

LABOUR PLEDGES TO SLASH SPENDING

BY THE EDITOR

THE next Labour government will slash spending, shadow chancellor Gordon Brown has promised business leaders.

Speaking to an invited audience at Manchester Business School, Brown promised last week what the Guardian described as 'an unprecedented squeeze on public expenditure' when Labour formed a government. 'Our aim,' pledged Brown, 'will be to save money before we spend money.'

Labour intends to publish a shadow public expenditure round this autumn which will keep to the tough spending plans laid down by the Tories and would mean a sharp reduction in the proportion of national income accounted for by state spending.

All shadow ministers have been warned of the new tough approach and told that they must not speak to civil servants until their plans have been cleared by Brown or Labour leader Tony Blair.

Brown's talk in Manchester about the drive against waste will fool nobody. Services have already been cut to the bone, and in many cases beyond the bone.

Output

With output in Britain stagnant and the so-called 'feel-good factor' something that remains far over the horizon, the Public Sector Borrowing Requirement is again threatening to run out of control, requiring savage cut-backs in expenditure.

While Labour pledges to slash public spending it has assured the financiers and speculators that under Labour Britain would have a low tax regime designed to attract the maximum foreign investment into the country.

This was the message from Blair to the bankers of Wall Street on his recent US visit. (See City Lights, page 7.)

For millions of workers and their families Brown's guarantees to the City and big business will mean continuing and deepening misery.

Labour was the party that always prided itself as the defender of the National Health Service and the welfare benefits introduced after 1945. But now, following the Tories' lead, the Labour leaders become a direct instrument for the destruction of the Welfare State.

How times have changed!

What better evidence that the time is more than ripe for the building of a new party that can really defend and represent the interests of the working class.

Victory to the Liverpool dockers!

Last Saturday the national solidarity conference called by the Merseyside Port Shop Stewards' Committee was attended by about 200 trade unionists and socialists. Many reports were given of activities in support of the dockers and funds coming in. The Liverpool dockers moved the following resolution which was passed by the conference.

THIS Conference recognises that the dispute of the 500 sacked dockers is a struggle which represents the interests of millions of working people nationally and internationally. By defending trade union principles in not crossing a picket line, the Liverpool dockers inspire workers.

The Mersey Docks and Harbour Company are out to smash trade union rights by introducing casualisation, wage cuts, taking away hard-won working rights and conditions. There is an employers' offensive here and internationally.

The dockers' fight is the fight of the working class. Victory for Liverpool dockworkers will be a victory for all workers.

The Merseyside Port Shop Stewards' Committee thanks dockworkers throughout the world who are taking action against shipowners. This world-wide blockade of the port of Liverpool is key to the future victory.

It pays thanks to trade unionists throughout Britain who have sus-

tained our struggle — physically, financially and morally — without this our struggle would not have come this far.

It recognises the tremendous role of the dockers and their supporters in maintaining the mass pickets from day one of the dispute.

The conference agrees that:

■ The TUC should call a one-day strike — or stay-away from work — in support of the dockers and in opposition to anti-trade-union laws. It should follow the example of the Scottish TUC and establish a hardship fund for the dockers' families.

■ All trades councils be encouraged to pass resolutions along these lines and for support groups to continue with the speaking tours and fund-raising efforts.

■ A national support group structure be set up to assist the dockers and all workers who are in dispute.

■ This network, in conjunction with the Liverpool dockers shop stewards' committee, will decide on national mass pickets and a national demonstration organised in London.

■ Support groups on behalf of the dockers to organise picketing and leafletting of those firms who continue to ship their goods through Liverpool docks. Support groups to continue action against Drake International and PDP supplying scab labour.

■ Support groups to promote the sales of the pamphlet 'Never Cross a Picket Line', the 'Dockers Charter' and the other items of merchandise.

■ Internationally, a day be established to declare a one-day strike of all longshoremen worldwide in support of the reinstatement of the 500 sacked dockers.

VICTORY TO THE LIVERPOOL DOCKERS!

Photo: Alan Clark



Last Saturday's solidarity conference in Liverpool

International Trade Union Solidarity Campaign — African Liberation Support Campaign
Conference address: PO Box 18, Epsom, KT18 7YR, Britain. Tel/Fax: +441372 721 550

AN INTERNATIONAL WORKERS' CONFERENCE

- Trade unions independent of the state and the employers
- Democracy in the trade unions • Workers' internationalism

AN INJURY TO ONE IS AN INJURY TO ALL

Saturday—Sunday 8—9 June, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1.

Near Holborn. Start 10.30am Saturday, 10am Sunday.

This important conference is convened jointly by the ITUSC and ALISC. It will follow the 'Africa Month' here in Britain. We will be discussing and deciding how to take forward workers' international solidarity in the coming struggles. *Delegates will be travelling from Africa, India, Bangladesh, South America, Russia, Ukraine and eastern Europe.*

Therefore, rather than have a set attendance fee we are asking you to give whatever you can towards the cost of the conference and the fares of those delegates. A draft resolution will be sent to you, and we ask you to keep in touch during the preparation of the conference and let us have any resolutions and/or written material on the issues you wish discussed.

Capstick leaves Labour

YORKSHIRE Labour loyalist and ex-miner Ken Capstick has left the party in disgust at rule changes made to let ex-Tory MP Alan Howarth stand in the next election (see page 2).

Capstick tried for many years to be a Labour MP and was rejected by HQ in Walworth Road when he was adopted as National Union of Mineworkers-sponsored candidate for Hemsworth.

Socialists like Capstick don't fit in with New Labour, while ex-Tories get on very nicely, thank you!

Workers Press

Blair waives the rules

THE rules of the Labour Party have been waived to allow a former Thatcherite to stand for Labour at the coming general election.

The change was made at the last meeting of the party's national executive committee on a motion proposed by party leader Tony Blair.

To stand for Labour in an election you must normally have been a party member for at least two years. This rule has been relaxed so that former Tory MP Alan Howarth can stand for Labour in the coming election.

Blair proposed the change so that Howarth's 'brave and principled' decision to desert the Tories for Labour could be rewarded, said Blair. Howarth could easily have defected to the Liberal Democrats and possibly retained his seat at Stratford-on-Avon, claimed Blair.

It perhaps never occurred to the Labour leader that maybe the Liberal Democrats are too left wing for Howarth and that this former Tory finds Blair's openly pro-capitalist policies more to his liking.

The Labour leaders are now busily scrutinising the 20 or so winnable seats that have still to select a candidate to try and fit Howarth up with a seat. If it proves impossible to foist Howarth onto a constituency, the plan is to persuade a long-standing Labour MP to stand down shortly before the election takes place, so that normal selection procedures could be curtailed.

CONTRAST the privileges afforded Howarth with the brutal treatment meted out to Liz Davies, democratically selected by North East Leeds Labour Party to fight that seat at the next election, but rejected by the Blair leadership. One of the charges made by the right wing against her was that she had refused to pay the poll tax!

This latest flagrant bending of the rules by the Blair coterie — a move opposed by five members of the NEC, including Dennis Skinner and Diane Abbot — is another warning of the shape of things to come under a Labour government. All internal democracy in the Labour Party is being trampled under foot. Rules are changed on the hoof to fit in with the accelerating gallop to the right by Blair and his circle.

Blair clearly wants to pack the next House of Commons with the maximum number of right-wingers, even ex-Tories, to ensure that there is no opposition to what will be a Labour dictatorship exercised in the interests of the city and big business against the working class.

THE same reactionary course is evidenced in the plan to put the Labour election manifesto to a plebiscite of all Party members: are you in favour of my plans or against them? This is deliberately designed to exclude any serious discussion in the party on such a manifesto. It is the 'democracy' typically chosen by many dictators in the past.

If Blair treats members of the Labour party in this fashion, if he tramples on the right of constituencies to select their own candidates, if he changes the rules to allow ex-Tories to represent Labour, how will he treat the working people when they fight against the sort of plans he has in store for them?

To ask the question is surely to answer it.

Letters

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Letters
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News from Croatia and the all-powerful Franky

A member of Student Aid for Bosnia in Croatia wrote the following to friends in Britain

ABOUT the situation in Croatia. Things are getting worse every-day. I'm sorry my English is not good enough to translate newspaper articles quickly because I would really like for you to be able to read all the crap in the daily newspapers.

The most popular is *Vecenji List*, controlled by the governing HDZ party. But the satirical comments of *Feral Tribune* are also very popular.

The government papers are so full of disinformation and lies, which you usually don't notice. But when they make a mistake you start to be aware of their power to fill your head with anything they wish.

Our dear Franky Tudjman, through parliament, with its HDZ majority and the ruling party's satellites, legislated new laws — really old laws from the Tito era — which we called the 'Verbal Edict'.

These said you could be imprisoned for slandering and spreading lies about the president, the prime minister, members of the government, members of the constitutional and high courts, presidents and vice-presidents of parliament and other high-ranking state officials. You could also get imprisoned for publicising state secrets.

The other evening there was a short film on TV about the aspirations of Croats for independence through the centuries. The film was so disgusting that we started swearing and shouting and eventually had to turn the thing off before going mad.

It was about the independence day during the days of the Croatian state in World War II [a stooge state for the Nazis]. Franky showed up. The commentator said so many stupid things trying to make the Ustashe look bright and positive but it all came to the conclusion that Croats had been miserable, unsuccessful in every attempt to get their independence and lost

like shit in the universe until HE came.

HE led us to all our victories and showed us HIS wisdom and HIS vision, blah, blah, blah. I couldn't believe it! It was the worst sucking up I've ever heard! BIG BROTHER LOVES YOU! BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING YOU!

In today's papers you can read about some of your blokes visiting Franky. One name is Sir Dudley Smith and he is the president of the European Union parliament or something like that. The most interesting thing that came from the meeting was Franky's statement in which he expounded his opinion about the war:

'Croatia belongs historically and geographically to the middle European and Mediterranean region, but in no way to the Balkans. Croatia joined the Southern Slav community after World War I to defend itself from Italian, German and Hungarian imperialism but the population's cultural differences were so great that they led to Greater Serbian aggression and terrible war.'

All along the Hungarian, Austrian and Herzegovina border there are protests of peasants who are getting poorer (who doesn't) because the government constantly refuses to help agriculture by setting some products and materials free from tax and refuses to protect domestic products. It is letting the Herzegovina lobby import foreign produce to Bosnia-Herzegovina with very low tariffs and they smuggle them into Croatia.

I really have to change the subject before you label me a Franky paranoic but really the whole of Croatian politics seems to be about not making Franjo upset.

The only comfort in the situation is that more and more people are becoming aware of what is happening to them. More and more young people who I speak to agree with me. The process has started. I just hope that war will not break out again. I don't know about other people but I don't think I could get through another one.

Long live May Day, international workers' day!

Statement by the IRANIAN REFUGEE WORKERS' ASSOCIATION

EVERY year on this day workers all over the world with one heart and one voice stand in front of the capitalist camp. They rise in protest against all social discrimination and, also in celebration, they show their strength which comes from unity.

For this year's May Day, the capitalist camp more than ever before has attacked workers' rights and their social gains to reduce its own crisis. For example, in 'developed' countries the ruling classes have tried to restrict or stop unemployment benefit, education, health services, trade union rights, immigration rights and all social services.

