mandate' the wording of the ballot on union democracy.

### Deep crisis

LOCAL authorities are in a deep financial crisis and Labour offers no solution to schools facing more cuts. Nor do our union leaders offer any solution to thousands of teachers being bullied and pressurised by the privatised Ofsted school inspectors, facing cuts in resourcing, increased workload and class sizes.

The solution to this is bound up with the reconstruction of the union at every level on a properly democratic basis with ful and open debate amongst the membership.

This has to be linked to a rea campaign against any government, Tory or Labour, who attack education. McAvoy and the Broad pening.

The main question in a sense is does a 21 per cent turnout in a ballot provide the result necessary for McAvoy to proceed with

the moral high ground? The whole democratic tradition of the union, such as it is, is under threat but McAvoy stil has to go through these same democratic channels, including above all conference, to make this fundamental change. On that basis the left must proceed with a campaign against McAvoy and the Broad Left with the membership behind them against the attacks of the Tory government.

Since Labour offers no alternative the membership must also discuss what sort of politica alternative needs to be built to sustain and develop the education system.

# Money and power go to the polls in Russia

ONE FINE day in August, investors cheated by one of Moscow's commercial banks held their regular demonstration in the city. Two years ago these people had put their money into the Favorit bank in good faith. They had been promised a high rate of return — and been left with nothing. 'Boiko, give us our money back', they shouted. Their placards carried the same message.

They know now that in 1993, their money was used by Oleg Boiko, prominent financier, owner of the National Credit bank and founder of Favorit, to finance the election campaign of Democratic Russia's Choice [the party led by Yegor Gaidar, former prime minister and champion of economic 'shock therapy'], of which Boiko was the national chairman.

Today, Mr Boiko is thinking not about how to repay the cheated investors, but about how to make new and profitable investments of his own in politics. He has parted company with Gailar, swapping his party's declining fortunes for the brighter visas offered by Our Home Is Russia, the bloc led by prime minister liktor Chernomyrdin. And who will foot the bill this time?

It's full speed ahead as we all repare for the elections to the lational Duma, Russia's parliament...

The political scene is livening as polling day, 17 December, pproaches. Blocs and coalitions re being formed, lists of candiates being registered and electoneering has begun. Bourgeoisureaucratic clans of various colurs have started the battle for eats. The main fight is expected etween the two main sections of the ruling class, which we may onditionally call the 'party of ower' and the 'opposition'.

The 'party of power' is repreented firstly by Our Home Is ussia. Its social base is that part the former bureaucracy which fully satisfied with the status o, resulting from pro-capitalist form and privatisation. It rings together the heads of the rge corporations, banks and fiancial groups, and everyone nows it was founded to serve eir interests. Its nickname is ur Home Is Gazprom, because of hernomyrdin's close links with at giant among energy induscombines. [In Soviet times, ernomyrdin for many years aded Gazprom, the state conomerate which owns most of ssia's vast natural gas re-

Nearly all the government inisters and heads of local adinistration belong to the Our me Is Russia bloc. Its organisamal structure corresponds to basis in the nomenklatura. So iking is its similarity to the old mmunist Party of the Soviet ion (CPSU) that even the provernment newspaper Izvestia terred to it.

Nearly all the party [i.e. CPSU] ivists in the local economy beg to Our Home Is Russia,' said article about Our Home Is ssia's organisation in vanovsk region. 'Among the c's activists are all the district st secretaries of the CPSU. The

mer CPSU branch officials are l-known as propagandists agitators.' Izvestia concluded: seems that the CPSU regional anisation has just been remed "Our Home Is Russia".'

The other strength of Chernordin's bloc is the support it reres from president Yeltsin. It well known that the prime lister founded the bloc in line in the president's wish for a tre-right coalition'.

Yeltsin's advisers was to creat the same time an equivacentre-left coalition' and esish something similar to the erican two-party system. In Elections for seats in the Russian Duma (parliament) take place on 17 December. Here ALEXEII GUSEV surveys the parties taking part. This first of two articles describes the parties closest to the present government. His second article, to be published next week, will look at the various 'opposition' parties including the Communist Party of the Russian Federation, and the stance taken by the parties and trades unions claiming to represent Russian workers. Gusev is a member of the Socialist Workers Union (Russian section of the Workers International to Rebuild the Fourth International).



