Workers Press

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BSEITHEY GO!

ORKERS PRESS adders were warned ack in December of a lew variety of CJD—ne human equivalent frad cow disease'—nat had struck down bung people ('Should e eat the cows?', 23 ecember).

Our readers were among e first to be told that this as the beginning of an epimic caused by eating conminated beef products.

Now the government's ongiform Encephalopathy divisory Committee (SEAC) admitted that BSE-fected beef may cause this tal disease. Their admission lows changes in this committee's composition that we made it more sensitive to blic health concerns.

Unknown numbers of peoe face death, thousands face employment and ruin, as e multi-billion-pound beef dustry slides into

For the first time in history illions of people have been posed to prions — the infector agent causing BSE — ith totally unpredictable

Almost everyone in Britain ill have been exposed peatedly to infective mate-al that is treated in medical boratories with extreme

BY DANIEL ROBERTSON

Humans are known to be susceptible to several types of BSE-like disease, and the variety that infects cattle is known to be particularly virulent. It infects most of the animal species it has been tested against, including primate species related to humans.

The government have hidden behind bland claims that there is no scientific evidence that BSE infects humans, but the reality is that no experiments have been done to try to infect humans purposely, to test their susceptibility — perhaps some Tory ministers would like to volunteer!

(You can bet your bottom dollar/50p they have been eating the safe but more expensive organic beef as part of their much-publicised 'balanced diet'.)

Subjects

Instead we are all the subjects in a massive experiment. They are waiting to see what the death toll will be and hoping that the political consequences will be manageable. The scientific evidence they are looking for is our deaths!

From the beginning the risks were so great that consumers should have been protected immediately by the removal of infected beef and infected products from any possibility of human contact.

These include: steak, stewing beef, veal, beef fat, suet, beef extracts (used in flavourings), and cattle-bone gelatine (used in jelly, confectionery, baby foods and numerous other products — and even cosmetics).

Many honest scientists have tried to warn of the dangers, but have been ignored, ridiculed, sacked from their jobs and even physically threatened. Their advice should have been taken and all infected herds slaughtered back in the 1980s.

We must hope that humans have enough natural resistance to this threat to keep fatalities low. But at present we cannot guess how many people will be felled by this disease.

Politicians and their tame scientists who still insist that there is no risk are lying.

Why was this disaster allowed to happen?

The Tory government's priority all along has been to protect farming big business. Many Tory politicians are themselves farmers. They must have been aware of the dangers and cynically decided to offset the political risks of mass deaths against the potential lost profits.

As far back as 1979 scientists were warning that feeding cattle on recycled animal material could expose humans

to unknown medical risks. The government had ample warning that this disaster was likely to happen.

There must be a full, independent inquiry. It must include trade unionists and representatives of consumer organisations and other grassroots organisations.

Guilty

The guilty must be held legally responsible for their behaviour and there must be full compensation for sufferers from CJD and for farm workers whose livelihoods are being destroyed.

Whole rural areas are likely to be driven into poverty by the collapse of dairy farming, resulting in the same type of community devastation that has hit former mining areas.

If the epidemic is as huge as some scientists fear, the pressures on the health service will be immense. Yet the government is planning to reduce medical care for suf-

Mad cow disease

— a plague from
the depths of
capital, page 7

ferers from long-term terminal conditions. But the fundamental conclusion must be that human health will continue to be under threat if food production continues to be tied to big business.

This process has gone further in Britain than in most other countries. It is no coincidence that it is British consumers' health that is being repeatedly threatened by the dangers that result from intensive capitalist farming methods.

Food production must be organised to meet real human health and dietary needs, to eliminate cruel farming practices and to be in harmony with nature.

Sydney Mthembu

Tories put kids at risk

MILLIONS of schoolchildren have been put at risk by being fed the cheapest and worst-quality cuts of beef in the burgers and minces served in school dinners.

The Tories' 1980 Education Act ended the previous legal obligation on schools to provide meals that met minimum nutritional standards.

For some 15 years most school meals were full of offal of the sort that is now banned because of the possible risks of eating food contaminated with BSE.

Socialist Science Forum on MAD COW DISEASE

Speakers: Daniel Robertson and Jonathon Bruce (scientists) and Geoff Pilling (economist)

Wednesday 3 April, 7pm prompt,

Friends Meeting House,

173 Euston Road, London NW1 2BJ. (Euston tube)

Guilty must be held legally responsible Full compensation to CJD victims and farm workers Full, independent inquiry to include trade unionists



ally for the 500 sacked Liverpool dockers, see page 3

Photo: Alan Clark

active member of the Workers International soon after its launch in 1990 at Budapest, Hungary.

Sydney died due to injuries which he sustained in a car accident on 10 January after

Comrade Sydney Mthembu was a worker at

BTR Dunlop for about 18 years. He was an

tained in a car accident on 10 January after attending for a medical check-up at hospital about his hand which was crushed by a machine at his workplace.

According to reports, the car collided with another vehicle. Doctors said two of his ribs and his left arm were broken in the accident. Due to his broken ribs doctors had to perform surgery. Sydney remained in intensive care until his death on 13 February.

We were very shocked to learn about his death because when we visited him in hospital he was showing signs of recovery. He leaves a wife and four children.

It is very difficult to say anything about the circumstances of his accident because the matter is still in the hands of the police.

As members of the Workers International we were very upset to lose such an active comrade at a time when the Workers International is under constant attack from the Stalinists, especially here in Natal.

During the 10th anniversary of the Congess of South African Trade Unions one of our comrades was brutally attacked by stewards while distributing Workers International leaflets with other comrades. Since then our comrades have been under constant harrassment by Stalinists in the townships.

At the Budapest conference one comrade from Sydney's factory reported that he was under attack from the Stalinists for participating. That comrade was slandered as an agent of the former government which wanted to destroy COSATU. Through Sydney and other comrades' bravery they didn't succeed in their smear campaign against him.

Sydney and others went out of their way to explain to the workers why this comrade went to Budapest and why socialism needed to be fought for throughout the world.

Many comrades will remember Sydney for his constant attendance at our national meetings. He was very popular with his fellow workers at the Dunlop factory. This was shown in their attendance at his funeral although some did not share his political

We as the Workers International would to extend our deepest sympathy to his family and relatives for the loss of this revolutionary and head of their family.

We salute you, comrade, for your contribution to the struggle for emancipation of the world working class against exploitation by the capitalist class. We will always remember you by continuing where you left off.

We say rest in peace comrade.

Workers International Durban

Workers Press Letters

Universities and Labour

THE Blair leadership of the Labour Party has now taken the lead in the efforts to destroy completely what remains of free higher education in this country.

Blair's supporters in the National Union of Students (NUS) leadership are to the fore in the fight to overturn the union's long-standing commitment to restoration of student grants to their 1979 level, updating them in line with inflation.

They want to scrap the student grant and replace it with a system of so-called 'partnership funding' in which student costs would be met by money from a mixture of taxpayers, businesses and of course the students themselves.

This proposal was defeated at a conference in Derby last May but was back on the agenda of the NUS conference in Blackpool last week.

NUS president Jim Murphy, a member of Labour Students, says that the implementation of current NUS policy would cost over £10bn.

'The reality is we have a policy that nobody else supports. The NUS has to decide whether it wants to have any influence over political parties or go on sloganising.

WHAT is the 'reality' that Murphy refers

Student grants have been slashed by 20 per cent in real terms over the past two years

An NUS survey published in February revealed that one in three students missed meals because of hardship, one in four considered dropping out, one in three worked part time during term and one in two students thought that financial hardship was having an adverse effect on their studies.

At the same time, conditions in universities are deteriorating at a rapid rate. Class sizes grow every year, face-to-face contact between academic staff and students is less and less frequent, library facilities are cut to the bone.

Serious academic and intellectual study and training are being destroyed as universities become evermore at best institutions for 'vocational training', subordinated to the immediate needs of business, or at worse places where the otherwise unemployed can be kept out of the official figures.

THE real face of the Labour leaders is revealed in the fact that they are pressing forward with these attacks, leading the forces of reaction that want to destroy the university. In so doing they are helping to smash up one of the great institutions that capitalism itself brought into being during its rise to power in struggle against the feudal ruling class.

After World War II it was possible for the first time for working-class children to obtain a university education based on merit. Thousands took advantage of this gain that the strength of the working class had extracted from the ruling

Now the Labour Party leadership is to be one of the chief instruments setting out to take back this advance. If their policy prevails, university education will be once again a thing for a privileged élite whose parents can afford to pay the fees and maintenance costs involved.

This is a matter for the whole working class. Only the working class can defend the threat to humanity that the continued rule of capital involves. That is why there should be a campaign throughout the Labour movement to expose the sinister activities of Blair's supporters in the NUS leadership.

WE WELCOME LETTERS SEND THEM TO: WORKERS PRESS, PO BOX 735, LONDON SW8 1YB

- OR FAX 0171-387 0569

Australian dockers' struggle our families.

SUPPORT for the Liverpool dockers is strong here among Brisbane Maritime Union of Australia. A spontaneous collection at a recent stop-work meeting raised over \$1,000 and more will come from ongoing job collec-

There is irony in the situation. The Liverpool dockers are locked-out for opposing attempts to casualise their port. In Australia, widespread casualisation is already in place through the use of redundant workers returning to work as casuals (supplimentaries).