The capitalists attempted to say that the collapse of the Russian government and the eastern bloc was the collapse of 'communism' and working-class government and tried to show the corrupt capitalist system to be the only viable system. But it did not take a long time for the workers in these countries to realise how the capitalist system and its democracy was corrupt and crisis ridden.

But the working class, despite political and economic pressures, have resisted in front of the capitalist camp to defend their social gains from capitalist attack. For instance, the mass united resistance of the French workers, Belgians and the Germans.

Obviously the situation in the under-developed countries is much worse. There are two major reasons for this. First, because of the lack of social services, poverty has heavily increased. Second, dictator governments with their lack of even a minimum democracy mean that often the working class has not got any legal organisational backing.

The Iranian working class is a good example because they have tolerated a very hard situation. Defeat of the Iranian regime's economic programmes has constantly made for a catastrophic situation in Iran.

Unemployment becomes insoluble. The price of basic necessities rises steeply from day to day and, therefore, poverty has risen to such a high level that even some of the government recently confessed that 40 million out of 70 million Iranians are now living below the poverty line.

Even simple economic demands from the Iranian people

are suppressed by the shooting of guns. For example, demands for drinking water and protesting against the rise in the cost of public transport has meant that people have faced arrest, torture and even being killed.

Last year suppression of the workers and poor people in the south of Tehran was the best example of the barbaric and brutal capitalist nature of the Islamic regime.

But despite all this savage political and economic pressure, not only did the working class not stop its struggle. Since 1982 historical evidence shows that, when the repression from the regime openly began the resistance and struggle of the workers continued, either by strikes in the workplace or by uprisings in the city.

Comrade worker!

THE capitalists and supporters of their ideology attempt to suppress the working class — saying they are incapable of running society, economics and politics and giving them an excuse for continuing exploitation. Unfortunately, there are some people

who follow this idea unconsciously.

On the other hand, the working class is the only revolutionary class because of its nature and its position within social production.

With their leadership they are able to free themselves and all people forever from the wage slavery of selling their labour-power and, in short, from the exploitation of human by human. They are able to cut the hand of the minority capitalist from the means of production and, thereby, to eradicate class suppression forever from society.

The working class is the only class who are able to make that kind of society in which the people by common decision, common work based on common ownership of the means of production and common rules, could build a most logical and natural and, therefore, the best way of life for humanity.

This is nothing but socialism, so comrades, let us go forward!

Long live the solidarity of all workers all over the world!

Long live the independent workers' organisations!
Long live socialism!

Workers Press — May/June lectures MARXISM AND THE HISTORY OF THE BRITISH WORKING-CLASS MOVEMENT

Some lessons for today

By Geoff Pilling, Workers Press

editorial board

To be held at Lucas Arms, Gray's Inn Road, London. Thursdays 9 & 23 May and 6 & 20 June, 7.30pm. Nearest tube King's Cross

Lectures start next Thursday!

Meet three Bosnian miners from Tuzla

Organised by the Greater London Association of Trades Councils and the Bosnian Solidarity Campaign
Tuesday 7 May, 7.30pm. University of London Union, Malet Street, London WC1. Tube: Russell Square
Also Mersey dock and African Liberation Support Campaign

1. Chartism and Socialism

The world-historical significance of Chartism. 'The first proletarian revolutionary movement' (Lenin). Marx and Engels's engagement with the Chartists. Engels's *Condition of the Working Class*. Chartism's two wings: 'moral' and 'physical'. The relationship between socialism (Robert Owen, etc.) and the Chartists. Some lessons for the new party.

2. Karl Marx and the British trade union movement

The role of British trade unions in the formation of the International Workingmen's Association (The First International). How Marx saw the International and how he worked in, organised and led it.

3. Marx and the Struggle

against sectarianism in the labour movement

The role of the petty bourgeois in the International. The Proudhonists and the followers of Bakunin. The fight against this tendency by Marx and Engels and its historical significance. The fight for the legal eight-hour day against those who wanted to separate the industrial from the political struggle.

4. Frederick Engels and the foundations of the Second International

The origins of the Second International, founded in 1889. The role of the struggle for mass trade unionism in its formation. The entry of new forces into new politics in this period. Struggles in the East End of London. The part played by Marx's daughter, Eleanor, in the formation of the 'New Unions' and the International.

Picket Drake International, the Mersey Docks and Harbour Company's scab-herding agent

Tuesday 14 May, 11am-5pm

96 High Holborn, London WC1.

Special call for largest possible turnout from 3.30pm

University cuts shock staff

BY STEVE DRURY

STAFF in universities have been shocked by the depth of the latest round of cuts in higher education. This year funding will decrease by 7 per cent, with at least 3 to 4 per cent drops each year until the end of the century.

Previous rounds of cuts have left most universities with little leeway for adjusting without drastic changes. Reducing non-staff expenditure is no longer an option that matches up to the severity that is demanded, and job losses seem inevitable among both academic and support staff, together with compulsory payment of a proportion of fees by students.

Emergency meetings to decide on a response to this onslaught are being held in every area in every university and college.

However, changes in job conditions and university management have been squeezed through by the Tories over the last 10 to 15 years and accepted meekly by the main academics'

organisation, the Association of University Teachers (AUT).

Since 1987 newly appointed academics and those promoted have had to accept conditions of service that no longer include the almost cast-iron tenure that once formed the base of academic freedom of thought, action and expression.

Many junior staff, both teaching and research are on short-term contracts, and an option that is being widely canvassed by university bureaucrats is imposing individual contracts on all staff. Cleaning, security, catering and maintenance in most universities are thoroughly casualised.

Morale

This is the same casualisation that has been forced through in many sectors of industry, with devastating effects on morale and future prospects for jobs, and which is at the centre of the Merseyside dockers' struggle.

Academics find themselves in a very weak position, as most are at the base of a vertical ladder of

line management that extends from the ministry through the Higher Education Funding Council, vice-chancellors, deans and heads of department. This sets college against college, faculty against faculty, department against department and ultimately individual against individual in a vicious spiral of appraisal, target-setting and competition for teaching and research funds.

The theme of the meetings called by management is for individuals to 'contribute ideas' for the 'least painful' repercussions; in other words to have a say in the manner and timing of their own execution! The main argument to ensure unwilling cooperation will be familiar to many in other sectors of public service; that non-cooperation will damage the interests of students.

Despite many years as isolated and privileged individuals, academics must quickly learn new methods of defence. This will undoubtedly mean turning outwards to one another, to other staff, to students and wider strug-

gles as they are forced to stand up to a devastating onslaught.

As the Merseyside dockers have discovered, starting from a trust only in their own self-organisation when standing firm was the only option, broadening the fight reveals support from unexpected directions and other groups facing the same problems.

Equally it flushes out the enemy's agents. It is not hard to predict that Professor Patrick Minford — Liverpool University monetarist and 'academic' supporter of his Tory masters and the Mersey Docks and Harbour Company against the Merseyside dockers — will be an august scab when his academic colleagues and other university workers are forced to move in their own defence. There will be others.

Workers Press can offer academics no better advice than to talk with the leaders of the Merseyside dockers and the national support group committee that emerged at their historic conference on 27 April. That will reveal the germs of what is required.

BSE epidemic grows

BY DANIEL ROBERTSON

THERE is now growing evidence that the feared epidemic of human deaths from BSE has started. Nine new cases of CJD (the human equivalent of BSE) have been reported in the last few weeks.

Most of these have been reported in younger age groups, suggesting that they may be the form of CJD derived from eating BSE-contaminated beef. Normal human CJD only affects old people.

The most frightening trend has been a cluster of cases around Ashford where the first cases of BSE in cattle were reported. This suggests that the human epidemic may only just be starting with many more cases to come.

A further menacing indication is a finding that the part of the prion involved in determining infectivity is identical in humans and cattle.

Prions are the proteins whose aberrant forms cause CJD or BSE. This suggests that humans may be particularly susceptible to BSE. We will only know how great the risk is as the numbers of CJD fatalities become clear in coming months.

Meanwhile the British government continues to blindly claim that 'British beef is safe.'

The conflict this is causing between Britain and its European Union partners is fuelling hysteria by the Eurosceptic wing of the Tory party. They see this as another opportunity to present Europe as a plot against national sovereignty.

The BSE epidemic, if it continues to cause mounting human fatalities, will cause a series of irresolvable crises for the Tories

as well as fuelling popular fears that the food industry is becoming a menace to human health.

Socialists must cut through the reactionary hysteria being generated around this issue to point the finger of guilt at the true cause of this terrible threat — a system that ignores human interests and recognises only the drive for profit.

Land-mine fraud

THE British government's claims to have finally agreed to support an international agreement to ban land-mines have been shown to be a fraud. The government's 'decision' follows years of lobbying by human rights organisations against these barbaric weapons.

Over 100 million land-mines have been laid in areas of conflict around the world, including Bos-

nia. They continue to kill or maim large numbers of civilians for years after wars have ended and cause enormous burdens to poor countries.

At present 20 new mines are laid for every one cleared, resulting in 2,000 new casualties a month. It is often peasant farmers and particularly children who are the main victims of this cruel form of warfare.

An international outcry against this barbarism has resulted in moves to ban their use. The British government's response has been to pledge to replace its present stocks with new self-destructing types that spontaneously destruct after a set period of time — but the failure rate is high and many mines will continue to remain active for years.

Agreeing to a total ban will be postponed as late as possible and will undermine efforts to end this barbarism for good.

Swedish occupation for Liverpool dockers

SWEDISH supporters of the Liverpool dockers went in to occupy the head office of the ACL shipping line in Gothenburg on 29 April at 11pm. Police failed to remove the 20 activists and they planned to stay until their demands were met.

One of the Merseyside dockers' main aims has been to force ACL to pull out of the port of Liverpool since this would cut deep into the employer's profits and hasten the end of the strike and

reinstatement. The demands of the occupation were those of the Liverpool dockers:

■ ACL to quit the port of Liverpool until all 500 dockers are reinstated.

The occupation threatened to take further action unless this demand was met.

Their message to the May Day rally in Liverpool was:

'Long live international solidarity! Victory to the Liverpool dockers!'

Cheques and postal orders for the Liverpool dockers should be made out to: Merseyside Dockers Shop Stewards' Committee. They should be sent to J. Davies, Secretary/Treasurer, 19 Scorton Street, Liverpool L6 4AS. The Liverpool portworkers' paper, the 'Dockers Charter' costs 50p (20p unwaged) and is available from the same address (add money for postage). Bulk orders by arrangement, phone 0151-207 3388.

Brighton and Hove fans make a stand

BY MIKE COOKE

BRIGHTON and Hove fans wanted to make a show against the businessmen who don't give a toss about the football side of the club — and that's exactly what they did at last Saturday's match.

Three thousand fans invaded the Goldstone ground within minutes of the York City match starting. Fans knew something was going to happen when they ran on the pitch but probably didn't expect that the goals' cross-bars would be broken.

The fans were particularly incensed at the news that their Brighton ground had been sold to Chartwell Land and that next season the club's board had expected them to travel to Portsmouth's Pompey ground about 50 miles away for 'home' fixtures.

'We'll never go to Pompey,' shouted the fans from the pitch. 'Sack the board', was another slogan.

