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Blair victory promises a 'constructive' role for Britain in the European Union

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LABOUR PARTY leader Tony Blair widely expected to win a decisive victory in the British general election on 1 May. He has set out his agenda for change in the European Union. Writing in *The European*, he says a new Labour government would be 'constructive partner, not mindless negotiator' on Europe.

Blair pledges: "I would not be willing to sacrifice Britain's economic future and status in the world by leaving the EU and entering a permanent isolationism." The story of the handling of the British beef crisis by John Major's government is one of "incompetence, hollow argument and unending failure," he declares.

Europe's capitals hope that the departure of the Conservatives as prime minister will draw a fine under the sorry saga of Britain's squabbles with its European partners. But their hope is tempered by the fact that Labour took a very Europeanistic tack during the campaign.

Blair, 43, cast doubt on meeting the 1999 deadline for monetary union, and repeats that there are "formidable obstacles to Britain joining in the first wave." He also warns other national governments: "There is a good deal of

OPINION

Victor Smart Political Editor

Under the aegis and direction of integration in many continental countries, not just Britain.

"We want a Europe where national identities are not submerged and where countries co-operate together, not a giant unmanageable superstate run from the centre. There was a desire for a superstate, we would stop it in its tracks."

During the campaign over the most strident Conservative attacks on Europe struck a chord with the European mood of the public: even so in the end the issue failed to swing sufficient voters back to the Tories.

Labour is clearly determined to show that it is in concert about winning a fresh start with Europe. The first emblematic victory will occur in Brussels as early as 5 May with an upgrade to the British rep-

resentation at the routine inter-governmental conference meeting.

For the first time a minister will be sent from London, most probably Roger Quin, the favourite to take the European Affairs brief. She would have the opportunity of opening a new dialogue with her integrating counterparts.

Once in office, Labour looks certain to drop reservations about British joining on a simultaneous 23 May. The Dutch EU presidency decided to prepare the ground for a treaty agreement at the Amstelveen summit last week here.

In what looked like an effort to facilitate Blair's taking over the negotiations, the Netherlands switched the location of the summit from the politically sensitive city of Maastricht. The date is still subject to review because of the French elections two days later.

Dutch Foreign Minister Hans van Mierlo said in Luxembourg: "If we do hold the summit at all, it will be a very informal one. For organizational reasons it will hold it in

Maasricht but in Noordwijk." With the prospect of a Conservative defeat, Blair is preparing to bid Europe's 18 years of European Tory rule in favour of a young and energetic team.

During more than a decade under the ruling prime minister Margaret Thatcher, the right-wing government of the 1980s drove through radical economic reforms, including privatisation and labour market flexibility.

The revamped Labour Party, which has used the pop song "Things Can Only Get Better" as its campaign anthem, now subscribes to most of that Thatcherite legacy.

Additional reporting by Fionn Buanaduna in Luxembourg

Indebted. Blair is promising to take the crusade for loosening up the labour market to the rest of Europe. In France, itself in the throes of a bitterly fought parliamentary campaign, the most glowing tribute to Blair's remarkable transformation of his party's fortunes have come, ironically, from the right-wing Gaullists. They want the French socialists to make a similar ideological leap to cope with the new economic realities.

All this suggests a sticky prospect for Blair at the meeting of socialist leaders in Malmo, Sweden, on 5 June.

DISAFFECTED French National Assembly speaker Philippe Seguin emerged this week as the lone member in Prime Minister Jean Juppe's ranks who could support President Jacques Chirac's election plan.

Seguin, who spearheaded the campaign against the Maastricht treaty in the 1992 referendum, has a strong presence following in Chirac's RPR party, and is the first senior government figure to launch an attack on the drive towards the euro, broadly supported by both major parties.

Fumetury sources said Seguin had opposed Chirac's decision to dissolve parliament early and warn of a liberal logic which serves

EUROPEAN PRICES

	100	100	100
Belgium	60	100	100
Denmark	22	100	100
France	10	100	100
Germany	10	100	100
Greece	110	100	100
Ireland	10	100	100
Italy	100	100	100
Netherlands	10	100	100
Portugal	10	100	100
Spain	10	100	100
UK	10	100	100

ASKOLD KRUSHELNYCKY

IRAN'S sparring shot on hit squad row

PREMIER Romano Prodi's tortured relationship with the neo-Maxist Communist Refoundation party has twisted this week local elections in more than 1,000 Italian towns and cities.

Juppe's attempt to rally the party to persuade sceptical voters that his government, if re-elected, would impose even more austerity in order to meet targets for monetary union.

The last unemployment figures to be released before the election appear to show a slight dip, giving a boost to the government's unemployment tally of 480 to 4,087,500 in March, still

CHRIS ENDAN

ROME

overall majority. The embattled premier is under local and international pressure to set up a new cabinet.

They announced they were sending ministerial files to him and that the member states would continue to meet visas to security functions and the EU's intelligence personnel.

But despite intense lobbying for the virtual abolition of visas, the foreign ministers agreed to return their ambassadors to Tehran and agreed to a relatively mild package of sanctions de-

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Belgium	60	100	100
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IRAN'S sparring shot on hit squad row

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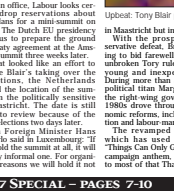
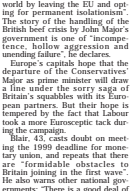
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take the lead on Internet porn

By Sandra Smith

THE European Union is set to legislate against pornography, paedophilia and racist material on the Internet. On 24 April MEPs called for European and international action to prosecute criminals who misuse the Internet to entertain and cybersex monitoring the Net to international agreements on companies which are Internet service providers.