A section of the MUA leadership is actively working for the recruitment of 'new' casuals and also part-time permanent labour (guaranteed 14 hours pay per

At the time of writing, only two ports, Melbourne and Brisbane, have refused to accept these proposals, portrayed by some officials as a 'recruitment policy'. Monty Python looks sane by com-

The Maritime Union of Australia is a recent amalgamation of the Waterside Workers' Federation, of which I was a member, and the Seamen's Union of Australia — a welcome and overdue uniting of Australian maritime and stevedoring workers.

The last four years on the Australian wharves have not been pretty. Fifty-four per cent of the wharf labour force has taken redundancy.

There is the widespread introduction of double-header 15- and 16-hour shifts. Delegates and rank-and-file committees are victimised. A devisive grading system of workers has been introduced.

Now there are attempts to replace our shift penalty rates with flat wages and bonus incen-

None of the inroads into our conditions and jobs could have been achieved without the connivance and active support of the right-wing bureaucracy that dominated the old WWF and holds a strong position in the new

The incoming Liberal/National coallition government of 'Honest John' Howard has proclaimed the smashing of the MUA and privatisation of the Australian National Line as its No.1 pri-

Irony again. Only the determination of the MUA prevented the outgoing Labour government from virtually giving the shipping line away to that international friend of workers — P&O!

The actions of the Liverpool dockers in turning unhesitatingly to their co-workers around the world gives me great heart.

Wherever we work on the ships and the docks we drive the same clapped-out machinery, work the same health-destroying shifts and no doubt share the same disbelief when management finally upgrade machinery without asking our advice and spend millions on equipment that is totally wrong for the job.

International solidarity is obviously the first step toward defeating the attacks on us and

> Mick Fulton Brisbane, Australia

Mick Fulton points out that Jim Donovan is not joint national secretary of the Maritime Union of Australia, as stated in Dot Gibson's 2 March report on the Liverpool dockers' international conference, but of the Central New South Wales

New party and

MIKE HOWGATE (Letters 2 and 23 March) thinks the political work of WRP members should now be in Arthur Scargill's Socialist Labour Party.

No one is saying he is wrong because he is in a minority. We think he is wrong because we are convinced — as we have been for three years and contrary to Arthur Scargill and his co-thinkers' opinions — that a new party for socialism did not become necessary because Blair managed to remove Clause Four from Labour's constitution.

The necessary new party can-not come, like the SLP, just out of political reflections on these changes. It must and will come out of the working class's deepest needs as it engages in the neces-sary reconstruction of its class movement.

The task of Marxists, of the WRP, is to work for the widest possible discussion and preparation of the new party through these struggles. The decision of a few hundred socialists to form the SLP is only one part of the ferment for a new party.

We seek to involve every member of the SLP and the SLP as such in the coming months of discussion and common action which prepare the new party. We invited the SLP to the 16 March conference. We are convinced our work has to be guided by Marxism and not by the SLP's left social-democratic ideas. We don't at all exclude winning many SLP members for Marxism.

But, the SLP was founded on far too narrow a basis, too narrowly 'political'. The real basis is the profound structural crisis of capitalism, developing since the 1970s and objectively demanding the working class discards its traditional reformist and Stalinist leaderships.

We have entered a period in which masses of people are being forced to recognise that both Stalinism and social democracy have failed the working class. This is a historic change. The class response cannot be restricted to the superficial reflections on 'New Labour' and the removal of Clause Four of the SLP.

What is necessary is not a revival of 'parliamentary socialism' and Clause Four, but a party for socialist revolution, embedded in a reconstructing workingclass movement which overcomes the poisonous division between the 'political and industrial arms of the labour movement' and the

narrow nationalism of the traditional working-class parties.

The Liverpool dockers have begun in a powerful way to do this and we went out of our way to put their fight at the centre of the 16 March conference. As against this, I defy anyone to know what Howgate means by 'the sort of structure your average trade unionist would want to join in order to fight for social-

Howgate misrepresents completely what we have said about 'new forces' coming forward driven by the crisis and having an entirely new scope because of Stalinism's collapse. We have never said these new forces are outside the working class and replace the leading role of that class. Quite the contrary.

But what Howgate does not recognise is that there are indeed many campaigns and issues which are provoked by the universality of capitalism's crisis, which are not in themselves socialist but which can only have a positive outcome in the fight for socialism. It is essential to work for the success of such struggles.

As for our supposedly having always put the accent on 'building ourselves into a new party', this is sheer invention. We have said all along the exact opposite (inviting accusations of 'liquidation'): that the new party will not be 'the WRP writ large' but will arise from our becoming part of those who become the vanguard of the working-class movement's reconstruction, and centrally reconstruction of its internation-

Cliff Slaughter

the SLP had not resulted from

Letters

longer than

500 words

WILL be cut

such struggles.

The SLP's form may have been thought up by a small group, yet it is more than that. It comes out of the struggles for the miners, against the poll tax, in defence of Clause Four and much more. It comes in a form that is very different from the one we anticipated or desired, but that is

The point Slaughter makes about the shocks facing the working class is important. He says these will 'begin to provide the living "culture" within which the working class will become conscious of what it must aim at, how it must organise, and how thousands will come forward to organise, inspire and lead their fellow men and women.'

But he misses out on the fact that the formation of the SLP is an important stage in this very development.

It is sad that Slaughter, who has done so much to anticipate new movements in the class, should be so abstentionist.

Meanwhile, reports of SLP meetings in London are similar to elsewhere - a lively discussion linked to an enthusiasm to defeat the New Labour right.

We have long emphasised that reconstruction of the workers' movement has to be based on internationalism, workers' democracy and independence from the

We have added to these some further demands in the call for the 'Crisis in the labour movement' conference. The SLP is an excellent forum to fight for these

Geoff Barr

A recipe for failure

MIKE HOWGATE's letter (2 March) on the Socialist Labour Party is an odd piece but I think I have got the gist of it.

That is that while Scargill's politics are misguided he will draw around him the basis of a mass working-class party. In this situation revolutionaries have to get in there and promote revolutionary politics. To stay out and preach would be sectarian.

I agree with this analysis. The letters, article on a new party and reports which appeared in Workers' Press on the 9 March add much to the debate.

Andrew Burgin argues that a good number of possibilities are opening up and, therefore, we should follow the development of the SLP closely, work with it where possible and seek to draw its members into the deepest dis-

Unfortunately, this reads like a recipe for failure. If we stand outside and argue, our influence on a new party which is engaging in intense internal discussions will be minimal. Sadly, Terry Brotherstone offers a similar menu to Burgin. He again misses the main issue.

Our 'fresh analysis' is worthless unless it lives as a contribution to the living movement of the class.

Standing aside, no doubt fully

guarded against the danger of liquidation, the power of our analysis will wither and die.

Martin Ralph points to the attempts by Scargill to impose a constitution on the new party.

But Scargill can't impose limits on a living movement. People attracted to Scargill include those escaping the witch-hunts of New Labour. They will not put up with arbitrary blocks on debate. It is our job to join with them, not pontificate from out-

The new party has a lot to arrange and sort out and a left wing is emerging within the SLP. We must work as part of that left.

Cliff Slaughter's article called 'The working class needs a new party' suffers similar faults. He talks of a new party coming into being as a result of movements and struggles. He says this as if

Bosnian war crimes

THERE are already signs that a pro-Chetnik letters' campaign maligning the international war crimes tribunal is under way. I have seen letters in the Observer, the European and the Economist demanding that it be closed down on the grounds that it is biased.

I have seen two of these names before: George Tintov and Lyda Aessing-Wolff. Tintov writes from the City of London and Aessing-Wolff from the Nether-

The real scandal about the tribunal is not that it is biased. Croats have been indicted and Muslims shortly will be. The scandal is that it is underfunded.

Judge Goldstone's team needs an extra \$20 million if it is to do a really good job. Britain did its best to strangle the tribunal at birth and has not contributed a brass farthing to its costs.

Britain also vetoed the appointment of Dr Cherif Bassiouni because he was too good at his job. Bassiouni's job would have been prosecutor. You don't have to be left wing

to know what a scandal this is becoming. Even an 'officer and a gentleman' like Colonel Bol Stewart is outraged by it. I think it's appalling.

People like myself have a

moral responsibility to stand up and say something — because i we don't, we too are guilty o complicity in genocide by virtue of our silence.

IFOR has got to do something It doesn't need to be mandated to pick up an internationall indicted war criminal. I don' care about this so-called 'mission bloody creep'. Who's going to crit icise them if they pick up some one who ordered the massacre of 100 people?

Do it, for God's sake, becaus that's what has to be done. Per haps Charlie might organise 'Media Serbwatch'?

I find it particularly upsetting that people in Holland, of a places, should criticise the tri bunal as biased. The Dute UNPROFOR troops were at Sre brenica and witnessed the massa

Tom Carte Someton, Somerse

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rallies

BY MIKE COOKE

THOUSANDS of people gathered

in Liverpool to show their support to the 500 sacked dockers last

Saturday. Many trade union ban-ners were on the march and the

new London support group ban-ner was proudly on display show-

ing Tower Bridge united with the

Liver building! From Sweden

there was a banner saying

'Swedish syndicalists support Women of the Waterfront'.

with banners from the JJ Fast

North-East London Transport

and General Workers' Union

Textile branch were warmly

applauded by Liverpool sup-porters of the dockers as they

marched together with the Lon-

don support group to join the

Liverpool city centre to the rally which began and finished with

the playing of 'Big River', the Jimmy Nail song that has become

the anthem of the Women of the

Waterfront. As at previous rallies

the emphasis has been on the

fight for future generations as represented in the broad range of struggles that are going on.