The poster says: 'I am on hunger strike.' Well off gent: 'What's your cause?' Hunger striker: 'Simple — there's no grub.'

June, Yeltsin himself went on television to explain all this, designating as head of the 'left centrists' the Duma speaker, Ivan Rybkin. The joke was that, since the whole thing was artificial, the members of the political establishment could not agree between themselves who was 'right' and who was 'left'.

In the end, Yeltsin's plan was not fully realised: Rybkin's bloc, Our Fatherland, having set out to unite all 'constructive critics' of the government, proved to be a nine-day wonder. The government's 'moderate opponents' decided that Our Fatherland's antagonistic image did not sit nicely with the fulfilment of the president's plans. [According to newspaper reports, shortly after the bloc's foundation, two leaders, Boris Gromov and Stanislav Shatalin, quit.]

This is how Our Home Is Russia became the main voice for the pro-Yeltsin fraction of the ruling class. What is its ideology and programme? Chernomyrdin is distinguished from his predecessor, Gaidar, by his attachment not simply to economic liberalism but to 'state social-liberalism', that is, emphasis on the role of the state in the economy and a 'social orientation' in politics.

The prime minister himself explained at a congress of the bloc the layers of society to which it would be oriented: the first step, he declared, was to stimulate the accumulation of Russian national capital. Reliance on the national capitalist and the national bureaucrat, continuation of promarket reform 'without excessive radicalism', guaranteeing supremacy in the economy for the huge state- and privately-owned monopolies — this is the essence of Chernomy adiabate and privately-owned monopolies — this is the essence

of Chernomyrdin's programme.
Our Home Is Russia's appearance is quite natural. The era of

Gaidarism [that is, 'shock therapy'], with its passion for destroying the 'command-administrative' system and orientation towards the 'free' demonopolised market, à la Adam Smith, has gone. The utopian attempt to implant 'pure' private capitalism in Russia has, naturally, collapsed. In fact that was not the aim of the nomenklatura's so-called market reforms: the real question for them was to modify and modernise the form of the bureaucracy's social-economic rule and redivide the property. Today, the stage at which this was the business of the day is practically over - and, once again, they talk about the 'accumulation of capital' with active assistance from the state.

As we will see below, this aim figures in the programme not only of Our Home Is Russia but of the great majority of electoral parties and blocs.

A symptom of this trend is the decline of Gaidar's party, Democratic Russia's Choice. If during the last election campaign it was considered the favourite, today it would be hard to find a commentator to predict that it will get more than 5 per cent of the vote, the minimum needed to get Duma seats. Gaidar has become unpopular. He is associated in the ordinary voter's mind with the painful consequences of 'shock therapy'. His former sponsors, like the above-mentioned Boiko, have deserted him.

The most that is left for Gaidar is to complain that he was not allowed to finish what he had started with 'shock therapy', and to criticise the Russian model of 'robber-nomenklatura capitalism', even referring to Trotsky's book Revolution Betrayed (!) which stated that elements of the former bureaucracy would gain most from the restoration of pri-

vate property. The only trump card left in Gaidar's pack is the human rights campaigner Sergei Kovalyov, who is on the Democratic Russia's Choice federal list of candidates. Kovalyov's outstanding condemnation of Russian imperialist aggression against Chechnya evoked widespread sympathy (although as a party, Democratic Russia's Choice had an ambiguous attitude, refusing to openly denounce Yeltsin on the issue.)

For voters who accept the general direction of Yeltsin's policy, but are put off by Gaidar's tarnished reputation and find Our Home Is Russia's image too élite and bureaucratic, there are other electoral alliances occupying political niches somewhere between Gaidar and Chernomyrdin. The two worth mentioning are the Yabloko bloc led by Grigory Yavlinsky and Vladimir Lukin, and Boris Fyodorov's Forward Russia movement.