The Football League told Brighton and Hove's board that the move to Portsmouth would not be sanctioned but with typical arrogance the fans were not told. Club fanzine editor Ian Hart said: 'We haven't had support from the FA and Football League. They just bury their heads in the sand.'

At the centre of the machinations against the Brighton and Hove fans is the former Liberal Democrat MP and businessman David Bellotti. He is Brighton and Hove's chief executive and deputy chair.

It was only after extreme pressure that a deal with Goldstone's new owners was made that meant fans could continue to see their team locally. But they still have no confidence in Bellotti or Bill Archer, the club chair. Even after the deal Bellotti had to call police when he was prevented from leaving Goldstone by Brighton and Hove supporters.

Although the amount was not disclosed, the new owners of Goldstone had demanded £480,000 to lease the ground for another season.

Liam Brady, former Arsenal and Ireland player who resigned as club manager last November, is heading a consortium which is attempting to take control. Brady was promising 'substantial money' to help the team stay at Goldstone. A press conference for the consortium was interrupted by applause and cheers from supporters. But Archer described it as 'a half-baked scheme to raise £3 million'. He said the offer would not be accepted.

Archer is particularly disliked by the team's supporters.

Confidence

'Archer must be made to relinquish his shareholding,' said John Baine, founder member of the Brighton Independent Supporters Association. 'Fans of the club have no confidence in Archer, some confidence in [co-owner] Greg Stanley and total confidence in Liam Brady.'

Within the board itself there are tensions with four non-executive directors being removed without notice two weeks ago. Bellotti maintained that they were 'exercising their opportunity to leave the board with a refund of their investment'. This is disputed by those involved.

Former vice-chair John Campbell said: 'We were removed from the board; we didn't resign. It wasn't an investment; it was an interest-free loan. And they haven't paid any of it back yet.'

What is clear is that until football is once again directed toward the enjoyment of fans and players, and not to property deals and financial shenanigans, owners will continue to treat the game with contempt. The fans were right to make their stand last Saturday.

Casualisation of work in Britain

The following is a written contribution made by Manchester lecturer KEITH GIBBARD to last Saturday's solidarity conference called by the Liverpool dockers (see front page)

of a so-called 'flexible' labour market.

In recent years there has been an enormous growth in the number of workers in insecure part-time and temporary jobs. Between 1979 and 1990 more than 5 per cent of the entire British workforce — 1.3 million workers — moved from full- to part-time employment. As a result about a quarter of all employees in Britain are now part-time, 85 per cent of them women.

For the employers this army of 4.6 million part-time women workers has obvious advantages. Hourly rates of pay are only 60 per cent of those for full-time staff.

In addition, about half of part-time women workers do not qualify for any kind of employment protection, while a third of those earnings are below the National Insurance threshold and are thereby excluded from unemployment benefit, sick pay and maternity leave.

Indeed a recent study by the Equal Opportunities Commission found evidence of 'a deliberate policy to reduce hours below 16 a week from an average of nearer 20 to ensure that the weekly earnings of part-time workers did not exceed the National Insurance lower earnings limit.'

At the same time there has been a big increase in the number of workers on temporary (less than 12 months) contracts. Last

year alone an additional 140,000 employees were forced to accept temporary work bringing the total to around 1.5 million.

Not surprisingly given their vulnerable positions, a survey of companies employing temporary staff revealed that less than a half were allowed union membership or were entitled to sick pay. It has become a common strategy for employers to sack temporary workers at the point where they become entitled to the rights and benefits of permanent employees.

Perhaps the most disturbing trend has been the growth of 'zero-hours contracts', familiar to dockers, where there is no guarantee of minimum working hours or earnings and the employee is simply required to be 'available for work'. Around 5 per cent of workers are now on such contracts.

Unsocial

The growth in 'casualised work' has been matched by the move towards longer working hours, and an increase in unsocial shift work. Workers in Britain work the longest hours in the European Union, averaging almost ten hours of overtime a week.

In fact there are now more workers doing overtime in the UK than at any time since records began in 1950.

This drive to lengthen work-

ing hours has been carefully engineered by the Tory government, overturning rights won in struggle by previous generations. For example:

■ The Deregulation and Contracting Out Act 1994 abolished rights to breaks and regulation of hours for shopworkers.

■ The Employment Act 1989 removed controls on the working time of young people aged 16-17.

■ The abolition of the wages councils in 1993 removed statutory definitions of the normal working week and hours after which overtime rates become payable.

■ The Sunday Trading Bill has led to a sharp increase in Sunday working.

Low wages and long hours in insecure jobs. These conditions produce low costs for the employers but they inflict a high cost on the 'flexible' worker. There is growing evidence of the link between 'casualisation' and a rise in ill-health, family and relationship difficulties, psychological problems, alcoholism and premature death.

As was made clear by the delegates to the international dockworkers conference in February, this is not just a British issue. Workers face the same problems worldwide.

It is only through the unity of workers internationally that the employers' onslaught can be resisted and overcome.

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Inside left

Seen and noted

WITH the help of British fascists — and co-operation from the state — Oster's notorious 'marching season' crossed the water. Despite local protests, the Apprentice Boys were permitted to march in Bolton, Greater Manchester, with Nazi Combat 18 thugs as stewards.

Last weekend, courtesy of the Metropolitan Police, the exercise was repeated in London, with resulting violence. The Met must have known it could expect mayhem. Last year when Loyalists marched in London's East End, fascists made for Central Hall, Westminster, to attack socialists inside Labour's special conference.

The traffic is two-way. Some 'Loyalists' in black bomber-jackets aiming petrol bombs in Belfast on Easter Sunday looked a wee bit familiar. Do you worry about consequences they can't have to live with?

Combat 18 doesn't just have a reputation for violence, it revels in it. C18 members were at Lansdowne Road, Dublin last year, to wreck the Ireland-England soccer friendly with an organised riot. Whereas British police would stop miners travelling from one county to another, sometimes even arresting them if they left their front-gate, they insisted they had no powers to interfere with Nazis' travel arrangements.

This isn't a matter of individual workers' fascist sympathies, although there are admirers among the Met's racist bootboys. It's what the state is up to.

Obviously Nazi boneheads can find it useful to get behind the bowlers and big drums, or bring 'soldiers' from Glasgow to London. Whether fascists want to be used this way is their affair.

What should be seen and noted is, although the 'hard men' have been a nuisance to the RUC lately, nobody in power here, not necessarily even interested in Ireland, wants fascist gangs on our streets.

Ironies of history

THIS week's Liverpool dockers' conference call began with a quote attributed to Irish socialist James Connolly: 'The great only appear great because we are on our knees. We rise!' Connolly was executed by the British government for his part in leading the Easter Rising, 80 years ago.

Connolly once posted leaflets in Belfast before 12 July, when Loyalists celebrate William of Orange's victory over James's Catholic Irish at the Battle of the Boyne (1690), pointing out that a grateful Pope had ordered *te deum* masses for this 'Protestant' victory. (His Holiness was in dispute with the French, who supported the Catholics, at the time.)

History is full of ironies involving statues on horseback. Durham has its equestrian statue of the Marquess of Londonderry, who evicted thousands of striking colliers.

Zagreb, the Croatian capital, has a statue of Josef Jellacic with outstretched sword. His Croatian army suppressed the 1848 Hungarian rebellion for its Austro-Hungarian imperial masters.

This reinforced Frederick Engels' judgements about Croats (and 'non-Slavic' Slav peoples generally).

A Serb chauvinist supporter wrote in *An Phoblacht* last August about Croats, and Muslims — 'one-time loyalist-like garrison troops of the Turkish and Austro-Hungarian empires'.

But Jellacic's 'Croat' army recruited Serb peasants from the Krajina, who were a 'garrison class'. Would this determine their descendants' rights today?

Incidentally, Britain's C18 Nazis — pro-Serb nationalist, while Croat fascists favour the IRA, as fellow-bombers. As an Irish wit wrote: 'The truth is seldom plain, and never simple.'

Charlie Pottins

Bosnia's statehood was one of the gains of the Yugoslav revolution in World War II, argues CHARLIE POTTINS, resuming the historical series begun in Workers Press last year: 'Milestones in the Yugoslav Revolution' (14 October) and 'Revolt in Hitler's Army' (21 October)

IN HIS recent self-apologia *Balkan Odyssey*, Lord Owen 'of Split', whose partition plans for Bosnia did so much to encourage war and 'ethnic cleansing', pretends a knowledge of Balkan history while trotting out tired old myths of Serb-nationalist propaganda, and some howlers of his own.

Owen claims World War II partisan Milovan Djilas as authority to assert that the borders of Bosnia and Croatia were 'often arbitrary', having been hastily invented by Tito's partisans, 'during a march'. Passing time, we suppose, while crossing the Neretva gorge under fire from stukas.

Djilas — an opponent of the bureaucracy, and of Milosevic's war — is no longer around to call Owen a liar. As historian Noel Malcolm has pointed out (in the Alliance to Defend Bosnia-Herzegovina's March bulletin), Djilas headed a commission set up by Tito after the war which spent months working out boundary details, based on geographically and historically defined borders.

Lord Owen only betrays his affinity with the reactionary Serb chauvinists who have waged war and 'ethnic cleansing' to revise what they call Yugoslavia's 'communist borders'.

What the partisans **did** decide during World War II was that Bosnia and Herzegovina should constitute a republic, within a federal Yugoslavia, with equal rights for its peoples. They did so for damn good reasons. Unlike Lord Owen, the Yugoslav Communist Party was capable of learning from the war, and wanted to unite Yugoslavia's peoples.

'The party had heretofore held the view that Bosnia and Herzegovina should have autonomous status, rather than become republics. This plan implied autonomy under the Republic of Serbia. However, the war had turned Bosnia into a battleground between feuding Ustashe and Chetniks, as well as a base and haven for the partisans.'

'Autonomy under either Serbia and Croatia would have encouraged further strife and deprived the Muslims of their individuality. The Bosnian leadership, too, like every authority that grows out of an uprising, insisted on their own state' (Djilas, *Wartime*, p.356).

Before the war, Yugoslavia was a backward, mainly agrarian capitalist state, ruled by a Serb monarchy that could neither unite the country nor free it from foreign domination.

After Croat leader Stjepan Radic was shot in parliament by a Montenegrin MP, King Alexander suspended parliament and the constitution in 1929. A series of *banovinas* were set up, with appointed governors, overriding traditional boundaries in an attempt to put national differences out of sight.

Autocratic

Beneath this autocratic centralised state, the 1930s depression exacerbated poverty and national conflict. Leaders of the Croat Peasant Party were jailed for demanding restoration of democracy.

Croat nationalist Ante Pavelic conspired abroad with fascist regimes, arranged the assassination of King Alexander in 1935, and prepared his Ustashe to set up their Greater Croatia state with Nazi backing in 1941.

The Communist Party of Yugoslavia had been driven underground in 1921. Leaders like Tito and Moise Pijade went to jail, fought in Spain (Dapcevic, Popovic, and many others) or, most dangerous of all, were exiled in the Soviet Union.

In 1937, his predecessor Milan Gorkic having fallen victim to Stalin's purges, Josif Broz, a former met-

alworker known in the Comintern as 'Walter', and to posterity as Tito, became general secretary. Although he was to deny testifying against anyone, Tito was known as a loyal Stalinist, intolerant of opposition.