Manufacturing Science Finance union vice-president

Gary Frasier brough fraternal

greetings from the national exec-

utive and membership of his

ers' platform because they were

'fighting for the next generation'.

be another generation,' she said.

'If we don't fight, there won't

She described how her father,

Abdul Onibiyo, had worked in

Britain for 23 years and paid his taxes. But then Home Secretary

Michael Howard had decided his

money was no longer good enough and declared him an ille-

Lola Onibiyo said it was a privilege to speak from the dock-

The march then went through

start of the march.

Turkish and Kurdish workers

workers and the new

Dockers must Liverpool be reinstated!

BY DOT GIBSON

SACKED Liverpool dockers say there can be no meaningful talks with the Mersey Docks and Harbour Company unless they are first reinstated.

The Transport and General Workers' Union general secre-tary, Bill Morris, and the company have made tentative proposals for talks to reopen on 2

But Jimmy Nolan, chair of the Mersey Port Shop Stewards Committee, says: 'There can be no negotiations while the dockers are outside the port. How can we

be expected to talk about jobs and conditions under duress? We must be reinstated with full union rights.'

Meanwhile, if there is no reinstatement, Atlantic Containers' Limited have again been requested to pull out of Liver-

A dockworkers' conference representing the main European ports is 'on hold' but will be activated when necessary to organise a European boycott of ACL vessels if the company does not leave Liverpool.

Campaigning continues to build support for the sacked dockers. A one-day conference is

taking place this weekend in Belfast. The five unions operating in the port of Bilbao, Spain, will take action against 'Chuppka', a vessel that uses Liverpool.

In Portugal, the port of Lisbon is fully supporting the Mersey men and now the ports of Avrion and Lexious have moved in, deciding at a mass meeting to give full support. Next week Kevin Robinson and Billy Jenkins will be in Turkey.

It will be ACL's removal that will hit the Mersey port employer most of all. It was a turning point in the dispute when the picket line was respected by longshoremen on the US East Coast before Christmas. That revealed the powerful support that was forthcoming for the dockworkers' international conference in Liverpool in February.

The boycott of ACL then and the international conference itself were won through the dockers' own actions. MDHC and the government were rattled then. Now the Tory government has even more problems!

Smooth-talking union officials who recommend delay now must not be allowed to undermine the dockers' independence and determination. This is a fight that can and must be won!



Eddie Loyden MP

gal immigrant. He was deported to Nigeria in October last year and that was the last his family had heard of him.

Woman of the Waterfront Pat Dooley said that when her husband Brian had got his P45 it was as if someone had died. Dooley said the dispute started 2 years ago when MDHC had taken contol of her family. They had been ruled by the phone.

'It was like having to clock in and out of your own home,' she said. 'Social life was nil. Family life was non-existent. How can you live your life like that?"

NUM President Arthur Scargill said the dispute was for the right to work and that the workers were fighting the antiunion laws.

Liverpool MP Eddie Loyden reported that it had been suggested to him that he shouldn't go on the march and rally in support of the dockers. But he had supported and been on picket lines in 1984-85 and had supported and been on picket lines in Southampton in the 1989 dock strike against the abolition

Scheme. Although Loyden was an MP, he didn't believe the battle would be won in parliament.

of the National Dock Labour



North London textile workers join the Liverpool dockers' London support group to picket Drake International

JJ Fast Food: the workers' fight goes on

BY LIZ KNIGHT

THE sacked JJ Fast Food workers have returned to work but their fight is not over.

They first returned on 26 February to be told by the boss that in spite of the industrial tribunal ruling in their favour there was to be no union recognition and he could make them work from 5am to midnight if he so required.

The workers responded by walking out again. The Transport and General Workers' Union district official referred the issue back to the tribunal, which in its turn recommended ACAS.

JJ boss Mustafa Kamil was told he must either reinstate the workers or face further court proceedings. The workers were told they must sign work contracts based on their conditions of work at the time of the sackings last October.

In fact, Kamil's solicitor had drafted contracts incorporating the worst practices previously operated at the firm:

■ No overtime pay.

No holiday pay.

Drivers paid only for driving time, not hours spent loading and unloading.

Divisive pay differentials, particularly penalising some of the most active workers in the dispute.

The tribunal ruling allows Kamil to get away with this. Reinstatement is on the basis of 'existing conditions'. But those previous conditions were not in writing. The T&G could have challenged Kamil's interpretation but instead went along with ACAS in telling the workers to

drew up their own list of demands, starting with formal union recognition and including holiday pay, overtime pay and minimum health and safety.

The union district official's response was to tell the workers they had to accept Kamil's contract and that the union could not modify it in any way.

The parts of the contract relating to a degree of union recognition and a grievance and disciplinary procedure came within ACAS's code of practice. Statutory sick pay is a legal require-

These provisions were in the contract because the tribunal had so ruled. Things not ruled by the tribunal could not be added.

The ACAS decisions only elaborated on the tribunal ruling on union recognition.

Kamil has to accept that the union has the right to represent the workers and negotiate on their behalf and that the workers can elect shop stewards. But formal union recognition is the subject of future discussion.

Forum

The forum for this discussion is to be meetings of a joint working party consisting of workers' shop stewards, the T&G official and Kamil or his representative. It is to meet weekly for the first eight weeks of the return to work. The permitted agenda items are 'Contracts, full or partial recognition agreement with the union, and joint intitiatives'.

If these meetings break down, ACAS is to be brought in.

The workers are not happy with this. They are being forced to return to work under condirecognition gains, are in some ways even worse than before.

It was those intolerable and degrading conditions and low pay which were the reasons for their struggle.

They joined the union for one purpose: to enable them to fight to improve their conditions and pay at work. They were sacked and then savagely beaten up on the picket line by the boss's thugs because Kamil knew that by joining the union the workers were organising to fight back.

All the way through the dispute the workers were fighting to change the balance of power between themselves and the bos organising pickets, boycotts and solidarity action by other workers — all to weaken the boss.

Together with the support group, they reduced his business by 30 per cent. They sank his reputation across London.

They were fighting to win, to return to work with better conditions including union recognition or bring Kamil's business to bankruptcy.

For the T&G bureaucracy the dispute is an entirely different story. They wanted paper membership at JJ's — as elsewhere. They showed no evidence of being interested in why the workers had joined.

Their single concern was and remained throughout union recognition. Reinstatement was to be on the basis of that recognition alone. To prove that Kamil had acted unlawfully before the tribunal was their be-all and end-

They never made the dispute official. The government's antiunion laws say that there are no grounds for a dispute if the workand if the union is not already recognised by the employer.

This means that strikes for union recognition are ALWAYS ILLEGAL.

That was why for the union officials the JJ workers' fight was never a strike or even a dispute. It was just a 'protest'. They religiously followed the spirit and not just the letter of the antiunion laws. They took little or no part in the fight back organised by the workers and the support group. Now they are part of the machinery that has snatched a partial defeat from the jaws of victory.

Ransom

Independently or with a fighting union the workers could have held Kamil to ransom. They had objectively won. He was desperate to settle. Workers could have refused any settlement except reinstatement on their own

But the court ruling, which seemed like a victory, has been used with the T&G's agreement (and ACAS's stamp) to undermine the workers. Their own weapons, their solidarity, their ability to damage Kamil's busniness materially, have been robbed from them. The ruling in their favour has been used as a stick to beat them with. They have to accept these worsened conditions or be refuse reinstatement. Compensation is not an option.

But everything is not lost. The workers who are going back go back with a fighting spirit. Although not all are accepting reinstatement their decisions have been made collectively. All

darity and to the continuing fight at JJ's and elsewhere for union recognition and human work

conditions. For nearly five months the JJ Kurdish, Turkish, workers -Greek and Russian - have fought a titanic struggle against all odds and against all attempts by the police to criminalise them and the boss to divide them. They are still taking solidarity action with other workers, in particular with north and east London textile workers and the Liverpool

Like the Hillingdon hospital women cleaners, the JJ workers have lifted the lid off the superexploitation of workers in Britain today. The dispute has also revealed the full extent of recent anti-union legislation and the almost total subservience of the trade union bureaucracy to the law. As the law leaves fewer and fewer possibilities for taking official action, direct independent strike action by workers becomes the only way forward.

The JJ workers have already inspired one such action: at Jenny's Textiles in Tottenham a

Trade union (if any)

hundred workers have just been on strike for union recognition and won within 24 hours.

Along with the textile workers and in particular the North-East London Textile branch of the T&G, the JJ workers and the support group remain at the forefront of the unionisation campaign in the area.

Support is needed from socialists everywhere for this continuing struggle. The flames of solidarity set alight by the Liverpool dockers, the JJ workers, the Hillingdon hospital cleaners and all other recent struggles need to become bush fires!

tribunals. Only the strength of our own independent grass-roots organisation within and between unions can win.

For information from the JJ Workers' Support Group and from the North-East London Textile branch of the T&G contact: Unwaged Centre, 72 West Green Road, Tottenham, London N15 5NS. Tel: 0181-802 9804. The support group meets every Wednesday, 7.30pm, at the Unwaged Centre. All welcome.