The Yavlinsky bloc leans on the support of the middle layers of entrepreneurs, parts of the intelligentsia and state officialdom, and some financial groups, the most important of which is the Most company. Sympathetic sections of the mass media do their best to create the impression that Yavlinsky — once [under Gorbachev] the author of a plan to take Russia to 'civilised capitalism' in 500 days — has a unique new programme to lead the economy out of crisis. Of course nobody has yet seen this sensational programme. In Yavlinsky's own statements there is nothing new or unique, just the old cliches about 'gradual reform' and so on.

As for Fyodorov, it can be seen from Forward Russia's name that he aspires to the role of a Russian Berlusconi. His election demagogy is closely related to Vladimir Zhirinovsky's, and he has even been called the 'democratic Zhirinovsky'.

Forward Russia promises to almost immediately eliminate inflation, to stop price increases, to destroy the highest bureaucrats' privileges and to eradicate crime.

Fyodorov, formerly identified as a dedicated 'free market' monetarist, is deliberately trying to distance himself from Gaidar [whose finance minister he was at the time of 'shock therapy'], constantly emphasising his movement's 'patriotism'. Not by chance was he one of the foremost supporters of Yeltsin's invasion of Chechnya.

These are the main parties of that part of the bourgeois-bureaucratic class which has already, in general, resolved its 'social problem'. But it must be borne in mind that only half the Duma deputies are elected from the party lists, while the other half represent territorial constituencies. And here operates another powerful fraction of the 'party of power' — the representatives of the regional élites.

There is no question that these forces, resting on the local financial-industrial and bureaucratic circles, are serious competition for all parties and blocs. The August election of the governor of Yekaterinburg district bore witness to their strength: Alexei Strakhov, a protege of Our Home Is Russia, was defeated by Edward Rossel of the Reborn Urals movement.

# Ready for a fight

vvorkers Press Saturday 2 December 1995

'SACKED Liverpool dockers have spoken at 900 meetings up and down the country over the last seven weeks,' said Jimmy Nolan, chairman of the Merseyside Dockers Shop Stewards' Committee, 'and the message is clear: people are ready for a fight.'

The 300-strong meeting in the House of Commons at a budget-day lobby welcomed Nolan with a standing ovation.

Organised by the Welfare State Network, the lobby was attended by, amongst others, pensioners, single-parents, and student groups, NHS workers, those organising protests on social security measures against asylum seekers, and locally based anticuts groups.

John Lister from the London Health Emergency addressed the meeting, as well as Campaign Group MPs Alan Simpson and Tony Benn.

Simpson said that there had been three large rallies in Nottingham against the cuts. Local people are expressing their anger and are saying 'Enough is enough'.

## Scabs high and dry

SCABS hired by strike-busting firm, Drake International Limited, do not need to be bussed through picket lines in the port of Liverpool. They now live inside the port!

Portacabins have been specially erected and fitted with televisions and washing machines so that the scabs can live in comfort in their splendid isolation.

But, they complained, there are no pubs this side of the dock gates!

The Mersey Docks and Harbour Company, who need 'their staff' to be happy and comfortable in their new home, came to the rescue. Cans of beer were shipped in.

Oh dear! A zealous local official from some department or other got wind of this illegal act, and booked the Mersey Docks and Harbour Company: 'No alchohol allowed inside the dock I'm afraid.' Well, what's a bit of suffering. It's all in a good cause!

## Two-tier power

LONDONERS who are prepared to accept power cuts without warning could soon be paying lower electricity bills.

Customers are being asked whether they would accept discounts of up to 30 per cent in return for cuts in their power supplies up to three times a week. The move is a response to the growing inability of the investment-starved National Grid to supply power at peak times. In July this year a decision was

almost taken to drop the voltage across the network — the final step before power cuts.

In a market research exercise organised by the Bristol-based Accent Marketing and research, customers are being asked to names times when they would find power cuts least inconvenient. They are then asked whether they would be prepared to accept regular cuts in return for a reduction in their bills.

## Green 'spooks'

BY STEVE DRURY

SOMETHING strange is stirring in Maryland, USA: the CIA is going 'green'.