In the late 1930s, obedient to the changing requirements of Moscow strategy, the Yugoslav Communist Party turned to supporting Yugoslav unity, and tried to pursue a 'popular front'.

In 1940, with the party still illegal, and Yugoslavia about to fall under fascist occupation, Milovan Djilas was sent touring Slovene party branches — to search out alleged Trotskyists.

In 1941, Tito was warned that Defence Minister General Nedic intended to open concentration camps for communists in Serbia. But in March 1941, when popular demonstrations and a British-backed military coup stopped Yugoslavia joining a Nazi pact, the Communist Party was unsure what to do.

Treaty

Stalin still had a treaty with Hitler, even though the latter was securing his Balkan flank ready to attack the Soviet Union. The masses' spontaneous patriotism proved ahead of the Comintern leadership's 'correct' line, providing future food for thought.

In July 1941, after the Nazis had invaded the Soviet Union, the Yugoslav Communist Party leadership decided on insurrection against the occupation. The party saw its tasks as national liberation, defeat of fascism, and defence of the Soviet Union.

In the autumn of 1941, after the Nazis murdered thousands of Serb civilians at Kragujevac and Kraljevo, General Draza Mihailovic, whom the Royalist exile government had named 'minister of war', and Britain recognised as leader of the underground struggle, made a truce with the quisling General Nedic, head of the Nazi stooge regime in Serbia.

Mihailovic's Chetniks turned on the partisans, then centred at Uzice. Some 30 workers and students, mostly young women from Belgrade, trying to reach partisan territory, were murdered by Mihailovic's officers. About 100 partisans were captured at Valjevo and handed over to the Nazis.

Tito's attempts to negotiate with Mihailovic, even offering him joint command in Serbia, were doomed. Whatever Stalinist 'stages' theory said about 'national unity', civil war was raging in Yugoslavia.

Vladimir Dedijer records in his war diaries: 'I remember well in November 1941 when, after an agreement with Nedic, Draza Mihailovic cowardly attacked the liberated territory as the advance guard of the Germans. I was sitting one evening then in Uzice with comrade Tito and Lola Ribar beside the radio.'

'We were listening to Radio Moscow's Serb broadcast. It was running some story about Draza Mihailovic as the leader of the uprising in Serbia. When Stari heard this broadcast he began to walk up and down . . . then said "We do not dare destroy Draza Mihailovic, although we have surrounded him. We must see to it that we do not cause the Soviet Union any foreign policy difficulties".'

(Dedijer, *Dnevnik-War Diaries*, pp.187-8. Tito's comrades called him 'Stari', the Old Man. He was 49.)

Early in 1942 the partisans crossed into eastern Bosnia, establishing themselves in Foca, a mainly Muslim town on the upper Drina. Croat Ustashe and Serb Chetniks had, each in turn, carried out horrific massacres there.

The partisans set about restoring some life, and establishing a political culture amid the wartime barbarism.

Bosnia Yugoslavia



Supreme staff meeting, Bihac, December 1942. Tito and Djilas

Moscow had made clear its displeasure at the Yugoslav Communists setting up 'Proletarian Brigades' and openly celebrating the October Revolution. Stalin urged them to renew efforts at national unity, and warned against upsetting the Soviet Union's British allies, who were supporting the Royalists.

On 21 February, speaking in Foca, Tito tried to put a 'communist' gloss on this, stressing agreement between Soviet and British trade unions, and the importance of the working class as a force in Britain, able to affect policy. But he went on: '**Our bourgeoisie from Serbia have imposed a class war. For a long time we have compromised with them. They as a capitalist group have stood against us. That has become crystal clear.**'

'A united Nedic-Pavelic front has been formed. The bourgeoisie have embraced the point of view of class warfare, they will not fight the occupier.'

'We feel however that our main enemy is the occupier. We will liquidate the kulak, but not because he is a kulak, but because he is a fifth columnist — physically and politically. The current struggle is national liberation in form, but class in essence' (Dedijer, *Dnevnik-War Diaries*).

The following day they held an anti-fascist women's rally in a former courthouse converted into a 'people's house of culture'. Some 500 came, Serbs and Muslims, partisans and peasant women from the villages, and a delegation from Gorazde. 'We are only three peoples in Bosnia and yet we cannot agree among our-

selves.' Rocko, a partisan leader admonished them. 'But in Russia 170 peoples live in complete harmony.' He promised that things would be better in Yugoslavia in the future.

'God willing!', agreed an old peasant woman in the front row.

Notwithstanding its Communist Party leadership and youthful rhetoric, the partisan army was not a proletarian army. Workers joined (as did students and some young army officers), but Balkan conditions and the nature of guerrilla war decreed its mainly peasant composition.

Old habits frequently showed. When the partisans took Bihac, in 1943, peasants from the Krajina came with their carts to carry off booty!

Nevertheless, unlike the Chetniks, who were unmistakably Serb nationalist, the partisan leadership had a higher vision. It was a cross-section of Yugoslav peoples.

Tito was born at Kumrovec in Croatia, of mixed Croat-Slovene descent; Djilas a Montenegrin; Moise Pijade, who helped lead the uprising in Montenegro, was Jewish; Rifat Burdzoic, a Muslim, organised the uprising in the Sandzak; Vladimir Dedijer, who commanded a Muslim brigade in Bosnia, was Serb; Edward Kardelj and Boris Kidric were Slovenes; Bakaric and Velebit, Croats; Svetozar Vukmanovic, who led partisans in Macedonia, came from Montenegro.

Vladimir Dedijer says mistakes were made in Herzegovina, both by 'ultra-lefts', assuming anybody not with them was an enemy to be killed, and by those who deviated towards nationalism. 'Rightist mistakes

Bosnia: reborn in the Yugoslav revolution



fourth and seventh from the left

appeared when Herzegovina comrades considered the people's liberation struggle as essentially a war of Serbs against other peoples. . . .

On 18 June 1942, however, Dedijer recorded good news from Herzegovina. One partisan battalion had 500 fighters, another had 350, and would be reinforced with workers from Mostar.

'Milentije told us some interesting things about Herzegovina. We stand well with the Muslims. In Mostar 80 per cent of the Muslims are with us. All of the assassinations and actions in the town have been performed by communist youth — Muslims. They have taken 20,000 bullets from the town in an Italian truck. They turned the ammunition over to the partisans. . . .

However, Herzegovina has paid dearly for the war. First the Ustashe came in butchering, then the Chetniks. . . .

'In all of eastern Herzegovina, from this side of the Neretva, all of the houses belonging to Muslims have been burned down.'

Allegiances did not conform to ethnicity or religion, but varied. The Ustashe, assisted by Catholic clergy, had support in western Herzegovina, less so among Croats in northern Bosnia. Croats in Italian-held Dalmatia supported the partisans.

At Husinje, in central Bosnia, a group of Croat miners seized weapons from the Ustashe militia at the end of 1941, and joined the Zenica partisan units. 'They were distinguished by their militancy and discipline', say the records.

There was a song about them. The

Husinje miners were betrayed to the Germans, captured and shot. Partisans captured the commander of the Zenica Chetniks, Golab Mitrovic, and found documents incriminating him in the betrayal of the Husinje miners, and an agreement with the Germans to guard the railway tracks.

The Nazis met resistance and sabotage with colonialist savagery. In a despatch to Radio Free Yugoslavia, Tito reported: '[T]he Germans are terrorising the population along the railway lines. Several days ago, for instance, they took 28 peasants hostage from Zenica, the majority Muslims, and hanged them on telegraph poles along the railway lines.'

But on 7 July 1943, a partisan communique reported: 'The town of Kakanj with the largest and most important coal mines in Yugoslavia has been taken. The coal mines and a sub-station destroyed, and dynamite captured. Railway tracks and bridges destroyed too. Coal from these mines had been used at Zenica and on the railways.'

Telegram

On 14 July 1943, Tito sent a radio telegram to Dimitroff, secretary of the Comintern, and Radio Free Yugoslavia, reporting heavy fighting in Romanija, Vares, and Tuzla. Coal mines had been destroyed at two places, and salt mines demolished at Tuzla Kladanj and Srebrenica. Vlasnica and Zvornik had been liberated and partisan units were advancing into the Tuzla area.

On 27 August came the capture of

Bugojno, seizing weapons and ammunition from Ustashe. 'The towns of Gornji Vakuf, Donje Vakuf, Jajce, Mrkonjic Grad, Ključ, Prijor, Glanoc Drvar, Tomislav Grad are now in our hands.'

On October 6, Dedijer recorded: 'Exceptional news from Bosnia. . . . Tuzla has been liberated after a fierce battle. So now, all of eastern Bosnia, save for Brčko and Zvornik, has been totally rid of the enemy. . . . Taken prisoner were 2,138 enemy soldiers, 30 officers and one general. Five hundred enemy soldiers were killed.' The area around Tuzla became the largest liberated territory in occupied Europe.

At the second session of the Anti-Fascist Council for the National Liberation of Yugoslavia, AVNOJ, held in Jajce in 1943, Tito declared: 'We have been slandered, and we still are being slandered from all sides — but the pattern is always the same.

'All the occupiers, and quislings, the hireling traitors, Ustashe, Nedivites, Chetniks under Draza Mihailovic, in the country and their masters abroad, have said that our national liberation struggle in Yugoslavia is purely a communist affair: they claim we want to Bolshevise the country, that the communists want to seize power, that private property will be abolished, that the church and religion will be destroyed, culture wiped out etc., etc. . . .

But the struggle imposed its own logic. To defeat the enemy occupiers, it was necessary to win the confidence of Yugoslavia's peoples, and their readiness to sacrifice. This meant confronting the country's backwardness, and inspiring the younger generation with belief in a better future.

On 1 October 1943, a German commander reported:

'Through its bad economic policies and the Ustashe course, the government has lost all support not only among the Orthodox and Muslims, but among its own Croat population. Real government and state authority no longer exists.

'In the farming region the Communists unhampered collect taxes in the form of grain. They hold literacy courses. On their territory, which comprises the whole of western and central Bosnia, they have set up their own administration of people's liberation committees.

'Practically speaking on this extensive area there exists today, both in the lowland region and in the towns, a soviet state.'

The need to resolve the national question contributed to the decision to break from the old regime. On 25-26 November 1943, the Anti-Fascist Council for National Liberation of Bosnia and Herzegovina held a constituent assembly in Mrkonjic-Grad, attended by 247 delegates. By this time peoples' liberation committees had been established over two-thirds of Bosnia.

'For the first time in the history of Bosnia and Herzegovina the representatives of the Serbian, Muslim and Croatian peoples have met together,' the assembly declared, 'linked by strong feelings of brotherhood in the uprising, to take decisions, on the basis of the results of the armed struggle of the people of Yugoslavia and the people of Bosnia

and Herzegovina, which will pave the way for our peoples to run their country in a way that accords with their wishes and needs.'

After reviewing the progress of the war, the victories of the Red Army, and the coming defeat of Nazism, the resolution declared:

'The peoples of Bosnia and Herzegovina do not wish a return to the old state of affairs which led to our misfortunes. . . . The old political parties . . . did not bring the people together; on the contrary their anti-national policies served to deepen the gulf between them and sow hatred. . . .