Age (if under 21) _

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British section of the Workers International (to Rebuild the Fourth International) Please send me information about the WRP

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Inside left

Priceless advice

VERPOOL dockers running to and winning support for their strugmight have missed Jim Dye's artiin the March-April issue of rkers News.

He says they're doing well but 'the lowing things must be fought for: lidarity actions from other docks, pping and transport unions in tain and internationally; Official cking from the TGWU, even if this eaks the anti-union laws; Workers' the dockers must not starve!; ss pickets to stop the port operat-I'm sure the advice will be wel-

Likewise, we must welcome the knowledgment, in a full-page decration on Bosnia in Workers News, at there is nothing wrong in prinole with sending aid convoys to alti-ethnic areas like Tuzla'.

So glad to hear it. I'd been worried at by taking food and medical supes to people fighting fascist 'ethnic ansing', Workers Aid for Bosnia d broken some rule of etiquette for y and gentleman 'revolutionaries'. ke, Thou shalt issue lofty proclaations, but on no account do anying useful'.)

Not that Workers Aid, the WRP or hers are in the clear. Apparently we we presented a multi-ethnic Bosnia some kind of strategic goal, refusto stress the need for a workers public or for the right of the Bosan army to receive arms.'

Worse, Workers Aid has used its avoys 'to develop a thoroughly portunist relationship with suprters of the Izetbegovic governent.' Has Workers Aid gone out nvassing for Izetbegovic's SDA rty, in expectation of a council ant? Been promised a peerage for a ryload of flour? Sounds more like orkers News's beloved Labour

Unfortunately, the joint declarain between the PST of Argentina d the LTT', isn't very specific. They n't even bother explaining that T is the Workers' Socialist Party, d LTT the 'Leninist-Trotskyist ndency' (to which the Workers ternational League, publisher of orkers News subscribes).

Obviously household abbrevians, known everywhere from enos Aires to Bugojno.

We have never given the slightest litical support to the Izetbegovic vernment,' they boast. Modesty foris them telling us what they have

Later, between talk of 'internanal class struggle' and 'workers' uncil government', the declaration eculates on divisions within the A Nothing about what Bosnian rkers or intellectuals have done, or doing. Dated 22 November 1995, all Workers News (March-April) s on Bosnia.

True, although Workers Aid for snia has mainly focussed on people the Tuzla miners (not reknowned supporting Izetbegovic's SDA), it sn't made aid conditional on which

rty people support.

Nor did we insist the Bosnian peoproclaim a 'workers republic' fore we support their right to selffence. Far from not raising the ms issue, we supported the Bosnia lidarity Campaign picket which sed its banner in Whitehall for ree months — BREAK THE MS EMBARGO!

Along with Bosnian workers and mocrats we think a multi-ethnic, ilti-cultural Bosnia is worth fending, against Greater Serb fass Croatian nationalists, imperialsor Muslim reactionaries.

A democratic national policy was wital to the Yugoslav revolution as ial ownership. Today, as Workers ss has reported, it is the fault-line which Bosnian politics divide and bottom line for rebuilding unity tween workers in former goslavia.

Charlie Pottins

GERWANY

THE German economy is in deep crisis. Here PETER JEFFRIES summarises recent news on the economy and points to some of its implications for the rest of Europe.

GERMAN CHANCELLOR Helmut Kohl has promised to halve unemployment by the end of the century. In the opinion of an increasing number of Germans, this merely proves that, however astute a politician he might be, he is woefully ignorant of economics.

For the headline stories about record levels of unemployment and a fall in real gross domestic product in the first three months of the year tell only half the tale, if that.

There is substantial hidden unemployment in addition to the officially registered 4.27 million (over 11 per cent of the population)

According to federal labour office president Bernhard Jagoda, a further 1.5 million are being kept off the unemployment register by various government 'job creation' schemes, training programmes, early retirement and short-time working.

Of those on such schemes in such categories 800,000 are in eastern Germany and 700,000 in western Germany. Overall employment dropped by over 200,000 last year.

■ The 0.15 per cent fall in real GDP since the start of the year will not be the last. The Berlin-based DIW economic research institute forecasts that real GDP will fall about 1 per cent in the current quar-

Recession

minister Günter Economics Rexrodt's words 'There is no question of a slide into recession or zero growth this year' are one that may yet haunt him. Even Rexrodt had to admit that any recovery 'will not be sufficient for a fundamental improvement in the labour market.'

The fact that GDP has fallen for two consecutive quarters means that the economy is officially in recession, although in the run-up to last weekend's state elections in Baden Wüttemberg, Rhineland Palatinate and Schleswig-Holstein, Bonn has banned the 'R-word' from its vocabu-

■ The monthly business climate indicator for western Germany from Munich's Ifo economic research institute has risen in only two of the last 14 months.

Survey

The latest survey of 25,000 member companies by the German chambers of industry and commerce (DIHT) shows that a third of western German firms expect business to worsen. As a result the chambers forecast virtual stagnation in the economy for the current year, with half a million job losses.

The number of workers in the manufacturing sector, once the real strength of the German economy, has dropped from 11.1mn in 1991 to its present 8.8mn, a loss of 2.3mn jobs.

Germany's public finances are deteriorating rapidly. Last year the country's public sector deficit shot up above the 3 per cent required by the terms of the Maastricht agreement for economic and monetary

The deficit will exceed the target again this year and doubts are mounting whether Germany can meet it in 1997, the year when decisions are due to be made about which countries will enter monetary union.

Last week finance minister Theo Waigel took powers to cap public spending that does not meet with his approval. He did so in the face of a federal budget deficit that is heading for an overshoot of between DM10bn and DM14bn on its DM60bn projection for the current year.

The overshoot arises from the economy's slowdown which has slashed tax receipts while increasing welfare spending because of the dramatic rise in unemployment.

A crisis has hit some of Germany's high-profile firms. They include the financial crisis at the Bremer Vulcan shipbuilding firm, which last month sought a restructuring for its growing debts, and Dasa, the aerospace company owned by Daimler-Benz.

Bankruptcies and liquidations



Dole queue in Berlin

reached record levels in both eastern and western Germany last year. Nationwide, insolvencies rose by a sixth last year to 28,785, with the construction industry bearing the brunt

The government blames many of the mounting economic problems on last spring's rise in the value of the Deutschmark and excessively high wage settlements.

The trade surplus was up at the end of last year, despite falling exports. This was because the cutback on imports has been even sharper. Last year visible exports were down 2.7 per cent while imports fell back 6.9 per cent.

But recent figures have also brought to light a sharp slowdown in investment. Investment in equipment was down 0.6 per cent in real terms in the last three months of 1995 compared to the same period of 1994.

And despite the big construction projects underway in eastern Germany investment in buildings was 1.8 per cent lower.

The chambers of industry and commerce warn that investment in equipment will fall by a real 2 per cent this year, with a 3 per cent drop in spending on construction.

The BDI, the German industry federation, warns: 'Rationalisation will continue to be the most important investment motive, rather than the expansion that would be normal in a phase of recovery.'

The government is pinning its hopes on a surge in exports to stem the rising tide of unemployment. But export growth is lagging behind the expansion of world trade and with German labour costs around a quarter above those of its competitors, there seems little chance for any improvement.



'We want work not the dole', Zeiss workers in Ober Kochen, west Germany

SN'T WORKING



'Alliance for jobs' faces collapse

THE German conservative government is trying hard to revive the alliance between employers and unions aimed at selling wages and conditions for the promise of future jobs.

Werner Stumpfe, soon to take over as president of the engineering employers' federation, Gesamtmetall, said two weeks ago the alliance was dead.

He announced the aim of cutting wage costs per 'unit' by 20 per cent in the next wage round.

Stumpfe scornfully attacked the IG Metall union's 'illusion' that 'the employers could create 100,000 new jobs'. He demanded a 10 per cent cut

in wage costs through reorganisation of working hours and new group-work methods.

He called on the state to cut social security contributions by five per cent and demanded unions should accept cuts in holiday pay to save jobs. Finally, he demanded a two-tier system which would allow firms in difficulty to avoid paying the agreed rate.

The following day government spokespersons and union leaders loudly insisted the jobs pact is still viable. Nevertheless, the carefully engineered system of class collaboration in Germany seems to be breaking apart.

Many firms are selling things abroad at a loss, reminiscent of the 'dumping' of goods that characterised the world slump of the 1930s. Bremer Vulcan's crisis came to a head after it contracted to build two cruise ships for an Italian line at a loss.

Any government hopes for a recovery via an increase in consumer demand seemed doomed by rising contributions for health and pension insurance and sharp increases in charges for local authority services.

Many workers and middle class people have cut back their spending in the face of growing fear of unem-

The government's '50 point programme' is condemned by big business as too little and too late. It is based on a series of 'supply-side' measures of the sort introduced by Thatcher in the 1980s — deregulation of markets, corporate tax reform and incentive for company start-ups. It involves a cut in public spending from its present 50 per cent of GDP to 46 per cent.

Accord

The social security system is to be 'restructured' (that is cut) while at the same time the amounts that employers must pay into the system are to be reduced. Early retirement schemes are also to be curbed on the grounds of cost.

Meanwhile the trade unions' 'alliance for jobs' — in which pay

increases would be sold in return for promises of fewer sackings — appears to be running into the sand as leading employers reject them out of hand.

Germany is the biggest and strongest economy in Europe. Its crisis is therefore one for Europe as a whole.