It is hoped that a ministerial conference on child pornography will be held on 6-8 July in Berlin, which will be followed by a meeting of the Internet group to tackle Internet. The report grew out of the Internet group which has highlighted the ease with which vulnerable people can access thousands of pornographic sites. MEPs acknowledge difficulties of policing a global network with an estimated 50 million users, while preserving the right to freedom of expression on the individual's right to free speech and privacy.

The MEPs also called on Germany and France to attempt to regulate the self-regulatory and self-censorship measures by the Authorities in France and Germany. MEPs also urged governments to take action on companies which are Internet service providers.

Karthein-Moewes is chief officer of the Internet group. He heads a team of five MEPs which has investigated 110 cases of child pornography worldwide in 1996. They operate a like normal Internet users. But MEPs say they lose

it is not sure how effective cyber-police can be. He said: "If illegal acts are mentioned or shown and read good exists, it is necessary to intervene. But it would not be confident about stopping it on a national or a European level. Pictures may come from Tokyo or Sydney and there is no way to stop this." He also said that the MEPs will be asking the professionals to agree on a code of good behaviour. MEPs called on the Commission to propose a common framework for self-regulation.

In February, the European Affairs Commissioner Martin Bangemann said he felt it was necessary to introduce binding measures on service providers, with penalties. MEPs agreed that such provisions should be in the form of a declaration on the Internet to participation in

German authorities in April adopted this approach by charging the managing director of CompuServe with providing access to pornographic material on the Internet. It should be a test case. That would be treated like telecom monitoring. But it has not been prosecuted when criminals use their computers.

Pradier forwards making users of the Internet. He said that software devices to filter out obscene material. MEPs explained that it will be necessary to introduce binding measures on service providers, with penalties. MEPs agreed that such provisions should be in the form of a declaration on the Internet to participation in

Secular arm of Islamic forces starts split

By Christopher de Bellique ANKARA and Roman Rollick

TURKEY'S Islamic-led coalition government looked closer to collapse as the country's staunchly secular military stepped up pressure on Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan.

Police arrested a crack-down Islamic fundamentalist after the military led a bid to force Erbakan to resign. On 26 April he signed a resignation letter to the President, but declined to implement it, saying he would continue to lead the government. He said he would continue to lead the government. He said he would continue to lead the government.

The authorities closed more than 20 buildings used for religious lessons and brought charges against the Karamollah Islamic act for challenging the secularist constitution.

Erbakan and Erbakan are clamping to power. He has faced the army demands for carbs but stands by his faith. He has faced the army demands for carbs but stands by his faith. He has faced the army demands for carbs but stands by his faith.

Nato applies brake to Kraimer

By Ian Mathew NATO SECRETARY GENERAL

DIplomats Secretary General Javier Solana is about to announce that NATO will not accept a request from Ukraine to join the alliance. Solana said that NATO will not accept a request from Ukraine to join the alliance. Solana said that NATO will not accept a request from Ukraine to join the alliance.

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Koizumi's reform hits Irish discord

By Tony Paterson BERLIN

IRELAND hosts the biggest live music show in the world on 5 May but with decidedly mixed feelings. The annual *James Joyce in Dublin* festival is expected to attract 25,000 people as 25 countries compete for an almost permanent home in Ireland.

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Apology from the BBC

THE British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) has issued an apology to John Sweeney, the former leader of the British Labour Party, for a report in the *Morning Star* newspaper.

The report, which was published in the *Morning Star* newspaper, accused Sweeney of being a "right-wing" and a "pro-Israeli". Sweeney said that he was "shocked" by the report and that he had "never" been a "right-wing" or a "pro-Israeli".

Iran insists on having the last word

By Tony Paterson BERLIN

IRAN insists on having the last word in the row over the Islamic Republic's nuclear programme. The Islamic Republic has insisted on having the last word in the row over the Islamic Republic's nuclear programme.

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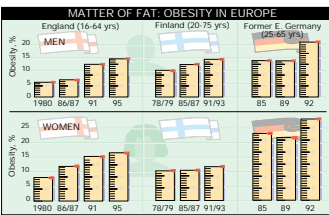
Obesity alert as European piles on the weight

Throwing out dictatorship of the diet



Experts warn of crisis levels, reports Tessa Thomas in DEIDESHEIM

THE number of overweight people in Europe has reached a record high. In many countries, one in three adults weighs too much. Eastern Europe, Germany, Britain and the Benelux nations are worst affected, with obesity having doubled there over the past decade. By contrast, the countries with the fewest obesity sufferers are Finland, Norway and France. "Obesity is now the most important chronic disease in Europe. It has reached crisis levels," Professor Hans Hauner told 200 family doctors and specialists at an international meeting in Dordrecht, Germany. The increase would not be a problem if obesity were merely a cosmetic issue, he said. "But it leads to a whole range of other disorders, including diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, osteoarthritis, sleep disorders and some cancers." Experts said that lack of education and money were causes contributing to obesity, which was a particular problem in lower socio-economic classes. This at least partially explained why the problem was more pronounced in poorer countries, simple over-indulgence as well as sedentary lifestyles contributed to the problem. Treating these conditions is putting a huge strain on health services in Europe. In the Netherlands alone, the cost of medical care for overweight patients is put at more than \$500 million a year, said Dr Jans Seidell, an epidemiologist at the National Institute of Public Health and the Environment in Bilthoven



and editor of the *European Journal of Clinical Nutrition*. A study of civil servants in Rotterdam showed that obese people were twice as likely to take long-term sick leave. Musculo-skeletal problems were common. Backache, the most common reason for taking time off work in Europe, is frequently caused by excess weight. Overweight people are also more likely to take sick leave for psychological problems. An increasing number of European insurance firms

are charging higher premiums for obese clients, as they are likely to be smokers. Yet governments in Europe are ignoring the issue. "We need to convince governments that they could cut their health costs greatly by reducing the number of overweight people," said Seidell, who next month meets other members of the International Obesity Task Force at the World Health Organisation in Geneva to prepare a document to be signed by all European governments committing themselves to take action.