'Another reason that the peoples of Bosnia and Herzegovina do not desire a return to the old state of affairs is that they had no democratic rights in pre-war Yugoslavia. . . .

Peoples

'The peoples of Bosnia and Herzegovina deny the so-called London government the right to represent them and speak in their name.'

The resolution went on: 'For centuries the peoples of Bosnia and Herzegovina have lived together, intermingling and interlinked by their common interests. For centuries the foreigner has introduced conflict and hatred. This policy of spreading hatred and intolerance was continued in pre-war Yugoslavia by all anti-national parties. In the flames of the national liberation war, all traces of the ill-fated past are being burnt away. . . .

'Today, the peoples of Bosnia and Herzegovina, through their sole political representative, the Anti-Fascist Council of National Liberation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, desire their land, which is neither Serbian, nor Croatian, nor Muslim, but Serbian and Muslim and Croatian, to be a free and brotherly Bosnia and Herzegovina, in which full equality of all Serbs, Muslims and Croats will be ensured. The peoples of Bosnia and Herzegovina will play an equal part with the other peoples in building a people's democratic federal Yugoslavia.'

On 1 July 1944, meeting at Sanski Most, the Anti-Fascist Council of People's Liberation of Bosnia and Herzegovina declared that, pursuant to the will of the people and the decisions of the Anti-Fascist Council of People's Liberation of Yugoslavia, which had met in Jajce in November, it would henceforth constitute itself 'as the supreme legislative and executive people's representative body, and as the highest organ of government of Bosnia and Herzegovina, an equal federated unit of Democratic Federal Yugoslavia' (from *The National Liberation War and Revolution in Yugoslavia, selected documents*, edited by Fabijan Trgo, Belgrade 1982).

Aleksa Djilas (*The Contested Country*) calls the 14th century Bosnian kingdom, which brought Croats and Serbs together under one rule, 'proto-Yugoslav'. **Modern Bosnia was born in the Yugoslav revolution.**

Inv. št. 402

NAGRADA

100.000.- NJEMAČKIH MARAKA

(U ZLATU)

Tko na ovoj slici desno prikazanog komunističkog poglavicu zvanog »TITO« izruči njemačkim oblastima živog ili mrtvog, dobit će nagradu od 100.000.- RM

(slovima: sto tisuća rajhsmaraka u zlatu)



Ona mu, bio on tko mu drago, zajamčuje svaku zaštitu.
Osim toga jamči mu njemačka oruzana sila život i slobodu.

Zločinac Tito je za Vašu zemlju nesreća. On kao boljševički agent hoće Vašu liepu zemlju milošću Moskve pretvoriti u sovjetsku republiku i uništiti u Hrvatskoj svaki narodni i posebnički samosvojni život.

MARBALU 607

Nazi wanted poster for Tito issued in July 1943

The murderers walk free

NO ONE now has any doubt about who it was that mobbed 18-year-old Stephen Lawrence at a south London bus-stop three years ago, shouted 'nigger' at him, plunged a ten-inch knife into his chest, and ran off exultant.

The Lawrence family are not alone in demanding justice. The very pavements of Eltham, that were awash with his heart's blood and the tears of his parents and friends, cry out for justice.

But there is no justice.

First of all, the police were culpably slow to move, and charges against two suspects, picked out at identity parades, were dropped by the Crown Prosecution Service on the ground of lack of evidence.

So the Lawrence family started their own inquiries. They went to see the Metropolitan Police Commissioner, who launched a second investigation. Unlike the first police effort, this was flawless — but unfortunately came a year too late.

The Crown Prosecution Service still refused to prosecute. So the Lawrences launched a private prosecution.

Last week, three years to the day after Stephen's murder, the case collapsed. The judge ruled that identification evidence from an eyewitness was inadmissible since it was not based on true recognition and was 'contradictory' and 'contaminated'.

To be sure, there was other evidence. Fibres taken from Stephen's hand were consistent with fibres taken from one defendant's jacket; a ten-inch knife, suspected of being the murder weapon, was found hidden under the bed of that defendant's girlfriend. But, since the case collapsed, this evidence wasn't put before the jury.

Nor was that all. There was yet other evidence which the jury didn't hear: video footage shot by a secret police camera in the Eltham flat of one of the defendants and presented at the committal hearing a year ago.

Filed during two weeks of December 1994, 20 months after Stephen's murder, it featured the three defendants as well as a fourth man who was originally charged but not committed for trial, and two others.

A FRIEND of one of the defendants is heard on this video saying that those who killed Stephen Lawrence must be 'laughing their nuts off'.

'They're doing that, mate', the defendant replies, adding: 'I reckon that every nigger should be chopped up, mate, and they should left with nothing but fucking stumps.'

As he utters these words the speaker is brandishing a large kitchen knife, waving it around, and stabbing the wall and the furniture with an overarm motion.

'Enoch Powell, mate, you are the greatest', he says. 'You are the don of dons. Get back into parliament and show those cock suckers what it's all about.'

Another of the men speaks as follows: 'If I was going to kill myself do you know what I'd do? I'd go and kill every black cunt, every Paki, every copper, every mug that I know.'

'I would go down to Catford... with two sub-machine guns and... I'd set on one of them, skin him alive, torture him and set him alight. I'd blow their two legs and arms off and say, "Go on, you can swim home now."'

Two of the men are heard shouting racist abuse at black entertainers on television, and at prominent black athletes appearing on the Sports Personality of the Year programme.

PERSONAL COLUMN

lives twisted by racism out of any recognisably human shape.

Reading it, we have to keep reminding ourselves that these tinpot sadists, whose thoughts and deeds are an affront to humanity, are members of our own species.

In a civilised society they would be locked up out of harm's way, like other dangerous beasts. In the sick society that has spawned and 'educated' them, they are free to roam the streets in search of victims — and fascist groups are free to egg them on and recruit them and put their talents to evil use.

It's good to know just what we're up against. For we must bear in mind that the defence of ethnic minorities is not a matter for those minorities alone, but is the responsibility of the entire labour movement.

Immediately after the murder of Stephen Lawrence, his mother commented publicly that ethnic cleansing had come to this country. That the family's herculean efforts to bring Stephen's killers to justice have not been successful is a tragedy.

But this must not be the end of the affair. The labour movement has to do what the CPS, the courts and the police cannot or will not do: make the streets unsafe for racist murderers, so that they never again dare raise their heads.

How press freedom was won

I WAS half-amazed, half-amused the other morning to hear Lord Wakeham, chairman of the Press Complaints Commission for the past year or so, tell Radio 4 listeners that freedom of the press in this country 'goes back to Magna Carta'.

If this is the kind of ahistorical myth they teach rich kids at Charterhouse, then the noble lord's ignoble parents — by which I simply mean that they weren't blue-blooded: their son was made a life peer in 1992 — were grossly overcharged in public school fees.

Far from being the bedrock of our liberties, Magna Carta was a document by means of which the 13th-century feudal lords put a check on the monarch's power in their own interests. For the rest of the population it had no practical significance at all.

Contrary to general belief, it did *not* initiate the jury system; Shakespeare's play *King John* is silent about it; it was discovered and made use of by 18th-century radicals who found it a handy rhetorical weapon in their struggle against corrupt and oppressive rulers.

As to its supposed connection with press freedom, two facts leap to mind. First, newspapers were unknown until some 450 years after Magna Carta was signed. Second, press freedom was won in the 19th, not the 13th, century — in a long and bitter struggle against governments bent on hampering dissident newspapers by slapping swinging taxes on them so that poor people couldn't afford them.

It was radicals like Richard Carlile (1790-1843) who won freedom of the press for us, by defiantly publishing 'unstamped' newspapers. For this crime Carlile spent a total of nine years and four months — almost a third of his adult life — in prison.

Not until 1855 and 1861 were the 'taxes on knowledge' — first the stamp duties on newspapers, then the customs and excise duties on paper — finally repealed.

Peter Fryer

WE RECOIL in disgust. But, however disgusting, this transcription does give us a rare and valuable glimpse into minds and

Massacre of landless workers in Brazil

From the United Socialist Workers' Party (PSTU) of Brazil

ONCE again a massacre of rural workers occurred in Brazil. Families of landless workers on the 18 April occupied a road in the province of Para.

Their objective was to pressurise the state government to comply with the agreements negotiated for the occupation of the land by these families. They were brutally attacked by the state military police.

More than 20 workers were literally mowed down with bullets. The leader was arrested, hit, dragged away by his hair and then executed. Already we have news of the execution of women and children and some have not been accounted for.

These events occurred in the presence of journalists who were reporting the conflict and they also were victims of the brutal repression.

This was no accident. The military police went in strongly armed with hand guns and machine guns and without any identification.

Workers demanding their rights were only armed with legitimate demands and their sticks and work tools. The response was deaths, arrests and

disappearances. This was no isolated event in Brazil. This year alone there have been more than 100 rural workers assassinated by the police in their struggles for land.

The judicial investigations into those responsible were opened but never concluded and no one has been charged. The case of the Corumbiara massacre is a terrible example of this.

The people responsible are the same people as those investigating. They are the official police acting under the orders of the civil governor and, in the case of those 'without land', INCRA (Institute for Colonisation and Agrarian Reform), dependent on the Ministry of Agriculture, along with the Brazil's President Cardoso, have been implicated.

Moreover, Para state is governed by the same political party as the president's party. The repression of the rural workers is the response of neo-liberalism to the just demand of workers to own the land they work.

The regime resorts to use of arms, persecution and imprisonment of the leaders of the movement and even assassination.

In the most recent case, Diolinda and other peasant leaders of the Pontal de Paranapanema in San Pablo were imprisoned.

These attacks are not only occurring in Brazil. In Latin America we have seen the assassination of comrade Neco Balbuena in Paraguay, the imprisonment of comrades Horacio Panario and Alcides Christensen in Argentina, the state violence in Bolivia, etc.

The hallmark of neo-liberal governments and the globalisation of the economy is the globalisation of violence and repression.

Strike

At the same time as this occurs, a strike of public workers in Brazil began in defence of wages and against the privatisation of public services. These workers and the landless workers have a common enemy in the government.

On the 19 April, demonstrations covering the whole country were organised demanding investigation into the repression, condemning those responsible

and denouncing Cardoso's government.

On 24 April, a 'National Day of Struggle and Mourning' was called throughout the country.

We consider that the struggles of landless workers and the public sector workers are part of the struggles of workers in the whole world against capitalism.

Please send your messages of support to: Movimento de los Trabajadores Rurales 'Sem Terra' (Brasil), repudiating the massacre and demanding an immediate investigation into the events and the sentencing of those responsible, even those in government.

Unity is strength.
International Secretariat of PSTU, International Secretariat International Workers League/Fourth International (LIT/CI)

Send statements of protest to: Fernando Henrique Cardoso — Presidente de Brasil. Fax: 00 55 11 61 226 7566.

If possible, please send copies to: International Socialist League, PO Box 9, Eccles SO, Eccles, Salford M30 7HL. Tel/fax: 0161-707 1584.

The name of the curse

BY ROSS COOPER

MARGOT Kidder — who played Lois Lane opposite Christopher Reeve in all four Superman movies in the 1970s and 1980s — is being cared for in the Olive View Medical Centre, Sylmar, California.