Maastricht

If it is to achieve the Maastricht criteria for monetary union, there will have to be sharp cut backs in state spending which go far beyond anything yet proposed. Yet such spending reductions will send unemployment climbing even more rapidly, especially in the east which is heavily dependent on state handouts from Bonn.

But the reduction in demand in Germany will have the most serious effects for the rest of Europe.

As the more intelligent commentators now realise, there is a real prospect of a spiralling down of the whole European economy, with all the social and political implications that this would entail.

It is now clearer than ever that the attempt, by no means realised, to assimilate the former German Democratic Republic into a united capitalist Germany has brought the most severe economic, social and increasingly political stains, not simply for Germany, but increasingly for the rest of Europe.

German builders strike for minimum wage

From BOB ARCHER in Germany

TWENTY thousand Bavarian building workers rallied at Munich's disused airport last week to demand a DM15 an hour minimum wage to cover all building workers employed

The city's mayor, Christian Ude, told them the council had proposed a

minimum wage on all city building projects but the Bavarian state government had cancelled the proposal.

A fleet of 186 buses, plus other vehicles carrying demonstrators to the site, temporarily blocked the motorway ring around the city.

Cheap labour in the building trade comes from Portugal, Poland and soon Ghana or Senegal, it is expected. Workers want all building workers to be paid a minimum wage.



Portuguese building workers in Berlin. Cheap labour in the building trade comes from Portugal, Poland and soon Ghana or Senegal, it is expected. Workers want all building workers to be paid a minimum wage.

IN 1646 Barbados began exporting slave-produced sugar, the white gold' of the New World, and two generations later the writer John Oldmixon, in his anonymous book The British Empire in America (1708), was making this boast:

When we examine the Riches that have been rais'd by the Produce of this little Spot of Ground, we shall find that it has been as good as a Mine of Silver or Gold to the Crown of England.'

Before independence in 1966, Barbados, like other British colonies in the West Indies, had a history of suffering and poverty — and of the most stubborn, heroic resistance.

In the mid-18th century some 5,000 slaves were dying each year on the island, out of a black population of 80,000. But already there had been five major slave uprisings.

The first publication revealing to English readers the realities of slave unrest in the Caribbean was a 14-page pamphlet published in London in 1676.

It gave news from Barbados of a 'Conspiracy, which had like in one Moment to have defaced the most Flourishing Colony the English have in the World'.

The next large-scale uprising in Barbados, in 1683, was remarkable for the distribution of handwritten leaflets in English, calling on the slaves to rise.

One of them, preserved in the Public Record Office, begins Brothers' and declares that 'wee have most of all Countreyes of our Side' — or, in other words, that Africans of different ethnic groups were united in the struggle.

In the 1692 Barbados uprising the leaders, who included carpenters, bricklayers, wheelwrights, sawyers, blacksmiths and grooms, had worked out a detailed plan of campaign, right down to organising a slave army of six infantry and three cavalry regiments.

One of the leaders of the 1816 uprising in Barbados was Nanny Grigg, a literate, militant, and articulate woman slave, who told her fellow slaves that the only way to get freedom was to fight for it, 'otherwise they would not get it; and the way they were to do, was to set fire, as that was the way they did in Saint Domingo' (i.e. Haiti). Six hours after the first fires had been lit, the revolt had spread to 70 of the largest estates.

The revolt was suppressed with great cruelty and bloodshed: slave dwellings were burnt; men, women, and children were slaughtered indiscriminately.

In a clear reference to the influence of the 1791 Haitian revolution, which had sent a shudder of terror through the British plantocracy, the Speaker of the Barbadian Assembly said afterwards: The Insurrection has been quelled, but the spirit is not subdued, nor will it ever be subdued whilst these dangerous doctrines which have been spread abroad continue to be propagated among the Slaves.'

Nor was that spirit ever subdued. In 1876 a well-organised rising in Barbados was put down with difficulty after the governor had sworn in 500 special consta-

The 1937 rising in Barbados began as a protest against the deportation of the Trinidad-born activist Clement Payne, who had distributed the island's first-ever May Day pamphlets and had led a march on Government House.

Police fired into unarmed crowds in Bridgetown, killing 14 and injuring 47. In the country-side crowds of poor and hungry people broke into shops and raided sweet-potato fields.

A commission of inquiry admitted that sheer hunger had helped to cause these outbreaks — that it was 'a question of undoubted stark poverty'.

PERSONAL COLUMN

As elsewhere in the British West Indies in the 1930s, the people asked for bread and the authorities gave them lead.

SUFFERING and struggle, which dominate this history of 350 years, are not unknown to the Barbadians of today. In Manchester last week I met a Barbadian family, long-time residents in the UK, who are under threat of deportation.

Their sole crime, it seems to them and to all who know them, is being the 'wrong' colour at a time when state racism is in the ascendant and black labour, once advertised for and welcomed to these shores, is now dispensable.

Owen Lashley lived in Britain with his mother and sisters between 1962 and 1973. In the latter year he went back to Barbados on a visit. There he met Lorraine Bartlett, and in 1988 they returned to Britain with their daughter Magdalen.

Though they had permission to stay as visitors, further applications to stay as a student and dependent spouse were turned down. The family were to have been deported last December, but the Manchester-based Lashley Family Must Stay Campaign won an extension on the ground of Lorraine's ill health.

The case for letting this decent, hard-working family stay in this country seems unanswerable

Lorraine has taken a Women Into Business course, and together the couple run a business. Magdalen is at university, and the Campaign points out that deportation 'would have a devastating effect on her education, development and future career'.

Not least, their younger, British-born daughter Takita is doing well at infants' school.

At a meeting in Manchester a week last Thursday, the couple spoke simply and movingly of their plight.

Owen recalled his contribution to British industry some 25 years ago: 'They say slavery was abolished, but I worked 44 hours a week in a foundry for £4 10 shillings [£4.50] a week. I don't understand why this is being done to us.'

'I'm watching my kids suffer', said Lorraine. I'm watching my life fall apart. I feel helpless. Why are they doing this to me and my family? Why are they treating us as if we were nothing?'

To this question there is no answer. A government that claims to attach great importance to 'the family' is wantonly persecuting — there's no other word for it — a family who have done nothing at all to merit such treatment.

What can be done? Readers who share my feeling of outrage at this persecution can write to the home secretary — quoting Home Office reference numbers B471356 and L289396 — in some such terms as these, suggested by the Lashley Family Must Stay Campaign:

'The decision that they should be deported is particularly cruel, given that they have developed a thriving business, their daughter is at university, and their younger child, born in this country, is settled in school.

"The family is loved and respected in and around Manchester, and they have made a vital contribution to the area.

'We urge you to reconsider the decision and allow them to stay. Their presence in this country is wholly beneficial and their deportation would be a loss to a great many people.'

By the time this is printed I shall have written a letter along these lines. I hope you will do the same.

Peter Fryer

Battle looms at NUT conference

BY DAVE FINCH Assistant secretary Croydon Teachers' Association (NUT) (personal capacity)

MOVES to railroad the National Union of Teachers annual conference at Easter are being made by General Secretary Doug McAvoy and his so-called 'Broad Left' allies. They want to convert the conference into a powerless organisation.

McAvoy was elected to office by a whisker-thin majority two years ago. He and his group intend to silence those teachers who wish to use the union's industrial strength nationally and locally to defeat ever deteriorating conditions: increased class size and workload, declining redundancies, less salaries, resources, OFSTED inspections aimed only at finding 'weak' teachers and getting them sacked and crumbling school buildings to name but a few.

The new rules McAvoy is recommending are designed to be in place if and when 'New Labour'

Blair and Blunkett want nothing more than the silence of the lambs — a quiescent and servile union which will not get 'stroppy' and embarass them as they continue with similar policies to the Tories.

In a pamphlet 'Extending Democracy', which he has recently sent (at union cost) to all secretaries and presidents of local associations and divisions and to annual conference delegates, McAvoy makes it crystal clear that his enemy is the left.

He names the Socialist Teachers Alliance, the Campaign for a Democratic Fighting Union and Militant Teacher as all opposing his new rules and he rejects their claims that his proposals 'will make it harder to demand action against cuts, selection and rising workload'.

Elections of union officers

PRESENTLY union rules put national elections in the hands of 'an appointed independent scrutineer'. A representative of the independent scrutineer shall 'act as returning officer'.

The Electoral Reform Ballot

Services Ltd (ERBS) were the independent scrutineers last November who ran the ballot for the election of five national offi-

In his letter to association and division officers and conference delegates, McAvoy has the gall to say that the ERBS 'was unhappy that the term "returning officer" confused its role.

'This confusion has caused local associations and members of the national executive to approach the ERBS for clarification of matters that are the responsibility of the union.

The rules will therefore be amended to confirm that the president of the union will be the returning officer and that the general secretary under the direction of the executive will be responsible for ensuring compliance with the rules in relation to the conduct of elections.

McAvoy intervenes

I HAVE quoted at length because the reason why members (including me) contacted the ERBS in the election last year was to **challenge** the election and demand from the ERBS that a new ballot be conducted.

'To ensure compliance with the rules', McAvoy blatantly intervened to support the rightwing bloc of candidates! The Guardian (24 October) had as its headline: 'McAvoy joins poll fight'.

It said that McAvoy had 'raised the stakes in his battle with the left-wing by disclosing confidential records to spoil the chances of his critics in elections for the top positions in the union.' It also said the statement 'authorised by Mr McAvoy broke the rule that voting should remain confidential.'