The notorious 'Company' set up a Global Affairs Department two years ago, to analyse environmental matters and focused on central Asia and Africa.

The 'logic' behind this is that, somehow, the 'threat to global security' (read: 'New World Order') has been transformed since the fall of Stalinism.

George Moose, the Assistant Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs believes that if the CIA had studied Somalia's falling water levels in the three years before the outbreak of famine and clan warfare, warning of crisis and preparation for US intervention could have been earlier and less chaotic.

The US intelligence community now looks far deeper into 'natural phenomena' in their search for the roots of destabilized security.

This includes changes in vegetation cover and rainfall, agriculture, local economic indicators and disease patterns.

The Defense Intelligence Agency has been looking at the spread of water hyacinths floating on Lake Victoria, which grow at such a staggering rate that they threaten to strangle that vast lake's ecosystems and decrease fish supplies to Uganda, Tanzania and Kenya.

DIA analysts reckon that such changes might trigger government destabilization, ethnic conflict or civil wars, rather than the 'state-to-state' conflict that characterized the 'Old World Order' before 1989-91.

In fact it is the imperialist stranglehold on Africa and the decline of the capitalist system that is by far the greatest factor in crushing 'Third World' economies, and generating famine and ecological collapse.

A disturbing, but by no means unexpected aspect of this new direction of Langley's 'spooks' is that much of their intelligence is now being supplied by aid agencies who are swarming over Africa, and also by environmental scientists examining ecological change using satellite images.

A link between the CIA, the US Agency for International Development and the US Geological Survey has emerged in a regional study of the environment and social structure for the whole of the Horn of Africa.

This is aimed ostensibly at famine early warning, but fits ideally with the CIAs new role in preparing imperialist intervention to suppress the continent-wide demands for self determination and a future by its oppressed and dispossessed people.

## Hunger strike

A HUNGER strike will take place this coming Wednesday, 6 December, against the new social security measures against asylum

It will take place outside the Social Security Committee offices in New Court, Carey Street, Lon-

don, WC2 (nearest tube Holborn) from 9.30am to 12noon.

It is supported by many of the leading refugee organisations in Britain,

For further details ring 0171 837-1450.

Send your letters and photos — Deadline Monday Workers Press, PO Box 735, London SW8 1YB Telephone: 0171-387 0564 Fax: 0171-387 0569 E-mail: s0gp@exnet.co.uk

### France's angry resistance 'IT SHOULD be a day of protest against the change in the pension scheme for state employees, but it has become a gigantic cry of discontent against the prime minister and against his plan to reform social security.'

This was how the leading bourgeois daily 'Le Monde' characterised what happened on Friday 24 November in France.

It was effectively a gigantic cry. About one million people in a dozen demonstrations all over the country. Strikes in schools, railways, underground, buses, hospitals, post office and universities.

This 24-hour action came only six weeks after the general strike of public workers on 10 October.

To unprecedented attacks on the public workers' pension scheme, the Juppe-Chirac government added a new front: socalled reform of social security, with the official aim to reduce its deficit, in fact to destroy it, raise new income taxes, and impose a 'two-speed' health service, etc.

The whole population is looking with anxiety to its future. This explains a new factor since the 10 October strike, large participation of industrial workers and students in the action.

Students started a nationwide strike action a fortnight ago, with hundreds of thousands occupying universities.

They want more teachers and credit for the university to improve working conditions. They had a national demonstration due on 30 November.

#### From JANOS BOROVI in Paris

On Saturday 25 November we had a 40,000-strong demonstration in Paris for women's equality, and against the fascist anti-abortion commandos, which turned up also in an anti-government demonstration.

Today, 27 November, as I write this, the railway strike continues, there are very few trains and practically no transport between Paris and the suburbs.

The workers' determination to fight back is particularly impressive when the union leaderships are making an enormous attempt to disorganise resistance, keep the struggles apart and prevent workers uniting in a general strike.

#### Assault

Nicole Notat, general secretary of the CFDT, the union federation led by Socialist Party leaders, found 'positive elements' in Prime Minister Juppe's assault on social security. Several CFDT unions rejected this capitulation. Notat was jeered and jostled by union members when she hypocritically wanted to take part in last Friday's demonstration.