But will governments spend money on it? They are not likely to in eastern Europe, where the problem is worst. "There are almost twice as many obese adults in the Czech Republic and Russia as in France and Spain. It is unusual to be of normal weight in eastern Europe, especially among women," said Professor Philip James, co-chairman of the conference and director of the UK Rowett Research Institute, Europe's

largest institute of nutritional science. The problem is exacerbated by high levels of smoking and drinking. Although smoking does not make you fat, it encourages the body to deposit fat around the middle as alcohol is metabolised, a fat that increases the risk of heart disease and stroke. But how do you know if you are overweight? "Waist size, rather than height-weight ratio, is now recognised as the critical factor," said Prof James. "A person's waist measurement alone indicates their risk of developing diabetes, high blood pressure and high cholesterol a waist of 94cm and above more than doubles the risk - 100cm and over it multiplies by five."

The problem for most patients, says Professor Stefan Rossner, president of the Swedish Society for the Study of Obesity, is keeping the weight of once they have lost it. "But complications are common after surgery for weight loss," said Professor Alberto de Leiva of the University of Barcelona. He welcomed the arrival of a new anti-obesity pill which has had dramatic trial results. Sibutramine, developed by German pharmaceuticals company Knoll, influences the new systems in the brain that control safety (how full one feels) and metabolism (the rate at which the body burns food). "It's a big breakthrough,"

said Professor Arne Astrup, professor of human nutrition at the Agricultural University of Denmark and secretary of the International Association for the Study of Obesity. "But drugs cannot be the answer to an epidemic. Prevention is the only answer. We need to have a more active lifestyle."

OBESITY across Europe may be a source of despair for the fat dieters, but diets are an easy source of misery for overweight people themselves. BombarDED by the media message that thin is beautiful, millions of women - and men - battle their bodies in the attempt to lose weight. The diet industry is flourishing but its success is rarely reflected in the experience of the dieters themselves. Finally, frustrated by a world which tells them to slim, fat people are beginning to speak out and demand to be accepted for what they are rather than what they weigh.

The result is International No Diet Day, scheduled for 6 May, when groups across the world will call for diets to be dropped. In Germany the Federal Congress for Fat People is campaigning fiercely for an end to prejudice. At its meeting in Hamburg in March, the group called for 120 kilogram Chancellor Helmut Kohl to support them and "strike a blow against the dictatorship of the diet."

According to Wolrab, the real necessity is re-educating people to accept a different image of beauty. She said: "When all you see is images of women such as Kate Moss, then you believe that this is beautiful, but those women are the exception. "People should accept their own bodies and not feel ashamed. The government should make sure that people are treated equally, and if people were exposed to that image of beauty they would soon get used to it."

Fat people are fighting back with a big-is-beautiful message, writes Cathy Savage

From the growing evidence that diets simply don't work, research suggests that the vast majority of dieters regain the weight they have lost very quickly and often end up even heavier than they started out. Wolrab said: "Thin people say fat people should just use their willpower and diet, but over 70 per cent of obesity is genetic, and that can't be cured."

Anti-diet does not mean anti-health, and the Federal Congress for Fat People, like other international fat groups, advocates a healthy lifestyle for the overweight. Exercise and good nutrition are encouraged but the emphasis is on being in harmony with your body rather than fighting it to achieve an impossible thinness.

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Fat proves enemy in the workplace

FAT (pictured, magnified, left) is the enemy when it comes to under-performing at work, say experts. Apart from fitness, overweight people are also more likely to take sick leave for depression and anxiety-related disorders. "Losing five to ten per cent of body weight can increase mobility and decrease blood pressure enough to improve the quality of life," said Professor Stefan Rossner, president of the Swedish Society for the Study of Obesity.

France Telecom. Let's be beautiful, the world will come.

France Telecom

The former French colony annulled its last elections. Now it is holding fresh ones, but at great human cost

There are not classrooms for terrorists in exile

A leader of the party which won - but was denied - power in the aborted elections talks to Julie Reed in BRUSSELS

ABDELKRIM Ouldadda, spokesman for Algeria's outlawed Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), is dubious over its campaign of "disinformation" by which he says his organisation has been discredited over the past six years.

This intense, bearded doctor has lived in his adopted Belgium as a political refugee since 1993. But he swears that Europeans still feel wary about meeting him. All the more reason for him to keep relating the message that were the FIS to take power, Algeria would not become the theocratic Islamic state that is the stuff of western nightmares.

Ouldadda, 41, denies that this is merely propaganda, but before June general elections, from which the FIS banned, and which the US helped its supporters to boycott. He also rejects the idea that the line has changed. "Too many false statements have been attributed to FIS," he says, yet the organisation has fearfully uttered a word.

"We want a civil state with a president who is democratically elected president and government and a separate legislature," he said. "But obviously the state would be within an Islamic framework. The election's descent into civil war began in the wake of the 1992 elections in June 1990 when FIS was the dominant force in 52 out of 48 constituencies. According to Ouldadda, the one-party National



Victim of hate: a woman carries a child injured when fundamentalists massacred 93 villagers south of Algiers on 22 April

with the Islamists on an end to violence and a return to democracy. It was ignored by the government of President Liamine Zéroual. According to the doctor his expulsion was just another attempt by the Algerian government to discredit the FIS. If it was worked, the Spanish authorities told Ouldadda they were sorry but they had made one under strong pressure from the Algerian government to depart him.