ERBS Limited

I PERSONALLY phoned the executive director of the ERBS who told me the union president was the returning officer. I checked the rules and confirmed that the ERBS was responsible.

I wrote to them pointing out this fact and asked them to declare the election null and void

because of McAvoy's intervention and also because of an earlier unauthorised circular sent out to Croydon retired members (who are eligible to vote) by two Broad Left executive members who misrepresented the background of the left-wing candidates.

Others, including executive members, also wrote to the ERBS along similar lines.

The ERBS remained silent — I suspect after consulting the general secretary.

One candidate did take up the earlier suggestion of the ERBS executive director and wrote to the national president protesting at McAvoy's action and that of the two Broad Left executive members who had intervened.

Strangely enough, there was no reply from the president either! Nevertheless, despite their witch-hunts, two of the five candidates were successful!

Pious promises

THE other rules are just as transparent. New rule 29 will stop all argumentation in the wording of any motion to conference which seeks to explain the reasons for any particular action the association is recommending.

The new rule also says that no motion can exceed a maximum of 150 words. Before an association puts it forward it must have been circulated (at considerable cost) and approved by all its members.

Even if carried at conference it (together with all other motions agreed at conference) must be submitted to all union members for approval within four weeks.

While there can be no arguments in a motion, the executive can put *their* case (or should I say the general secretary can put **his** case?).

This is the opposite of democracy.

Worse is to come. Any motion asking for industrial action must appear on the agenda separately and any policy explaining why it is necessary. Even if there is a positive vote for action the new rule states: The executive shall have the right to conduct further ballots on industrial action in support of a policy endorsed by members in any circumstances in which the executive considers it expedient to say so.'

It is like the Alice in Wonderland scene where 'cunning old Fury' can be 'judge and jury' but this time to condemn all those wanting a fighting union and who are opposed to the union spending unlimited amounts on circulars and statements in an attempt to make members powerless.

Local autonomy

ONE other extraordinary rule being suggested (rule 5) will prevent any local association making any donation to affiliate to or sponsor any individual organisation unless by 'decision of the executive or resolution at conference' or passed at a quorate meeting and 'endowed by a ballot of members'.

In November last year Croydon Teachers Association (following an earlier decision at a quorate meeting) ran a social for the campaign being conducted by the parents of Stephen Lawrence.

Stephen was killed some three years ago in a vicious racist attack. Since the police are not prosecuting, his parents are taking out a private prosecution and the legal costs are very high.

Our social made just over £300. Had we circulated the members for permission, which I am sure would have been granted, it would have cost the association about £250 in postage alone and would merely have delayed our social and depleted our funds unnecessarily.

If the new rule is agreed that is what must be done in future.

These changes McAvoy wants coincide with his remarkable coyness toward many of the Labour Party's educational proposals.

Officials of the other main teaching union — the NAS/UWT — have been far more vocal. No doubt McAvoy and his Broad Left cronies believe if they deliver the union in chains to Blair and Blunkett they may be granted a few minor concessions.

What a hope! Nothing but platitudes and continued attacks on teachers will come their way — and ours.

The left at the conference will fight McAvoy's proposals tooth and nail. Victory for the right is by no means guaranteed.

'Crisis in the labour movement' conference

Last week's report on the 'Crisis in the labour movement' conference is completed here. There will be further discussion, including the text of Cliff Slaughter's speech, in the weeks ahead.

Keith from Liverpool pointed to the sectarianism that had been rife in the 1970s and had divided the working class. Workers had been used as 'donkeys' by left groups. He contrasted the 500 dockers who had been sacked in Liverpool with the 7,000 to 10,000 that had worked in the port in the 1970s. Previously 'investment' had meant jobs but now it meant workers out the door. Tilbury's contract was like 100 years ago. A one-day contract and that was it. At least in the days of the hiring pens workers could see each other. Now the class was becoming invisible and couldn't rely on old power bases.

Will Thomson, a benefits advice workers for the Liverpool dockers, moved the main conference resolution (see last week's Workers Press). He said the government was determined not to give a penny to the dockers for having the cheek to stand up like the miners.

When the dockers marched back victorious it would be a big coup with people queueing up to join the Transport and General Workers' Union. But then the political fund would go to Tony Blair! That was like putting

Workers' support groups should liaise to make sure the people involved didn't just go back to their normal lives after the dispute. Only in this way would true socialism come about.

Anne Murphy of the Communist Party of Great Britain, moving a resolution calling on everyone to join the Socialist Labour Party, thought it was the responsibility of all to join the SLP. Scargill shouldn't be allowed to create a Labour Party Mark II to become a barrier to the formation of a revolutionary party, she said.

Martin Ralph from the International Socialist League called for work to develop around the Socialist Alliances. The Liverpool dockers stood for more than 500 men sacked by the Mersey Docks and Harbour Company. There were 9 million workers affected by casualisations.

International Trade Union Solidarity Campaign and WRP member **Peter Gibson** said there were moves toward resolving the crisis in the labour movement.

The working class had the skill and tenacity to organise in a new way. The experiences of Women of the Waterfront showed how those faced with struggle became different people.

Bob Towers from the Liverpool dockers' London support group said it had been slow to get off the ground. The group was under the direction of the Liverpool shop stewards not some group or indiThe movement was dealing with change as graphically shown by the speech by Woman of the Waterfront Sue Mitchell (see last week's Workers Press).

Towers described plans to break the press boycott of the Liverpool dock strike including a picket of scab-herding company Drake International.

Lindewe of the African Liberation Support Campaign described how South African Workers International member Bongani Mkhungo had his children threatened at gunpoint by Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) thugs.

Bongani was a worker who had decided to tackle the unfairness in front of him. He had written a leaflet on the nurses' strike to give out last December at COSATU's 10th anniversary celebrations. The government said there was no money for nurses but a theatrical group had got £2.5 million.

She reported that antiapartheid campaigner Trevor Huddleston had recently returned from South Africa 'disgusted' that Nelson Mandela had not tackled apartheid.

In Nigeria their masters nodded and the military government had killed Ken Saro Wiwa for writing the truth. Capitalism was at its most vicious and raw in Africa as seen in Rwanda and Burundi.

The ruling class will kill us one by one if we don't unite,' she

said. Skills were being destroyed by built by slave labour in the Far East. Working class children could no longer go to university.

Bob Myers reported on a recent trip to Bosnia. He said that what had happened there was not the welling up of racial hatred. It was a systematic, planned attack against the unity of the working class. But there had been resistance to that break-up.

Bosnian miners had a long history of internationalism. Now the war was over they were returning to no money, no work, no jobs.

Ex-miner Dave Temple said that during the miners' strike 70 per cent of the aid had come from international organisations, including the Tuzla miners.

One problem was what to do with the British state. For one year it had given up the fight against crime to fight a trade union, the NUM. Could it be taken over to fight in our interest or did it have to be overthrown?

Kofi Klu from ALISC wanted to draw attention to the fact that a new party would need to take in 'communities of resistance' that were not strictly 'working class'. But the vanguard party would lead their struggle and be the vanguard of the oppressed.

The large numbers of refugees and asylum seekers who were here for seeking national liberation gave international substance to the party and needed to be part of its programme. There was a need for global revolution since a British or even European revolution were simply not practical.

Mad cow disease — a plague from the depths of capital This is an updated version of the article by DANIEL ROBERTSON published on 23 December that warned readers of the appearance of a new strain of Creutzfeldt-Jakob

Our scientific advice!

Readers will want to know if it is safe to eat

beef. Government reassurances that

contaminated food did not enter shops after

1989 are untrue as the limited restrictions

imposed then have not been properly

observed. Steak, if from proper beef herds

rather than dairy herds, is safer as

animal-originating feed is not usually used

here. If the retailer can guarantee that this was

the practice then the meat should be safe.

Dairy herd beef, and its products such as

stewing steak, beef stock, veal, suet, etc.,

should be totally avoided until the BSE

epidemic has ended. Check all food labels

carefully. Except for the vegans among us, we

are all regularly drinking milk from infected

cows — there is no evidence of any risk as yet.

Beef from abroad is fine, but take care that it is

not British beef relabelled.

Disease (CJD) linked with eating beef MAD COW DISEASE is back in the news after the government's Encephalopathy Spongiform Advisory Committee (SEAC) was forced to admit that there might be a link between mad cow disease and the human condition

could this situation have arisen? To understand the reasons we have to start by reviewing the known science behind this out-

CJD after years of denials. How

Mad cow disease (Bovine Encephalopathy) Spongiform and its human relative CJD are characterised by a deterioration of brain structure and function.

In humans there is loss of memory, personality change and loss of control over bodily functions as the victim gradually slides into a vegetative state. Death is inevitable.

The condition is associated with an infective protein structure called a prion that causes the accumulation in the brain of protein fibres causing a sponge like consistency.

Prions are mysterious in structure and function. All other living organisms require the presence of DNA or RNA to reproduce themselves.

The prions seem to spark off production of protein fibres (themselves prion material) by the hosts' genetic system probably by modifying a normally produced protein. Prions are highly resistant to heat and chemical treatments - they are not destroyed by cooking.

Some eminent scientists still believe that there may be a DNA virus involved - there is no con-

Several species of animal suffer from encephalopathies. A well known condition in sheep is scrapie. This has been present in British flocks for centuries. Sheep, like several other species, show a genetically-based variability in susceptibility between individuals.