Force Ouvriere, the social democrat-led federation with which Pierre Lambert's Workers Party is associated, broke the unions' united front against the government by calling a separate one-day strike and demonstration for Thursday 28 November.

The Communist Party-led CGT initially called for action on the 28th, too, later switching to back the strike on the 24th. This was the only union calling for workers' assemblies to prepare the strike.

It later decided to support the 28 November action too, after negotiations between union lead-

The 100,000-strong FSU teachers federation decided on Monday that it would support the strike the following day - with no communication to the members, and no chance for them to discuss or organise.

What's happening is what the French call 'greve press bouton' - push-button strikes, decided bureaucratically without the membership. Fearing the workers they lead, the union leaders want to exhaust the working class without defeating the government.

#### **Discredited**

The Chirac-Juppe government is government by 'default'. only remaining because there isn't a working class alternative to replace it. The Socialist Party is discredited by the way it managed the bourgeois state under President Mitterrand from 1981.

The so-called Communist Party lost its 'identity' with the collapse of Stalinism. Now it is trying to transform itself into a reformist party in a situation where there is no possibility for peaceful reforms.

Its general secretary, Hue, seeks a 'constructive opposition' to Chirac-Juppe when there is massive opposition to the government.

Last week, in the midst of the strike wave, supporters of the call for a new working-class party met in Paris. They decided to launch a liaison bulletin for those who sign the appeal for a new party, and to organise a meeting in Paris on 16 December.

But the most important discussion was on the strike wave. We had reports from railway workers and discussed how to introduce the call for a new party in the actual struggles.

There is a big step from the working class's determination to fight to the building of new leadership. But, disgusted by the union bureaucrats, the opposition is growing in the old unions.

There is a strong desire for

democratic, class-struggle inter nationalist unionism. The SUD PTT postal union, which activel supports Secours Ouvriere pou la Bosnie (Workers Aid for Bos nia) made big gains in the las union elections.

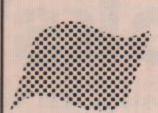
Other trade unionists ar interested in the way it functions and its programme.

#### **Brake**

The lack of perpective and organisation to unite the fights i a brake on the situation, but no an absolute one.

Anger is growing. A socia explosion can come at any moment. All those who fight for re-organisation, rebuilding the workers' movement in the unions, the unemployed organi sations and the initiative for new party of the working class share great responsibility to pre pare it.

## 'Where can I go?'



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#### 'The winters are very severe. BY CHARLIE POTTINS The central heating is out of order, because there's no oil. They have to buy timber or coal on the A 31-YEAR-OLD cafe manager is black market, it costs an arm and fighting for the right not to

return to a home town he left because he didn't want to be killed himself, or to have to kill his neighbours. Mladin fled Banja Luka, in

northern Bosnia, three years ago, after the Serb nationalists took over the town. He and a Croat friend hid together, refusing to join either side's nationalist militias.

'It's ridiculous to fight against people you have lived all your life with,' Mladin says.

Now he sees no place for people like himself, of mixed background, in a country which the US-brokered 'peace' has carved up between nationalists. 'Bosnia ceased to exist as a country with that agreement in Dayton, Ohio,' Mladin says.

Last week, appealing to a British government immigration tribunal, he told them he has nowhere to go. 'All I'm asking is to be allowed to stay a bit longer and to save my life."

Mladin doesn't just fear for himself. Thousands of Muslims and Croats have been 'ethnically cleansed' from the Banja Luka area, thousands more were thrown out of their homes recently.

'My mother is Croat. She has been living in fear all this time. If anyone knew she was Croat she'd be evicted from her place. She is in her 70s. She'd have nowhere to go. She can't start from scratch in her 70s.

'Banja Luka as a town hasn't been shelled or damaged so far. In these respects it is fairly lucky. But you cannot call it living to be constantly in fear, without means of a livelihood. The economy doesn't exist. The old people aren't getting any pensions even. I manage to send some money from time to time, that's all they

a leg. It's a position I would not wish on anybody.'