His meeting coincided with the European Union referendum conference in Malta. "I believe that the Algerian minister told Spain in no uncertain terms to kick me out. I imagine how worried the government were not to be invited to a peace conference."

Ouldadda suffered from bad publicity two weeks ago when he was expelled from Spain after participating with Algerian opposition parties known as the "Rome platform", in a peace conference.

The Rome designation results from a meeting at the San Egidio convent in 1995 which produced a declaration calling for negotiations

with the Islamists on an end to violence and a return to democracy. It was ignored by the government of President Liamine Zéroual. According to the doctor his expulsion was just another attempt by the Algerian government to discredit the FIS. If it was worked, the Spanish authorities told Ouldadda they were sorry but they had made one under strong pressure from the Algerian government to depart him.

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Abdelkrim Ouldadda: "The Ouldaddas have nothing to do with the FIS"

Smart terrorists 'hiding out in Spain'

Giles Tremlett in MADRID reports on an attempt to smash clandestine cells

ARMED Algerian Islamists are using Spain as a base from which to organise terrorist operations in France and other European countries. Police sources say that members of the Armed Islamic Group (GIA) are setting up bases in the eastern regions of Valencia and Murcia to police operation against the groups, which has been dubbed "Operation Africa", resulted from arrest of eleven GIA members in central Valencia.

Three other GIA members were arrested in the south-west last December. In Barcelona four members of a suspected separate cell were arrested on 25 April.

Police sources in Valencia say that the operation is just the start of a crackdown on suspected Algerian Islamist fundamentalist groups in the region.

"It is a first step against the Islamist groups that organise their

armed Basque separatist group ETA, which carries out attacks in Spain but has its logistical and support bases in France."

The GIA members operate the same way as ETA but in the opposite direction, a police spokesman in Valencia said. "They are using Spain as a network from which to carry out attacks in France and Algeria, a police spokesman said.

The eleven GIA members arrested in Valencia last month belonged to a support unit that was mainly devoted to preparing the airport for the arrival of GIA members across the border from France.

The group also reportedly acted as a contact network between members in France and the organisation's main base in Algeria. "Newspapers said the police said that the GIA had funded its cell in Valencia by selling drugs. Drug-dealing is an easy way to

earn money and anybody whose lack of scruples allows them to carry out terrorist attacks is not going to have any problem about selling drugs," Cotino said.

Police who raided four apartments in Valencia also found arms and GIA literature.

The direct ferry connection between Alicante and the Algerian city was closed because this region is also the principal point of contact between the two countries and a gateway for GIA members and resources.

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THE massacre which began around Algiers on 3 April has killed the civil cost which has racked Algeria since 1992 to a new level of horror. On 25 April a plane, 25km south of Algiers, 93 people, including women and children, were murdered: the highest toll in a single incident in five years.

The electoral set up by President Liamine Zéroual to contest the forthcoming constitutional referendum (RND) clearly does not benefit from the instability of a month or so before.

Recent unofficial polls indicate that although the RND would win the election the combined opposition parties would garner a majority of the votes. The RND is expected to win around 30-35 per cent of the vote. There are then the two major parties, the Front de libération algérienne (FLA) and the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS). The FLA is expected to win around 30-35 per cent of the vote. There are then the two major parties, the Front de libération algérienne (FLA) and the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS). The FLA is expected to win around 30-35 per cent of the vote.

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Operation Africa: material seized by Valencia police from GIA houses

activities in Spain," said Spain's Secretary of State, Ricardo Mari Paz, in French. Cotino said that the operation follows a promise by Spanish Interior Minister Javier Moragas to launch a conference with the Islamists who live in the countries of central and eastern Europe. Speakers will include experts and politicians who will focus on aspects of cultural communication such as the role of the media, national minorities, religious and immigrants, unemployment and cross border co-operation.

The 4-day study trips are another way for students to get to know different cultures and will be organised by

A 'Neighbourhood Europe' scheme launched by Aegae, the European students' association, aims to improve relations and communications between reform communist countries and the West

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the Council of Europe's 46 member states, and will be conducted in 1998. It will have most striking effect in the Balkans, the Baltic states. Another will look at the role of the media in the Balkans, the Baltic states. Another will look at the role of the media in the Balkans, the Baltic states.

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Police chief battles to contain anarchy

WHEN the time comes for awards to be given out, Rajan Jhij will be high on the list of candidates. The former banker's clerk has agreed to become Shkoder's fourth police commissioner in less than a month. He takes charge.

The original commissioner fled town in March as hand-to-hand negotiations with the police station. His successor resigned after threats from local wardens. The third bowed out when a grenade exploded beneath his window, killing a guard.

Not that police commissioner number four looks like he has any old sign of rank in a crumpled police cap. "We're still waiting for new uniforms," he says.

The hand-to-hand signs you dress like us. In Shkoder you can tell the difference between a policeman and a criminal.

Authority comes from a fleet of armoured personnel carriers parked permanently outside the police station - testimony to the 150 heavily armed special ops men who help Jhij fight the nerves.

The new police commissioner is a symbol of the Albanian national unity government's determination to

fill the vacuum of law and order that has marked its cities hostage to vigilantes, large Albanian criminals for nearly two months.

By going back on the streets of Shkoder, the justice Minister Spartak Ngjira is confident that the state - to use Swiss sociologist Max Weber's definition - will regain its monopoly over legitimate violence.

Before Shkoder, the special troops had "cracked" a population of 100,000. Justice Minister Spartak Ngjira is confident that the state - to use Swiss sociologist Max Weber's definition - will regain its monopoly over legitimate violence.

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There is a power vacuum at Albania's heart, writes Chris Vanden in SKHODER

tion will change in the north," says Ngjira confidently, seated in front of a large Albanian national flag in his Tirana office.