Humans are susceptible to several different spongiform encephalopathies. The known outbreak (Kuru) was among cannibals in New Guinea who practised the unfortunate habit of eating dead relatives'

Kuru is a variety of CJD with some additional symptoms similar to those suffered by BSEinfected cattle, including shuddering and an unsteady gait. The new variety of CJD killing young people in Britain has some similarities to Kuru.

Some incidences of human CJD seem to be totally genetically determined. Rather than the infecting prion modifying a normally produced protein these individuals suffer a mutation causing direct production of the prion without exposure to infec-

The argument that deaths of vegetarians from CJD disproves an animal origin is thus probably

CJD is so dangerous that hospitals have been known to refuse admission to sufferers. Yet another form has been spread by use of human growth hormone from an infected donor.

Cover-up

BSE first occurred in British cattle in 1985. It is still largely restricted to Britain, limited outbreaks abroad being due to exported animals. Unlike here the response abroad has often been immediate and decisive infected herds have been slaugh-

The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAFF) persistently covered up or distorted news of this new condition. The first medical paper on BSE, in the British Medical Journal in 1988, warned of the threat to humans but was ignored.

Since 1985 there has been a slow reluctant programme of restricting contamination of the human food chain by BSE material, release of lying reassurances, blatantly distorted statistical information and restrictions or abuse directed against concerned

Imposition of controls has been nominal — a recent survey found that half of all slaughter houses inspected were not following procedures. Routine examination of cattle brains was rejected as being too expensive.

The earliest bans were on less commercially valuable materials able liver and kidney materials were exempt.

Now the Advisory Committee on Dangerous Pathogens is advising laboratory workers handling BSE infected material to take stringent precautions handling materials that are present in any supermarket!

The government-sponsored Southwood Committee set up in 1988 projected that the outbreak would be limited to no more than 20,000 cattle and would be virtu-

ally over by 1995. At the end of

1995 around 150,000 cases had

been confirmed and countless

more have slipped through the

wholly inadequate net of detec-

the true number may be a mil-

lion, with virtually everyone in

Britain having been repeatedly

is eliminated. This is partly because government claims that

the use of animal-derived food-

exposed.

Some estimates suggest that

It will be years before the BSE

There is evidence that it can sometimes be passed from cow to

Another reason is that the government's own limited restrictions are often ignored.

The 500,000 veal calves exported from Britain every year (and subject to no effective BSE controls at all in Europe) may contain some nasty surprises for their ultimate consumers who apparently favour sweetbread

materials that may be loaded

corpses have been illegally bur-

ied in land-fill dumps where they

risk infecting surrounding areas

for years to come. Blood and bone

material have been used as fer-

tilisers, spreading the prions

BSE probably originated from

feeding cattle sheep material

Large numbers of infected

with BSE agent!

everywhere.

between BSE and scrapie. Per-haps it mutated in some way as it made the jump from sheep to cat-

As far as is known scrapie does not infect humans. BSE's origin and range of potential hosts is essentially unknown.

Some farmers believe that treating cattle with dangerous organophosphorus pesticides may have had a role.

Cost-saving changes in the manner in which animal material is processed before being fed to cows to improve milk yields probably made it easier for the infective agent to spread. This material includes everything from dead cattle to cats' corpses collected from vets.

Scientists warned in 1979 that this practice would cause unknown new threats to human health. This practice is banned in other countries.

Government claims that the disease would not spread beyond cattle, and could thus be no threat to humans, have been proven to

BSE has been found to infect over 20 other species, including pigs and primates that are often used to model human susceptibility in drug trials due to their physiological similarities to humans.

Experts

CJD experts have not been consulted for their views -Spongiform Encephalopathy Advisory Committee was initially packed with 'friendly' scientists. BSE research programmes are actually being run down. No research is being pursued on means of combating a possible spread to humans.

A massive research programme should be in place. Instead concerned scientists are harassed and the public fed lies. Hopefully recent developments will reverse this trend.

What is the evidence of humans being infected by BSE? Recent cases of CJD show some disturbing characteristics.

Four dairy farmers have died from CJD. The statistical probability of this happening by chance is minute.

A new type of CJD, similar to Kuru, is responsible for some recent cases. Traditional CJD has been of types one and two. This new third type has a short incubation period.

It has killed several British teenagers (teenage deaths worldwide were previously almost unknown). It also shows symptoms very similar to cattle BSE and quite distinct from normal CJD.

The incubation period seems likely to be shortest in young people - perhaps from ten years. In adults it will be longer. We are seeing the beginning of an epidemic that will stretch well into the next century.

Scare

CANADA has been experiencing a scare over the possibility that blood transfusions from CJD carriers may spread the disease. Could this factor further spread CJD in Britain? Can it be caught from consuming milk or other dairy products?

Is the gelatine prepared from beef bones carrying the agent? Gelatine is used in a very wide range of foodstuffs and cosmetics.

Perhaps the genetic suscepti-bility factor will protect most

people from it. Studies on CJD caused by infected growth hormone treatments or transplanted tissue suggest that perhaps 1 in 200 people are susceptible. But Professor

stuffs were uniquely to blame for its spread are wrong.

although this claim seems to be undermined by the differences per cent of the population may be susceptible.

How much BSE material has to be eaten for infection to occur? At present we have no idea of the answers to these questions. Britain is now an enormous laboratory - and we are the laboratory

How could this have been allowed to happen? The beef industry is very big business indeed. There are presently over a billion cattle on this planet.

Cattle ranching and its associated grain production take up nearly 25 per cent of its useable surface. These cattle actually weigh more than the total human population.

The environmental and economic impact of beef farming has devastated many countries. The promoters and profiteers of this industry are powerful and violent men and can easily sway political debate to protect their

In South America they do not hesitate to use death squads to impose their will.

In Britain we have the big-business dominated farming,



21-year-old Peter Hall died in February

food processing and retailing industries and the government scientists that protect them.

Scientists

SCIENTISTS who speak out against the BSE cover-up have been ridiculed. Richard Lacey, who has campaigned vigorously on this issue, has been described as a 'bogus professor' and 'in need of psychiatric treatment'.

A particularly outspoken scientist — Dr Harash Narang has been hounded out of employment as a microbiologist. He has developed simple tests for rapid and simple detection of both BSE and CJD that the government fear will produce embarrassing

Dr Narang has been burgled and scientific evidence has been stolen. His car has been repeatedly tampered with in a manner designed to threaten his life.

The organic farmer believes that there is a link with pesticide use has been repeatedly shot at. Nobody knows who is behind these sinister activities.

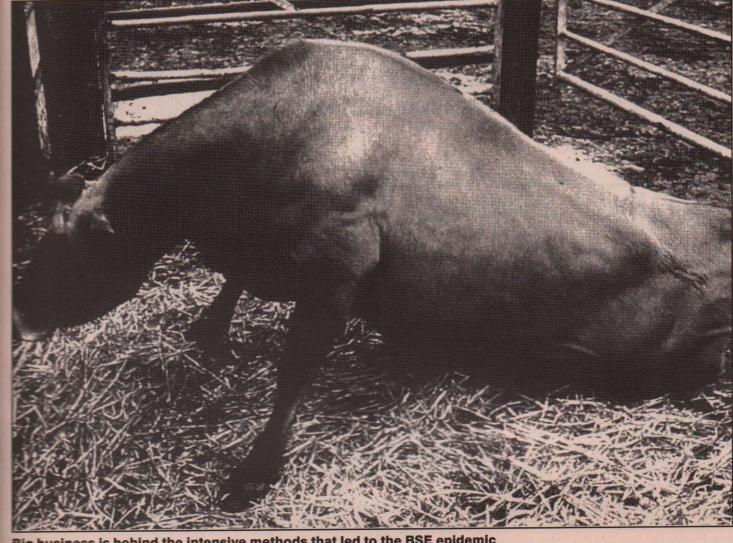
Numerous other scientists who have attempted to speak out have been ridiculed or silenced.

This is a disaster for public perception of the honesty of scientists, many of whom have been demonstrated to be crooks. It will feed hostility to scientific rationality and encourage the popular retreat into mysticism.

Society

THE decision to expose the public to this terrible risk was taken to protect profits, by men who care nothing for human (let alone animal) well being.

This disease is a symptom of a wider disease in society - domination by a system that has profit as its only motivation and in which people are only a means of making more profit. We will comtinue to be threatened by this irresponsibility until there is a settling of accounts.



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Saturday 30 March 1996

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Black Americans and unions against Nigerian dictatorship

LEADING black Americans and the trade unions have launched a fight against General Sani Abacha's military dictatorship in Nigeria. They want a ban on Nigerian oil, profits from which they say are enriching the military rulers' overseas bank accounts.

Writers Maya Angelou and Alice Walker, actor Bill Cosby, and orchestra leader Quincy Jones, have joined former presidential candidate Reverend Jesse Jackson in the campaign.

Black people who previously targetted the apartheid regime in South Africa voice suspicion that now, as then, the British Tory government wants to shield the dictators. 'Britain has always been a problem,' says Randall Robinson of TransAfrica.

The United States takes 50 per cent of Nigeria's oil exports, although Anglo-Dutch Shell petroleum is the main firm operating there.

Writer Ken Saro-Wiwa, who had spoken out for his Ogoni people against the oil companies' land-grabbing and pollution, was executed by the regime in November.