Psychiatrists want to know why the one-time \$100,000-a-week movie star ended up crouched under a suburban garden hedge, clad in rags, in a state of mental confusion.

Kidder, who had shaved her head and removed her dental plate in an effort at disguise, said she was hiding from a 'stalker' who had abducted her. Police decided it was all in her head.

'We don't believe she was a victim of a crime, we feel this is a case of mental distress', said Rick Young, a Glendale, Los Angeles, police officer.

Confused, sure. But whether or not what happened to her was a crime under the laws of California, Margot Kidder was a victim. Early success for the Canadian-born actress had given way to no-hope TV parts, flops, and the

solace of the bottle. 'Hollywood had known for a while about her painful decline into unemployment and poverty,' says Jonathan Freedland in the *Guardian*.

In 1990, while working on a TV series based on the Nancy Drew detective mysteries, Kidder damaged her spinal cord in a car acci-



Margot Kidder

dent. Confined to a wheelchair for two years she couldn't work.

'But a gap in her health-insurance coverage meant she had to pay her medical bills herself. The result was bankruptcy. . . .' ('Is Superman cursed?', *Guardian* review, 26 April).

Couldn't the big film compa-

nies with their billions help a fallen star who'd helped make their bucks? Couldn't friends in Hollywood have passed the hat round for a fellow-worker down on her luck?

Then you remember what an English actor said about Hollywood; so long as you're doing fine, you're not short of 'friends', but as soon as word spreads that your latest movie's not so hot, and your career has taken a dip, folk cross the road to avoid you.

So Margot Kidder walked New York's 47th Street diamond district selling her jewellery off, moved home down-market to a cramped one-bedroom flat, experienced poverty without the solidarity of the poor, and got frightened.

Someone who saw her hiding in the bushes in suburban Glendale warned her there were black widow spiders there.

'What I'm hiding from is a lot worse than black widow spiders', Margot replied.

Just as well she wasn't Hispanic, or black, by the way. Glendale is where cops were videoed recently battering a Mexican woman immigrant worker with

their clubs for no reason, and she wasn't even hiding behind the bushes.

Millions of people around the world know every day the fear that fed Margot Kidder's nightmare. One of the ways they hide from it is to fix on a screen, watching fantasy made in places like Hollywood.

Mild-mannered Clark Kent first donned his cape at the end of the 1930s depression, when over in Europe little men were strutting in uniforms, persuaded by deadlier 'Superman' legends.

Forty years later, the creators of the comic-book Superman, Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster, who had sold their teenage idea for peanuts, were found living in poverty. They'd been sacked by DC Comics years earlier when they asked for a rise. To quieten the bad publicity Warner Bros agreed to pay them a \$20,000 a year pension.

Is Superman cursed? The whole Dream Factory is. The name of the curse is capitalism. Margot Kidder is one more victim. There's no real Superman to save the world, we have to organise to do it ourselves.

Ill health for drivers, big profits for bus companies

BY ROY THOMAS

WHILE London Transport, the transport minister and private bus companies will tell the people of London that their services are so much better since they were privatised, those who use the bus are not so sure.

Fares have gone up by more than inflation every year and London bus and underground prices are now higher than in any other capital city in Europe.

But, when London Transport bus services were broken up and sold off two years ago, the government, who expected to get £154 million, managed to make £233 million. Merchant bankers BZW, the company that handled the sale, made £5 million, rather than the expected £2.8 million.

London General in south-west London was sold to its managers for £28 million. They say that as a result of their aggressive package of change which was supported by the union (TGWU), in the first seven months they made a profit

of £1,497,000 out of their 1,850 staff. Maybe the union support was responsible for the locally elected union leader being voted out last December and the two attempts to set up breakaway unions.

It was the big bus companies that bought most of the London bus network.

The massive multinational Stagecoach bought two — East London and South East London, for £52 million — and saw their profits leap by 43 per cent. But even that was not enough. Their attempt to increase drivers' working hours in south-east London by two and a half hours a week to 43 has already caused one 24-hour strike.

The Newcastle-based 'Go Ahead Northern' bought London Central and saw their profits increase by almost 300 per cent to £10.29 million. This company is now paying its drivers less than £4 an hour. MTL, the Liverpool-based bus company which bought London Northern for £20.55 million, last year boosted its profits

from £56 million to £74 million. In the words of MTL boss Peter Coombs: 'London Northern . . . is making a significant financial contribution to the Group.'

However, the pay and conditions are not seen in that way by those who live in north London. Because of the number of drivers leaving the job, MTL offered a one-off £1,000 to anyone with a PCV licence to go and work for them.

Cowie Group — which bought two London bus companies, Leaside in north London and South London for £54 million — also has trouble keeping its drivers because of longer hours and low pay. They seek to keep their staff by getting them to pay the company up to £1,000 toward the cost of their training if they leave within the first year.

Cowie, who also own Grey-Green bus company in north London, are now the biggest of the companies running in London. Their profits grew 54 per cent. Together with the profits (a bit flat last year) from their

Hughes DAF dealership, they had a turnover of over £1 billion in 1995. The earning per share rose by 19 per cent.

However, they have another problem. Gordon Hodgson, the £300,000 per year chief executive of the Cowie Group, is reported in the *Daily Mail* to have been served with a court summons by his former secretary alleging sexual harassment.

This drive for profits by both the new privately-owned bus companies and the government, is based on two things. Very large (many millions of pounds) secret payments of public funds to companies to run the bus service, admin and engineering staff and low wages and longer, unhealthy hours worked by drivers.

More than 10 per cent of drivers report that they suffer from health conditions that limit their work. And 36.7 per cent report that they suffer from problems with their back, neck, legs or feet. Nine per cent of transport workers report illness caused or made worse by work.

'Left' wins Italian election

The results of the Italian 21 April general election have been greeted with a chorus of approval, not only by the international financial markets — shares on the Milan stock exchange rose by 5 per cent — but by social democrats around Europe. NICK LEE reports



Prodi, leader of the centre-left 'Olive Tree' coalition that won the Italian election, a.k.a. 'Dr Privatisation'

the centre-left coalition, and Massimo D'Alema, the young 'modernising' leader of the PDS, draw wide sections of the working and middle classes into believing that something has changed.

Post-communism and New Labour

BUT what exactly are the forces which have come to office in Italy? The *Guardian* (23 April), in one of its rare moments of clarity, remarked: 'It is a historical irony that the "left" is now deemed to have won when it is no longer predominantly or coherently left-wing.'

As the financial markets indicate, international capital has confidence that Prodi and his allies will carry through the tasks begun by the 'governments of technocrats' — massive cuts in public spending and continued privatisation to reduce the public debt.

They are right. Lamberto Dini, the outgoing 'technocrat' prime minister whose task was to bring the public finances under control — that is decimate wages, pensions and public services — formed his own party and stood for election under the banner of the Olive Tree as did 'reconstructed' Christian Democrats of the Popular Party who got 9 per cent of the vote.

Dini may well get a key financial post in the Prodi government. The commitment to financial orthodoxy in order to get Italian finances in line with the requirements of the European Monetary System will be total.

The Prodi government will move rapidly to a huge wave of

dom Alliance for losing the election through too much emphasis on privatisation and the market.

The right vote did not collapse. Forza Italia polled 21 per cent, slightly more, in fact, than the PDS. Fini's national alliance increased its vote also but only from 13 to 15 per cent. However Fini is an astute politician and may well try, with Berlusconi a rapidly fading star, to bid for overall leadership of the right.

The right has 247 seats in the lower house, 77 fewer than the Olive Tree coalition. This means that Prodi has to pay attention to the important regionalist Northern League led by Umberto Bossi which has 59 seats.

The League started out as a petty-bourgeois dominated populist regional party demanding secession for the economically prosperous northern provinces. Bossi increased his votes to 10 per cent (from 8 per cent in 1994) but, as with Fini, not as much as he had hoped. Prodi will attempt to placate Bossi with some moves towards regional autonomy and federalism.

Rifondazione Comunista

BUT the grouping to watch most carefully, and the one which currently is the focus of most media attention, is undoubtedly Rifondazione Comunista (Communist Refoundation).

When the PCI, the party of Gramsci, Togliatti, Berlinguer and the 'historic compromise', finally turned itself into the social-democratic PDS, some of the most militant sections, led by Fausto Bertinotti and others walked out and 'refounded' the communist party.

Although frequently characterised as unreconstructed Stalinists, without the links to the USSR, Rifondazione has attracted other sections of militants including some thought of loosely as 'Trotskyists'.

Rifondazione increased its vote from 6 per cent in the 1994 elections to over 8 per cent. This gives it 35 seats in the Chamber of Deputies.

Prodi and the Olive Tree coalition need, in the short term at least, the parliamentary support of Rifondazione. The party is now debating its position. Its candidates campaigned as part of the Olive Tree coalition, even being prepared to engage in cross-voting where necessary.

Immediately after the elections Bertinotti and the leadership put forward the slogan 'neither in the government nor in opposition'. This was in fact the slogan of the PCI at the height of its strength in the 1970s when, unable to enter government, it was prepared to support 'progressive' Christian Democrat administrations.

What does this slogan mean in the current context? Help keep the Prodi coalition in power for the full five years of its term of office? As the Italian left newspaper *Il Manifesto* put it last week:

'Rifondazione Comunista has some hard thinking to do: how to keep alive the government without renouncing fundamentals and without losing visibility and becoming sucked into the parliamentary game.'

There will be some pressure from the Trotskyists to let go and return to the opposition, but above all the risk is that of association and contamination — five years is a long time.'

The party is committed to a programme which will bring it into direct confrontation with Prodi and D'Alema, namely, defence of pensions, restoration of index-linked wages, and opposition to the privatisation of strategic sectors such as energy and telecommunications.

How Rifondazione conducts itself in relation to the Prodi government may have important lessons for a new working-class party in Britain which found itself in a similar position in par-

privatisations — telecommunications, electricity and chemicals are among the prime candidates.

Prodi, a Bologna economist, was head of the state holding company IRI and supervised the privatisation of its subsidiaries, earning himself the title 'Doctor Privatisation'.

Meanwhile PDS leader Massimo D'Alema greeted his election victory with the announcement that now is the time to remove the hammer and sickle from the party logo, a last reminder of its previous incarnation as the PCI (Italian Communist Party).

The ruling class was all smiles and congratulations at this. In the words of the Italian left-of-centre newspaper *La Repubblica*: 'After the vote of 21 April the PDS is no longer a post-communist party but a democratic force of the modern Western European centre-left. . . . The decision of D'Alema to remove the hammer and sickle represents effectively this new reality, recognised and rewarded in advance by the electorate.'

The PDS under D'Alema is modelled increasingly on Blair's New Labour with the dropping of Clause Four and severing the trade union link. Despite their different origins, as Communist and Labour parties, the PDS and New Labour exemplify the obstacles confronting the working class throughout Europe in building new parties to express their interests.

The right falls out

THE forces of the right in Italy have by no means been decimated. The right is also a coalition — the Freedom Alliance — consisting of Forza Italia led by ex-prime minister and media magnate Silvio Berlusconi and the 'reformed' fascists of the National Alliance led by Gianfranco Fini.

Berlusconi is currently on trial for corruption himself and his personal arrogance led him to greet the election results with murmurings about forged votes.