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escaped from the local jail bars. In their criminal records at the law courts, and then set fire to the building itself - wrecking recent restoration work worth \$100,000.

"The power of the criminal is stronger than that of the military prosecutor Nikëllaj, who star his own office with light fittings, sinks and skirting boards.

Suddenly, an arc of tracer fire slices the dusk, fired by one of the thousands of weapons stashed from Shkoder's military depot, the largest in northern Albania.

In the absence of law, this city has returned to police itself. Until special troops arrived, inhabitants had erected makeshift barricades of burnt-out cars, trucks and broken masonry to keep bandits out.

"To save your home town, everything you know, destroyed before your own eyes, to go to sleep in the security of gunfire, I cannot come to terms with it," says 26-year-old law graduate Drita Hija. Pointing at the ruins of the law court, she adds: "That's what remains of my future in Albania. I wanted nothing more than to work as a lawyer."

The power of the communist in 1991, a small group

of magistrates have striven behind the scenes to reform the legal system. Albanian justice has come a long way since the repressive days under late communist dictator Enver Hoxha.

After a 45-year interlude, there is a ministry of justice, a private lawyer profession, the right of appeal and a new criminal code, copied almost word for word from its Italian equivalent. But when the grand schemes collapsed, Albanians turned their backs on this new world. Instead of filling courts with prosecutors, they took the direct route: robbing the local bank.

Edison Heba, director of

foreign relations at the prosecutor general's office in Tirana, says: "We have been very careful to write good laws. Our constitutional charter of human rights looks better on paper than any European equivalent. But we neglected to teach our people about the spirit of law. Now it's as if the people are in a psychological crisis. They have no confidence in the state or its laws."

Nothing embodies this lack of confidence better than an Italian-owned factory in Shkoder that makes tables and chairs for Albanian churches. The factory is the only one in the area that

has survived intact. Special forces offered to protect it, but the owners preferred to use local vigilantes.

Yet, say military prosecutors who say that all our hard work has been destroyed. Compared with 1991, we have good European laws. It's just a question of implementing them.

In theory, Nikëllaj deserted their posts in March, but the barracks are empty of soldiers. So he is dealing with former prisoners hoping to qualify for amnesty.

"Boris was one," says an aide. "A man who murdered

an army officer ten years ago says he regrets. He's sorry, but the man was holding him and he had to do something about it. Under the terms of the amnesty, I have to release this man."

Little wonder that Nikëllaj, 30 months without residents, believes that real law and order will return only when the multinational peace forces are drawn into police duties. "In my opinion, they would be more than welcome as international policemen," he says. "After all, the Albanians are not by nature disobedient. They endured Enver Hoxha for 30 years without so much as a murmur."

Courtesy: Bajram Jhij, Shkoder's new police commissioner

Renewed fever over forgotten goldrush

DEVOTION to home runs deep in Lapland. To Lapps the region represents a way of life which they are loath to lose, despite high unemployment.

Finland as a whole has an unemployment rate of about 15 per cent, but Lapland's is more than double that figure. Local people believe it is more 40 per cent.

Work is available farther south, but Lapps simply will not leave their land, a sparsely populated forest wilderness where summer months hay daytime under the midnight sun and winter is constant twilight lit by the Northern Lights.

The only jobs are in tourism, reindeer herding and forestry. However, even tree felling is providing less work: machines have been introduced to cut wood cheaply and efficiently, leaving hundreds of loggers without jobs. In addition, environmentalists in the rest of Europe encourage consumers to boycott wood products from old Scandinavian forests, claiming that these forests need protection. The majority of Lapps forest is virgin.

The Lapps of northern Finland pour scorn on the discussion of working elsewhere in the European Union. Helsinki sees a world away and Europe is gold-mining territory south. Young people do more south for education and jobs, but most return quickly, weary of the noise and rush and eager for the peace of the Arctic.

Terkki Karttilla is doing research at Manchester university in Britain. Every holiday she heads home to Lapland. "If I stay away too long, I get tired, run down. In Lapland life is slow, we sleep in, we don't rush anywhere. I could never rush anywhere else. People ask me how we have survived during Kazanov, when the

Cathy Savage in IVALO on how a movie has excited Lapland

sun doesn't rise at all the time is perfect. By the time the summer is over we are ready to fast."

Unemployed logger Tapio Karpinen's eelcher Tyno attachment to the area: "I don't enjoy being unemployed, but here I have forests and lakes. I could move away, but if I left and still had no work, I would have lost that one thing I can still treasure."

As Lapps are not prepared to seek work elsewhere, the local community centre does what it can to address the needs of the unemployed. A team for sewing gear is provided, and there is a shop for stacking with crafts and second hand goods.

With a population of just 7,000, tranquil Ivalo is the biggest town in the heart region. Yet more than a century ago, for two short years, it was all quite different as thousands of Finns poured into the tiny town, lured by the dream of gold.

The first gold nugget was discovered in the valley over 1808. Hundreds of hopeful prospectors trekked north to try their luck at gold-mining. Some were lucky, most returned home empty handed and the tales of tragedy and adversity which they left behind provided the local heritage which is now being exploited and could prove the boom the local economy needs so much.

A feature film on the gold rush is being made.

The film is the project of Finnish director like Lindman. Now in his seventh decade, Lindman first decided to make the film 40 years ago. Backed by Finnish state television he was to start filming in 4 July.

It is hard to imagine gold fever in Lapland. That heavy rain is a forgotten part of the story. But the film may go some way to change that.

The producers have decided to shoot everything locally and Ivalo is brimming with pride.

Not only will the film show the world the beauty of Lapland, but producers are employing local unemployed people to build scenery and new costumes.