The American Federation of Labour-Congress of Industrial Organisations (AFL-CIO) have called for an embargo on all Nigerian exports.

Despite increasing international criticism and isolation, the renegade regime of General Sani Abacha continues on a course of widespread violation of the most basic rights of Nigerian citizens, the executive council said in a statement.

'Violence and illegal arrests continue, much of which has been targeted against the country's trade unions and their leaders.'

Among those being held illegally are Frank Kokori, general secretary of Nigeria's natural gas workers' union, who receives the AFL-CIO's 1996 George Meany Human Rights Award.

BY VIC CHARLES

Kokori was arrested on 4 July 1994, for leading his union, the National Union of Petroleum and Natural Gas Workers, on strike in opposition to the military dictatorship. Several unions joined the strike, which halted transport in Nigeria as well as production in the country's oil fields.

Seven trade union leaders were arrested after the strike. Others have been released, but Kokori remains in prison. In the two years since he was arrested, no charges have been filed against him, nor has he been allowed legal counsel or contact with his family.

Milton Dabibi, general secretary of the Nigerian oil and gas workers' union, was arrested last month and also is being held without charge.

After the strike, the military regime appointed 'administrators' to take over the unions, replacing elected union leaders. Trade unionists were harassed and intimidated.

Effective

The AFL-CIO council, meeting in Bel-Arbor, Florida, said 'more effective and forceful measures are urgently needed to force the Abacha regime to stop the violence and torture, restore civil liberties, including an end to arbitrary arrests, and immediately release all political prisoners.'

It called for a complete embargo on all Nigerian exports, with sanctions on nations that refuse to honour the embargo, and an embargo on shipment of equipment and replacement parts to Nigeria. The unions also back freezing the foreign bank accounts of Nigeria's rulers.

They urged US oil companies to 'admit their culpability by ceasing their support of the Nigerian military regime that violently abuses human and worker rights to degrade the environment and make massive profits from the blood of its citizens.'

Crimes that can't be hidden

ANOTHER mass grave may have been found in north Bosnia. It is thought that the bodies of 120 former prisoners from the Serb nationalist-run camp at Omarska are in one cave, near Lusci Palanke.

'The cave was destroyed by a strong explosion, and it was done by somebody who wanted to hide the signs of a crime,' says Refik Hodzic, a Bosnian war crimes investigator. The excavation of the site could begin this month, as the spring weather improves.

At Ljubija, the mine where it was estimated 10,000 bodies may have been dumped, it is feared the Serb Chetniks may have been allowed to to destroy the evidence, with orecrushing machinery and lime. The mine has now been filled in.

A witness interviewed by German television reporter Jurgen Bollman recently said he saw Serb soldiers driving busloads of prisoners to the mine. Ante J. said later he managed to get near and saw a hole filled with bodies.

He said bulldozers had covered over the hole with dirt. The German reporter visited the site, and saw the heaps of dirt, but said Serb police were still patrolling the area, and local Serbs were unwilling to talk. IFOR troops had neither protected the site nor sought the criminals, he said.

Serbs brought into the 'ethnically cleansed' areas of eastern Bosnia, where thousands of Muslims were slaughtered, have been talking, and evidently do not feel as comfortable as some Western 'lefts', like Living Marxism, which claims nothing happened.

Rajko Brajic, 47, a Bosnian Serb refugee, now in Srebrenica, the former UN 'safe area' seized by Serb Chetniks last July, says: 'It stinks of death... And it simply won't go away... We all know that thousands of Muslims were massacred here... But we don't talk about it. It's a taboo... Most of us have a feeling of guilt as we move into places whose owners are probably dead... But we had no choice — either here, or out in the open.'

After the massacres, vandalism and looting by the Chetniks, Srebrenica was left as rubbish-strewn ruins for those hapless Serbs persuaded to move in there.

'This makes you close your eyes and bang your head against the wall,' sobbed Jovka Miric, a school teacher from Ilijas. 'If someone doesn't remove this garbage soon, we'll all die of some epidemic. Whoever on earth wanted to capture this doomed city in the first place must have been crazy.... Our life in this place is like God's revenge for what our boys did here....'



The Ljubija mine shaft

Bosnia Solidarity: Getting the show on the road

WHEN actor John Davies told his agents about his plans for the summer, they were horrified. 'What if the fighting starts again? What about those mountain roads? What about your insurance!'

But it's not John's first Bosnian tour. The northern actor, whose face is familiar to viewers of ITV's 'Emmerdale Farm', and 'Hetty Wainthrop Investigates', is an active member of Workers Aid for Bosnia, and has been on more than one convoy.

John's known to Workers Aid comrades as someone who won't normally make a drama out of a crisis; but this summer that's what he and his travelling companions plan to do.

Bosnians who have lived through this war have made it clear they are not just victims needing food and medicine. They want solidarity, they want to rebuild their life, and that includes the cultural life they've always been proud of. So this summer there's going to be an arts convoy. Artists for a United

Bosnia, putting on a satirical cabaret show wherever it stops for the night.

That's not all. There'll be music—ranging from rap to soul and blues, to classics, with Lebanese flautist Wissam Boustany travelling to Tuzla to perform. Visual arts will be represented both by professional and children's work, in exchange for which work by Bosnian artists and children will be brought back for exhibition in Britain.

The arts convoy also aims to fulfil some very practical needs. Bosnians, particularly the young, are desperately short of art materials, books, CDs and cassettes, computer ware and other items.

'You can't get guitar strings in Tuzla', says a frustrated player.

Before the war, Bosnia was a musical centre for all Yugoslavia.

The artists' convoy is dedicated to belief in a united, multiethnic, multi-cultural Bosnia for all, and to the same principles elsewhere.

summer there's going to be an Leaving Britain provisionally will lead in returnants convoy, Artists for a United on 22 July, it plans to publicise artistes' tour here.

such events as the Bradford Mela, biggest Asian festival in Europe, and taking in the Festival du Monde in France's Massif Central, and a Romany centre in the Czech republic.

The convoy is heading for Tuzla, northern Bosnia's mixed mining area where Workers Aid has been before, and local arts workers are already planning a festival to coincide with its arrival.

Discussions are also taking place on possible visits to Mostar and Brcko, in both of which the question of a re-united, multicultural Bosnia remains a red-hot issue.

The artists, actors, musicians and singers will not only be a mixed bunch themselves, but are already working with friends throughout Europe.

A team of musicians, artists and film-makers from Macedonia will be joining them in Tuzla. And it is hoped the convoy's visit will lead in return to a Bosnian artistes' tour here.

Whether you're a professional amateur, or just interested workers Press readers can held For a start, the comrades new money. Vehicles, diesel, and tire cost money — to send one true will cost at least £2,500. Can your your union, community group or whatever contribute, organise fundraising?

Would you like to join the corvoy, as a driver or performe Would a theatre, gallery, schoor radio station in your area lil to make links with people in Bonia?

Can you donate material Among things needed are pain water colour, oil, plus brushes

Music: instruments, she music, sound mixers, replacement parts.

Plus: lighting consolerabling, bulbs, and photograph equipment.

■ For more information plea contact Nigel Gilkes 0113-2 7965 or Bosnia Solidarity Car paign, c/o ADBH 12 Flitcroft S WC2H 8DJ

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URGENT APPEAL: Jorge Garca Jimenez and Ruben Ventura Galvn must not die!

ON 6 March, two Mexican political activists — Jorge Garca Ramirez and Ruben Ventura Galvn — began an indefinite hunger strike at the National Cathedral in Mexico City to demand that the Mexican government meet the just demands of the SUTAUR-100 bus drivers' union.

Garca Ramirez is a National Front of Democratic Lawyers leader, Ventura Galvn is a leader of the National Revolutionary Union For a Dignified Life.

Both these organizations have been in the forefront of the support efforts for the embattled Mexico City bus drivers. Today, the lives of these two activists are in serious danger. On 11 March, Ventura Galvn sewed his lips together. He announced that he was ready to die, if necessary, to ensure justice for the bus drivers and for independent trade unionism in Mexico. Doctors are at his side 24 hours a day.

Ventura Galvn is able to sip water and juice through a straw. Garca Ramirez has also announced he will maintain his hunger strike until the Mexican government opens serious negotiations with the SUTAUR-100 leadership and frees the 12 detained union leaders.

Trade unionists and sup-

rastle upon Type NF1 2PO (0191-222 0299)

porters of human and democratic rights the world over must redouble their efforts in support of the Mexican bus drivers.

Jorge Garca Jimenez and Ruben Ventura Galvn must not die!

We urge you to fax letters to
Mexican President Ernesto
Zedillo and Mexico City Mayor
Oscar Espinoza Villareal
demanding that they:

Release the 12 detained SUTAUR-100 leaders, and

Open serious negotiations

outside the prison cell — with
the entire leadership of the bus
drivers' union.

Send faxes to: Preside Ernesto Zedillo, Presidencia de Repblica Mexicana, Atenc Magdalena Rubio, Mexico I Fax: 525-273-2376, and May Oscar Espinoza Villareal, Sect tara General de Gobierno, Depa tamento del Distrito Feder Atencin: Lic. Jos Ignacio Jimen Brito, Mexico DF, Fo 525-512-9082.

Please send copies of your leters to the Ruta-100 Bus Drive Support Committee, PO B 40458, San Francisco, CA 941 Fax: 415-641-4610. Thank your your prompt response to that appeal.