Fini by contrast accepted the outcome with good grace and promised 'vigorous opposition' within the rules of the parliamentary game. Fini is biding his time, dubbing the Prodi coalition a 'Russian salad' and hoping it will fall apart.

The problem on the right however is the uneasy relation between Berlusconi's free market Thatcherite liberals and Fini's corporate state 'ex'-fascists who

City Lights

Charity and Mr Murdoch

LIKE me, I don't suppose you've ever regarded BSKyB, the operator of the Sky satellite TV channels, as a charity. It's not the sort of thing you immediately associate with the company's largest shareholder, Rupert Murdoch. Yet BSKyB is shamelessly exploiting a tax concession designed to help charities, and thereby pocketing £16m a year.

The entirely legal operation involves BSKyB forcing its TV subscribers to pay £2.50 a month for a magazine few of them want and many throw away unread and unopened.

This magazine is sent directly to the 3.17 million households subscribing to BSKyB's services. The company has persuaded the tax authorities that no VAT should be paid on this part of the subscription because newspapers and magazines are VAT-exempted. If it were paid the Customs and Excise would collect an extra £16.6mn a year.

But BSKyB subscribers have no choice but to pay and no possibility of a refund, since the £2.50 charged for the magazine is part of the deal for which they sign up.

Numerous complaints to the Office of Fair Trading have brought about no change.

The irony is that Murdoch is getting away with this tax avoidance under a rule aimed at helping charities such as the RSPCA to cut down on the VAT they must pay. The relevant rule says that if you send out a magazine as part of a subscription then the element absorbed by the cost of the magazine is zero-rated.

Rupert Murdoch's NewsCorp is notorious for its tax-avoidance schemes, such as registering parts of its empire in the tiny Cook Islands in the Pacific Ocean.

I wonder whether the Labour Party leader Tony Blair raised this sort of issue with Murdoch on his last visit down under? Or whether a future Labour government will put a stop to these sorts of practices? No, the questions were not intended to be serious.

Top of the league

WHAT is the world's top growth industry? Computers? Trade in drugs? The second answer would certainly be nearer the mark, but still wrong. No, the fastest growing activity throughout the world is laundering, not the laundering of clothes, but of dirty money.

Three years ago the United Nations estimated that some \$150bn of dirty money was circulating through the world economy. Two years later it was estimated that \$225bn was passing through London's financial markets every year, a figure that is now certainly out of date.

Around \$1bn a day is passed by electronic transfer through the global banking system, according to Eduardo Vetere, the head of the UN Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Division. At a conference held last week Vetere estimated that the total profits from organised crime throughout the world is now running at around \$1,000bn a year.

This money consists of many elements, of which the money from drugs and terrorism are perhaps only a small part. Tax evasion, fraud, extortion, proceeds from theft, counterfeiting (including goods, money and credit cards) are important elements in the total.

tioned by the state. In the case of Greece, for example, it has been estimated that some 50 per cent of all economic activities are unregulated, that is outside the employment and tax laws.

Pakistan actively discourages an inquiry by its financial institutions into the source of overseas deposits, and tax havens like the Seychelles are notorious for the deposit of ill-gotten gains.

Foreigners depositing more than \$10m in the Seychelles are given guarantees of immunity from prosecution or investigation about the source of the funds. Such depositors are also granted diplomatic status. And these measures were introduced as part of last December's 'Economic Development Act'.

But these countries are not the major centres for money laundering. For that you would have to look to cities like London.

In British law, money moved out of a country in breach of the exchange controls of that country is not deemed dirty. Only if it is the result of a crime recognised by English law is it regarded as such.

And because any UK regulations against exchange controls are no longer enforced, money arriving in London that has evaded exchange controls in, say, India is considered clean.

Yet the policing of money used for criminal purposes in Britain is notoriously lax. For the past two years it has been a requirement for anyone in 'financial services' to report any suspicious transactions that come to their attention.

Yet the reports from lawyers and accountants — well known as soft targets for dirty money looking to enter the legitimate banking system — are notoriously few. (A tip: the easiest way to turn dirty money into clean is to make a payment to a solicitor in dirty money for the purchase of a property and then cancel the deal; the money that is returned is then clean.)

Over these past two years, how many prosecutions have there been in this country for failure to put in place proper checks against the laundering of dirty money? Answer: not a single one.

Blair's latest fan

BLAIR's much publicised trip to the United States produced at least one new recruit to the Labour Party. It was George Soros, notorious for having forced sterling out of the European Exchange Rate Mechanism in September 1992, during which time Master Soros was reputed to have pocketed £1bn.

After hearing Blair address the Wall Street banking fraternity, Soros declared the Labour leader 'a very thinking person'. 'He is not an ideologue', declared Soros, 'but thinks things through.'

'I don't think a Labour government would influence or scare foreign investors' said this prominent speculator. 'Mr Blair made it very clear that it is a different generation. They are not going to revisit the controversies of the 1980s.'

Soros had a private hour-long audience with Blair after the meeting with the US banking elite. Blair it seems bent over backwards to assure his audience that Labour would set corporation and income taxes at levels that would not deter foreign investment.

The 'main elements' of the trade union 'reforms' of the 1980s would stay and all in all Britain under Labour 'would be a safe bet for the foreign investor', he informed his no doubt appreciative audience.

As they say, 'by their friends shall ye know them'.

The end of the nightmare

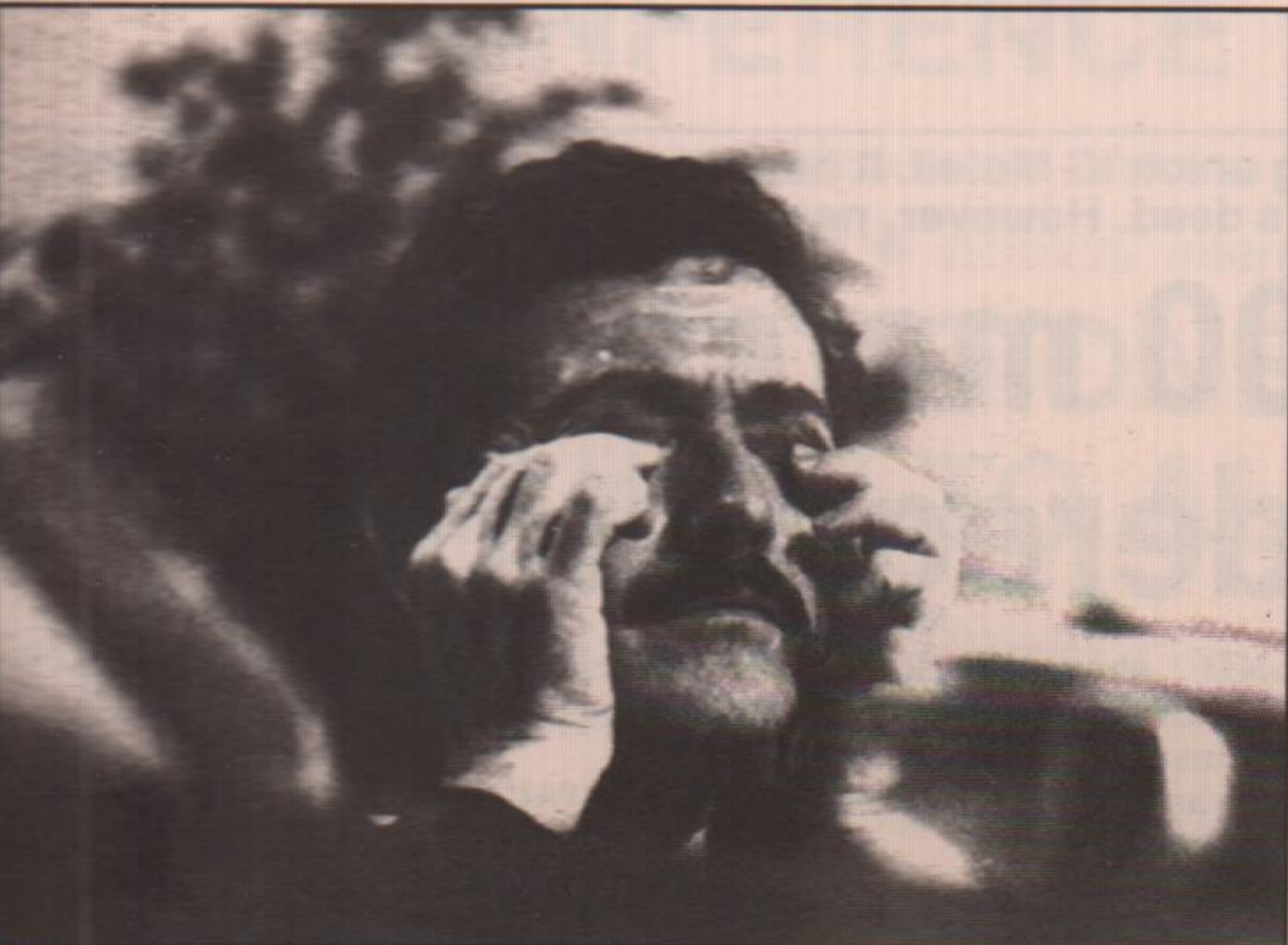
MUCH of last week was spent dancing in the streets and singing 'Bandiera Rossa'. There has indeed at last been a breaking of the log-jam.

After spending half a century outside government the victory of the centre-left 'Olive Tree' coalition with 20 per cent of the votes for the ex-Stalinist PDS (Democratic Left) and 45 per cent for the coalition as a whole, marks the completion of the transition from the corrupt, Christian Democrat-dominated, CIA-backed regime of 'blocked democracy' that ruled Italy during the Cold War years.

The transition has taken four years: the corruption scandals of 1992 which brought down the ruling Christian Democrats and their Socialist allies were followed by a thinly disguised recycling of old guard politicians interspersed with governments of 'technocrats' led by 'non-political' financiers. Now, with a reformed electoral system, the left has acceded to the 'levers of power'.

There will be similar euphoria and dancing in the streets on the election of the next Labour government led by Tony Blair. The sigh of relief at having got rid of the Tories — who, steeped in sleaze, highly-paid jobs for 'friends of friends' in privatised utilities and quangos, increasingly resemble the old Christian Democrat regime in Italy.

For a short time, Blair's new team of younger, competent-looking faces will, like the affable Professor Prodi, leader of



Massimo D'Alema, leader of Italy's Communist Party (PDS) which came out of the Communist Party

NATO watches as mobs attack Muslims

BOSNIAN refugees trying to return to their homes, or visit family graves, have been attacked by organised and armed Serb racist mobs, while NATO troops and helicopters looked on.

NATO 'peace' Implementation Force (IFOR) troops have had orders to stop families trying to cross the frontline without Serb authorities' permission.

At least two Muslims were shot dead, and others injured, when they tried to visit family graves in Serb-held territory near Sjenina, west of Tuzla. Some people were chased into a minefield. NATO said seven dead or injured had been evacuated.

A NATO commander in Dobož said the Muslims had been stopped at an IFOR checkpoint, but tried to find a way around it.

Outside Trnovo, ten miles south of Sarajevo, 15 people needed hospital treatment after their buses were stoned by a racist mob.

Local Bosnian Serbs tried to stop the attackers, who were armed with clubs and shovels. But French troops with tanks, who were supposed to be escorting the buses, made no attempt to interfere.