In a modest warehouse tucked behind the trees and snow on the road out of town, carpenters use traditional skills to heat and carve pine, making old-fashioned sledges and canvas. Sawmill chokes the air and the floor is stacked with finished items: boots, dog sled, chairs and trawls.

One carpenter demonstrates the wood-bending technique, glad to use his skills once more. "This means a lot to me," he said.

At the technical college, where the jobless learn to use computers and are retrained for industry, there is a team of young handy tool and pine old-fashioned coats and dresses. They are made in the 1900s and there is a shortage of local furriers. The excitement is unbelievable.

"The film will be a great thing for the local people to see. This will be the first time that the world will see what we are like. The local people here, they will see that they can't be poor. They can't be poor."

DEVLIN KUWAN BattyKaarajoki

ANTONIO PEREZOS Nattan Peost

IAN RICHARDSON To Play the King

ROWAN ATKINSON The Blackadder

TIM SEBASTIAN HARDIJK

SHAHNAZ PAKIRMAN Tomorrow's World

NICI MIKX The World Today

DONALD MACCORMICK The Monday Programme



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Traditional skill: a carpenter making a pine boat using an ancient wood-bending technique



EUROPEAN

The European, 200 Gray's Inn Road, London WC1X 8NE

Some things get better only get better

THE United Kingdom has a new relationship with Europe under Tony Blair. Labour party presents a desire for constructive dialogue with their European partners and an end to the destructive demonstration that has so often put Britain at the throat of Europe, instead of at its heart.

The last desperate warnings of John Major that "Blair would go cap in hand to Britain's squalid masters" were designed to instil widespread fear in the electorate. Instead, they should evoke widespread anger.

Anger at the man whose hopelessly divided government triggered the BSE crisis, destroying businesses in Germany, Italy and elsewhere and had the "madness" to blame Europe for it all.

Anger at the man whose sulking and stamping has consistently confounded the UK's partners and isolated Britain.

Anger at the man whose lack of strength in leadership has devalued the British voice at the negotiating tables by crying wolf too often.

Six years ago, this newspaper had a message for Britain's electorate as it went to the polls. We said:

"The honeymoon is over for John Major. Whatever the outcome on polling day - win, lose or a hung parliament - he will not be getting the same support from the press, the media or more importantly, the public. (Perhaps he should also have mentioned John Major's own wife.)"

Major will be remembered by some for his apparent decency and endeavour. But many will remember him as the man who replaced the old-fashioned, following a disreputable conspiracy in the party or as the chancellor who had Britain lurching about on a roller coaster mechanism at the wrong rate and at the wrong time. He will be remembered too as the 'quiet man' who gave the socialist their golden opportunity "to return to Downing Street."

The choice then was the Tories or Old Labour. Today, Blair has presented a unified image for New Labour. The party has grasped the modern world's need for the maintenance of union legislation to prevent a return to the bad old days, while at the same time adopting a sensible approach to taxation and labour flexibility.

Rightly, the Tories pointed to their economic performance, low inflation, low unemployment, high inward investment and low interest rates. Their campaign slogan urged: "Don't let Labour blow it." The fact is that a politically divided Conservative Party was plagued by internal wrangling for the future leadership, under fire over sleaze and incoherence on Europe blew it for themselves. Some things can only get better.

New Labour meets the age-old for a downward-sloping Britain

TONY BLAIR says that his new Labour government will not pursue a policy of isolation

LEADING Britain to be one of the warring countries in Europe. We have the ability to make our voice heard and to give Britain back its confidence and self-respect.

Our position on Europe is not seriously challenged from any quarter of the party, whereas John Major has led his party pitifully on Europe.

This shambles does not just harm the Conservative Party, it damages Britain. It reduces our capacity to secure a good deal for Europe.

It is nonsense for Major to claim that he alone can successfully negotiate for us in Europe. Judge him on his track record. The story of the loss on British beef is one of incompetence, hollow promises and a long failure.

There are three choices open to Britain: stand in the European Union, staying in but impotent, or staying in and leading it. We can only win by the latter. We can only win by the latter. We can only win by the latter. We can only win by the latter.

It is not enough for Major to claim that he alone can successfully negotiate for us in Europe. Judge him on his track record. The story of the loss on British beef is one of incompetence, hollow promises and a long failure.

The second is where the today



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We must stand up for Britain's interests and be prepared to stand up to support of these interests if necessary. But we achieve nothing from perpetual isolation.

We need to be and then we have a real say in where Europe is going. There is a good deal of unease at the pace and direction of integration in many continental countries, not just Britain. We want a Europe where national identities are not submerged and where countries co-operate, not a giant unmanageable superstate run from the centre.

There was a desire for a superior role, which would stop it in its tracks, which would stop it in its tracks, which would stop it in its tracks.

First, completion of the single market and the removal of the remaining barriers to trade are essential. We must still need American support and the United States must be seen to show it can be more self-reliant.

The hardest of all telecommunications, energy and financial services.

Second, enlargement of the EU to the east. It is vital that Cyprus and the Balkans are included in the EU. We are fully integrated into the European family of nations.

Third is reform of the Common Agricultural Policy. A new system of support for farmers is needed. We need to be able to pay the opportunities provided by enlargement and the 1999 to bring about real reform.

Fourth is to tackle employment and programme flexible labour markets. The idea that the market would do it all is a myth. We need to be able to pay the opportunities provided by enlargement and the 1999 to bring about real reform.

And last of all, we need to make our foreign policy co-ordinated with the EU. We will still need American support and the United States must be seen to show it can be more self-reliant.

The hardest of all telecommunications, energy and financial services.

The nature of our changing society

WHAT is sometimes praised as the 'Union's diversity' in fact reflects a very basic and dangerous society. However, the fact that the Union is a diverse society is being encouraged to move in the direction of a more homogeneous society, where there is a shortage of diversity in an economic and inter-European political environment.