Mladin applied for political asylum in September 1992, soon after coming to Britain. In November last year he heard from the Home Office. They said that having considered his reasons, they were turning down his application.

He could return home without fear, because 'the Secretary of State understands' that both the Bosnian constitution and that of the Bosnian-Croat federation guarantee the protection of human rights.

Does the Secretary of State 'understand' that the muchvaunted Dayton agreement has left Banja Luka outside the rule of the Bosnian government, that the town is crowded with Serb refugees; and that the UN High Commission on Refugees reports thousands of Croats and Muslims evicted from their homes are camped out in sub-zero temperatures?

They also suggested — this was before the massacres at Zepa and Srebrenica, but not before the attack on Gorazde - that refugees like Mladin could go to UN 'safe areas'. 'I would like to know the name of one safe area where the person who wrote that letter would go without an armoured vehicle and body protection,' he says.

#### Nowhere

'I really have nowhere to go', Mladin says. 'I appreciate my life more than the British government does. If I went home now I could face ten years in jail, if not get shot.'

Like many Bosnian refugees, Mladin has professional training he has not been able to use. Before the war, he studied to be a lawyer. His friend Goran, a Croat married to a Serb, is a qualified mechanical engineer, now working with him in the cafe.

'There are people with PhDs and MAs washing up, or in cleaning jobs. Most of us aren't here because of poverty, we came because we wanted to save our lives, and not be forced to kill our neighbours. It's ridiculous to fight against people you went to school with, people you've lived all your life with.

'I'm still in touch with friends who are Croats or Muslims in other places. Those who stayed behind are mostly dead. There are refugees all over the world, even in Colombia.

'We have no state. It is ridiculous to expect otherwise when the country is divided in two, we have ethnically "cleansed" areas. The Muslims and Croats were fighting until 20 months ago. That alliance cannot last. Where can I go? Bosnia ceased to exist as a country with that agreement in Dayton.

'Do you think the Serbs will comply with the orders of the Bosnian government, or the other way round? That's what ethnic cleansing was about. A country has to have a president, an army, and a parliament. I can't see parliament functioning in a country like that.

'Mr Clinton's talk about "safe return of refugees" was pure rhetoric, without any ground in reality. You can't expect people who were driven out at gunpoint, or fled in terror, to just return to the areas. You have had whole villages burnt down completely. In my home town there were 16 mosques. All these places are now empty, they are parking lots or waste ground without even the foundations left. The Serbs made sure Muslims are not going back.

'I guess it's the same in Mostar, and Herzegovina. There are just two areas where there's still a bit of multi-cultural feeling, where we still have the mixture we had before, Sarajevo and Tuzla. Being

a lawyer, what would I do? I need a new homeland. I'm the holder of a passport of a non-existent country. I still have the passport of former Yugoslavia.'

'It's not that people are bloodthirsty. They were dragged into war by cunning politicians. Anyone who refused to join the army would lose their job and home and become overnight penniless People were hoping they wouldn't be the one to be killed.

### Majority

'The majority, or at least a large proportion of Serbs in Bosnia didn't want war with our neighbours. We grew up together All of a sudden some politicians came to our town, and said we couldn't live together. Unfortunately, the people who created the war were in power. And they are still in power. Even if Karadzic is made to step down there are others. Somebody killed 8,000 people at Srebrenica, someone was in charge of concentration camps around the country. These people won't be brought to justice, ever.'

Mladin wrote to his MP Labour's Joan Ruddock, about his case, but says she replied that she couldn't help him. He feels others to whom he turned weren't helpful either. 'The Immigration Advisory Service told me to drop the case, to admit there are "safe areas" I could return to, and hope the Home Office would have sympathetic consideration.'

'My chances are still slim. I still fear that I could lose. That would put at stake everything I achieved so far. I don't ask much from the government. I'm not on benefit. I've worked, I've paid taxes, I paid community charge and national insurance, so I don't cost this country a penny. I'm contributing to this society.

'What I'm asking is to be allowed to stay a bit longer and save my life. It may sound pathetic. But many people are still being killed in Bosnia.'

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