On Sunday, 28 April, at the start of the Muslim festival Korban Bayram, carloads of Muslim families, trying to visit their homes with sheep to be slaughtered for the festival, were held up at an American roadblock, at

BY CHARLIE POTTINS

Memici east of Tuzla, on orders from NATO commanders.

'They promised us freedom of movement in a free Bosnia, but look at this. This is not what we were promised,' said Kasen Omerovic, one of the drivers. They set up their own roadblock and said they would stop IFOR traffic. 'If we are not allowed to go home, we will go back to war,' vowed Kasen Omerovic.

At Jelah, west of Tuzla, Polish troops turned back 150 people. At Dobož, Muslims and Croats were allowed to visit family graves, watched over by Nordic IFOR troops, while a Serb crowd yelled threats.

Protested

In Sarajevo, following the Trnovo attack on Monday, returning Muslims protested outside UN representative Carl Bildt's office.

The racist mobs are obviously organised by Radovan Karadzic's Serb nationalist leadership. Having carved out its little fascist

statelet by war and 'ethnic cleansing', it is determined to stop the slightest move towards the re-unification of Bosnia.

Reporting an incident at Otoka, northwestern Bosnia, Reuters said: 'A crowd of some 400 Serbs, who were ferried in by bus, waved Serb flags and threw stones at some 200 Muslim civilians who wanted to see the homes they fled earlier in the war.'

'Serb policemen led by the hardline nationalist police chief from nearby Prijedor, Simo Drljaca, also participated in the action, which appeared well-organised.'

NATO soldiers fired warning shots and moved in armoured personnel carriers at Otoka.

'The legitimate movement of people back to their homes across the boundary between opposing entities is becoming more of a security problem,' NATO spokesman Major Simon Haselock said.

The UN refugee agency warned of confrontations unless displaced people were allowed to at least visit their prewar homes. But after consulting diplomats

and UN officials, IFOR warned that visits or demonstrations not authorised by 'local civil authorities' had the potential to degenerate into civil disorder.

Thus NATO gave the Serb nationalists the right to stop travel, or mobilise the hostile mobs. And when armed mobs are bussed some distance, is it a coincidence that they arrive at the right time and place to intercept their 'escorted' targets?

More than 15,000 Bosnians demonstrated across the frontline from Brcko recently, demanding the right to return home. 'Brcko is the town of all its citizens, regardless of faith or nationality,' said Sabrija Slomic, one of the organisers.

A couple of weeks earlier Muslims trying to visit their homes were attacked. Before the war, Brcko, a river port on the Sava border with Croatia, was 70 per cent Muslim. The Dayton agreement left the area's status to be negotiated.

Serb Chetniks who 'ethnically cleansed' it, carrying out some of the worst atrocities of the war,

are moving Serb refugees into Muslim homes to forestall the Muslims' return.

War criminal Radovan Karadzic and his gang remain firmly in control of their so-called Republika Srpska.

Return

'The hardliners' return to the fore has stalled an attempt by relative moderates based in the northern city of Banja Luka to wrest power from Pale, the Bosnian Serb village "capital", near Sarajevo,' says Reuters. 'We've seen a re-emergence of the leadership team from the start of the war in 1992,' a Western diplomat told the agency.

Velibor Ostojic, believed to have led the brutal expulsion of Muslims from Foca in 1992, recently became a 'deputy prime minister'.

'Karadzic, once a psychiatrist in Sarajevo, is using Orwellian tactics to raise Serb nationalist bigotry to new heights,' according to an article in the *Globe and Mail* of Canada.

'Srpska's "information police"

are out in force. Clad in purple uniforms, they snatch NATO's *Peace Herald* newspaper, which talks of multi-ethnicity and laying down of arms, from the hands of curious citizens.'

International workers in Bosnia 'fear that a fascist state will thrive in the "Republic of Srpska".'

'Diplomats admit things are moving in the wrong direction,' the Toronto paper said; NATO officers feared pressure to go after Karadzic and Serb commander General Mladic, both indicted for genocide.

Surprise! Surprise! — fascists behave like fascists! As Workers Press has reported, while the US and British-led 'implementation force' has steadfastly refused to touch the war criminals, the criminals organised their forces to terrorise opponents.

Promises of re-unification and the right of return, held out to secure Bosnian acceptance of the Dayton agreement, are a dead letter. What remains is NATO's 'implementation' — or occupation — force, policing the frontline for fascist 'ethnic cleansing'.

Dismantling the German 'social state'

BY BOB ARCHER

scrapped. But the SPD and union leaders are in a poor state to fight the government plan.

They are so steeped in 'social partnership' that they have been for many months paralysed by fear while ruling class circles debated the need to inflict huge attacks on the working class.

Dieter Schulte, chair of the powerful DGB union congress, stuttered that 'Helmut Kohl has lost his social sensitivity' after a meeting with the chancellor.

Union leaders are bewildered and disarmed by the end of consensus. The SPD has been trying to square the circle, mediate between the needs of capital and the refusal of the working class to give up jobs and living standards.

This has led to bizarre policy vacillations and disastrous election results. Leading SPD politicians, who have a majority in the Bundesrat — the upper chamber of parliament — have threatened to block the government's plans.

The media campaign in support of government cuts has been powerful and sustained. Two weeks ago an editorial in the mass circulation *Stern* magazine called on SPD leaders to show real leadership and help impose cuts.

'News' items have talked up the cost of the national sick pay arrangements and flayed the pension system for masking unemployment by taking redundant workers into early retirement.

Former SPD leader Helmut Schmidt demanded a turn to regressive taxation to help industry to compete internationally. Union leaders in the textile, chemical, and recently the media industries, persuaded workers to accept a 2 per cent wage increase on the 'expectation' that employers would create more jobs.

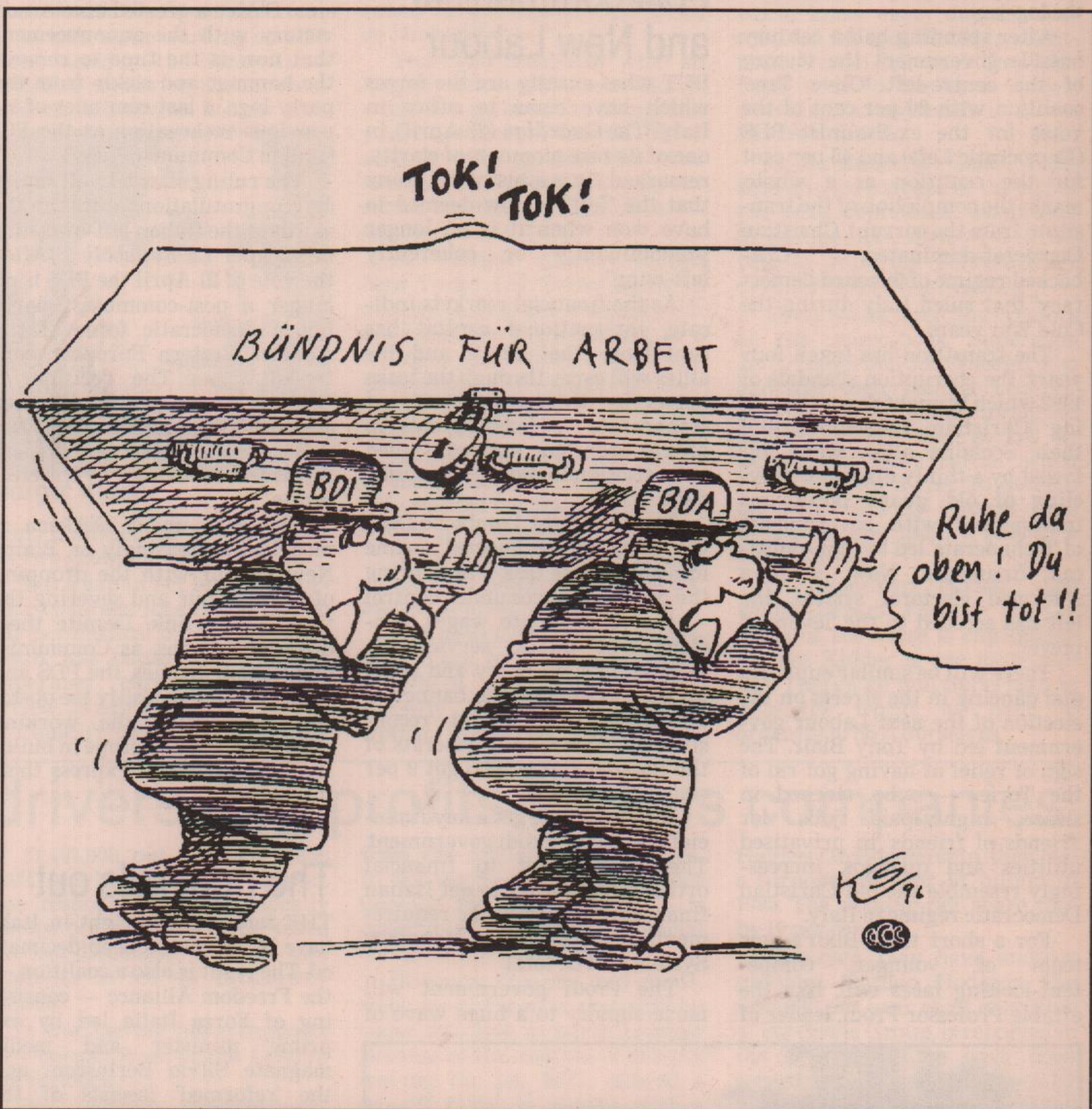
A central aim of this 'Alliance for Jobs' was to preserve the 'social state' intact. As Schulte of the DGB said: 'The unions are ready to participate in the reform of the social security system. But we also need social justice.'

But capital's crisis is expressed too severely in Germany to allow any such fig-leaf. The attempt to absorb former east Germany into a thriving market economy has cost spectacular amounts of money to no avail.

Big convulsions are underway in Germany. Immediately the grip of reactionary political structures and old illusions on the working class will cause confusion and even allow partial defeats.

At the same time the resistance of the working class has forced the leaders into half-hearted opposition and this in turn opens up new possibilities of working-class struggle.

The path from class-collaboration to conscious class struggle will be difficult and painful. But everybody should know: the journey has started.



Cartoon from the engineering union IG Metall. It has employers' associations telling the 'Alliance for Jobs' that it's dead. However, news of its death are not exaggerated!

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Time runs out for Vulkan 50,000 march against deregulation

ON THE eve of May Day, financial support ran out for the threatened Vulkan shipbuilding group based on Germany's North Sea coast.

Receivers are expected to declare the Bremer Vulkan yard in Bremen and the Schichan Seebeck yard in Bremer Haven bankrupt.

Some profitable parts of the operation will stay in business. There will be a massive reduction in jobs.

FIFTY THOUSAND shop workers marched through Bonn on Sunday 28 April to protest against an extension of the legally enforced shop opening times and against government cuts.

Margaret Mönig-Raane, of the Retail Banking and Insurance Union, attacked

'free market politicians' for 'not putting ordinary citizens first but big money'.

Conservative politician Peter Hinze accused the union of standing in the way of progress towards the 'service economy' which he maintained would bring more jobs.