In Vienna we are celebrating the 50th anniversary of our cathedral. People can feel very European here because the city is a blend of cultures. Walking through the city, we witness a mix of sometimes feel like foreign tourists in our own country. But this is not necessarily a bad thing, as it brings to our attention that much has changed over our world.

Our customs and traditions are being replaced by new things that are often foreign. But this is not necessarily a bad thing, as it brings to our attention that much has changed over our world.

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God's gift to Bosnia

IT IS God who has given the state of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the Bosnian people. Therefore, it is Bosnian people who should be responsible for the future of the state.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Poland's transition to a market economy is a model for others

POLAND has recorded an outstanding economic performance since 1990 in terms of growth in gross domestic product, simultaneous reduction of inflation and unemployment, fiscal balance, job revolution, capacity restructuring, and high inward investment.

The Polish have achieved a package of medium to long term economic reforms, supported by a commitment to establish a social market economy by new legislation. The emphasis on institution building through a participatory process will bring a better balance between private and public investment and growth and greater success in economic transformation.

The children of the baby-boomers will overcome their narrow-minded who have been the cause of the 'shock therapy' of the early 1990s. The Polish have achieved a package of medium to long term economic reforms, supported by a commitment to establish a social market economy by new legislation.

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UKraine never had a chance

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Industrial and agricultural policy

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Stricter fiscal austerity

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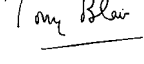
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THE TIMES MAGAZINE SPECIAL

DECISION DAY

Britain votes for change after 18 years of Conservative rule

4-PAGE SECTION BEGINS HERE

TORY TURMOIL

More divided than ever, they have already started the leadership race

NIGEL DUDLEY: PAGE 9

FRENCH FLAIR

Politicians revel in the campaign while the voters go on holiday

ANNE-ELISABETH MOUTET: P.10

The Labour campaign was short on details but the public's mood was: TIME FOR A CHANGE

Britain's Labour campaign

OW 43 years old, Tony Blair was scarcely mature enough to vote at the time his party last won a general election. This week he is poised to re-down Downing Street as the youngest British prime minister since 1801.

This is the stuff of history. A Labour win will be momentous for Britain, and gives the country's foreign relations with Europe, her EU neighbours too. Yet, in truth, many voters are disillusioned and emerging numb from a six-week campaign whose result never seemed in real doubt. Back in 1974 the tims on the world stage were Brandt, Pompidou, Brezhnev and Nixon. European integration was stagnant but at least socialism was not a dirty word. Now the Macroeconomic initiative is careering along as a black-market pace and the man has outbranded market forces so warmly to his astonishment that France's Gaullists hold it up as an alleged lesson.

Reclaiming Downing Street after so long will be eerily unfamiliar for Labour but never nonetheless will the eyes of the world will be fix on the party that on Blair as a man and as a politician. Youthful, energetic, with clean hands, his image has a high luster. In Downing Street the arrival of the high-flying barrister wife, Cherie, and her young family will be a touch of the miss of Camelot.

Euro-summits Blair should out-spark Europe's grim face after stagnation such as Germany's Helmut Kohl and upgrade those who have own opinion such as the erstwhile Castilian Jose Maria Aznar.

But to win the election under the banner of new Europe, Blair has planned to run his politics and sanitised image. His platform has been virtually content-free. He has been marketed officially to the public in precisely the way that proved successful for Clinton in his party for office with a confidence that he promises to bring to bear in the next stage of his political mission.

"Trust me," Blair's central message during a promotional tour of his party for office with a confidence that he promises to bring to bear in the next stage of his political mission.

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Joyce Quinn - and get her to Brussels in time to attend a Monday morning meeting. Quinn is a multi-faceted, an effective negotiator highly rated by the Foreign Office. Her task that day will be to represent the United Kingdom on the weekly working group on the inter-governmental conference to revamp the EU's institutions.

It will be the first time that Blair has bothered to attend an election event. Blair is already showing a marked interest in attending a one-day summit to be staged on 23 May, in Maastricht, at all places. The ambitious ultra-federalist Dutch who hold the EU talks.

Blair has been talking with barrister wife Cherie, represents a new era for Britain, tired of Tony Staeze and disapproved of the EU. The Tories have been discredited by Blair, by their disunity on Europe, by their imposition of a 1992 crisis on the pound and the EMU. Voters feel it is safe to agree on private law taxes, and low state spending. The brutal conviction politics of Thatcher in the 1980s.

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Labour: the first 100 days of power

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1 May General election results enable in some hours after polls close at 10pm. Size of majority known by 11.00am morning.

1 May Tony Blair goes to Buckingham Palace to kiss hands with Queen Elizabeth. Labour cabinet members go to 10 Downing Street.

1 May Brussels, Ministry of Foreign Affairs Conference working towards to sign its new European Affairs Ministers to signal that it means business. New Labour Chancellor meets his EU counterparts in the afternoon.

1 May Blair makes his first formal speech as prime minister. Labour's education and regional development secretary announces a new initiative.

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The Labour prime minister aims to make a fresh start in Europe, writes Nigel Dudley

Barring a huge upset, Blair should be heading for the cameras on the doorstep of Number 10 by the afternoon of Friday 2 May. Blair intends to occupy this residence not for one, but two five-year terms. Within hours his new administration will have to be unveiled to its true constituents so disillusioned will have to be revealed. The aim is that by Friday after to begin to discuss the new government's key Cabinet posts will be confirmed.

The new Iron Chancellor will certainly be considerably unfamiliar for Labour but never nonetheless will the eyes of the world will be fix on the party that on Blair as a man and as a politician.

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The new Camelot. Tony Blair, with barrister wife Cherie, represents a new era for Britain, tired of Tony Staeze and disapproved of the EU.

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Parliamentary election to Blair, Baise and Social Chapter

A HISTORIC summit to transform Europe's security arrangements approaches, it is clear that the Nato agreement of scant interest at election time either Britain or France.

Political parties which stand any chance of power or influence in both countries are in favour of enlargement. So nothing that happens in the polling booth will alter the fact that alliance leaders will agree in Madrid on a 50-50 issue invitation to at least three nations, thereby annulling the EU's security pact.

But this does not mean the British and French elections have no implications for future security arrangements in Europe. The British poll was always going to have an impact on the European Union's own efforts to develop a common foreign and security policy (CFSP) separate from Nato. In France, too, the election of 25 May and 1 June will reveal the public mood against the back-ground of which President Jacques Chirac has to decide whether to back down or stand firm in a dispute with the US over Iraq. Nato reform that are also supported by the US over Iraq. It is obvious that the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy, established under the Maastricht treaty, has been a disaster so far. Britain was deeply sceptical when many embarrassing failures. Recently the EU again looks feeble when Alberto's President Berlusconi expressed his unwillingness to respond. Britain, Germany and Sweden did not stand side for side to restore order. In France, Italy, Germany and Britain and Germany declined to join the Franco-Italian and German 'multinational stabilisation force' that recently set up in the Balkans. Ministers' meetings in Noordwijk, Netherlands, on 7-8 April, the French vetoed an attempt at EU condemnation of human rights violations in China to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights. The British had much to do with Chirac's forthcoming visit to Clinton. It is expected to wrap up an order

Foreign and security policies will provide immediate challenges for new British and French governments, writes Ian Mather

for Airbus aircraft worth \$2 billion. The present treaty has no defence and security as one of the three main areas of cooperation along with immigration and free trade and 'flexibility' (the EU code for opt-outs) for

For the EU dilemma is that nothing is changed if a second round of the present treaty requiring unanimity for collective action through the CFSP will continue to produce paralysis. Yet it looks as though the advocates of an effective CFSP are going to be disappointed in Madrid. Labour, the Conservatives, opposes extending

majority voting to foreign policy and defence issues as one of 'one of several' key matters of national interest. Labour also shares Tony Blair's doubts about the proposal for Amsterdam, a Franco-German plan to set up a 'multinational stabilisation force' and the ten Nations Western European Union to be set up under Maastricht as the EU's fledgling defence force. The British fear that it would undermine the transatlantic link. The Franco-German proposal for a protocol to be signed at Amsterdam committing the EU to a complete merger with the WEU to be achieved in stages.

A merger would be the first step towards a European defence policy independent of Nato and of the US. A Labour government would face opposition to any deal in Europe from an opposition Conservative Party that will have moved further in a Euro-sceptic direction. Britain is not alone in opposing any move to restructure the CFSP. Denmark, larger EU countries which could not be persuaded by any military force, are aware that they could be overruled by smaller and medium-sized countries. The consequence is that no new expansion from Amsterdam or the CFSP reform because such changes could themselves not be imposed by majority voting. Furthermore an attempt to merge the EU and the WEU will be blocked not only by Britain but by Finland, Sweden, Austria and Iceland, which are not members of the WEU. In France the two-stage

parliamentary elections are being held as a European defence policy important strategic decision of the presidency — whether to take France into the military wing of Nato. The elections have raked round the argument over France's role in the alliance vis-à-vis the US. France has been edging back towards full participation, and a decision in principle to accept the integrated military structure has been taken. But France's insistence on a 50-50 split in the alliance as a quid pro quo has brought the US to a standstill. Washington, Paris wants more senior Nato military posts to go to Europe. A demand for France's US southern command, but the US, which has always held the post, has refused on the grounds that the head of southern command also takes charge of the American 7th Fleet. No break-through has been achieved. France cannot appear to show weakness. He faces criticism over Nato from many sides. The Socialists are not opposed in principle to enlargement but they oppose Chirac of baulking the negotiation. Nicolas Sarkozy, former Francois Lottard, head of the centre-right Union for French Democracy, is not in favour of the Maastricht criteria for joining the European single currency, has abandoned its normally co-operative stance.

In a clear warning that exclusion of the UK from the economic and monetary union, the first step in the process, said Italian Foreign Minister Romano Prodi, 'Italy would not accept' minimal 'integration' with the EU. 'It was decided to hold the signing ceremony for the Russian and the UK on 27 May. But after the French referendum, we may decide to postpone reintegration into Nato, thereby postponing one of the Madrid summit aims, the announcement of the 'treaty' to match the present-day security environment. In the case of the summit would be such a smooth affair after all.

ONE of the few firm commitments that Labour Party leader Tony Blair has made on Europe is the intention to sign the Social Chapter. This protocol, annexed to the Maastricht treaty, allows member states to pass directives in a number of social areas.

One of the Conservative government's pet hates, John Major was an opt-out from the UK on the Social Chapter enjoys a very ambiguous reputation. It is often described as a job-destroyer monster, with Major claiming that it will cost 1.5 million jobs over a half a million, plus a complex and not strictly enforcing minimum provisions that in many cases have already been superseded by legislation before the Social Chapter. A direct and indirectly force and a provision setting up coalitions for workers in multinational companies, so-called works councils.

So has the Labour Party on the rights of councils to national level. It is not strictly a shift part of the burden of proof of employment in case of discrimination in the UK. It is not strictly on setting up reporting structures for the employer combat social harassment.

It was a Tony pet hate. But Labour will bring Britain into line, writes Paola Buonadonna

'None of these is likely either to create or destroy half a million jobs, says a Commission official. It is just a legal mechanism allowing employers and trade unions to negotiate on important subjects connected with the welfare of people at work. Areas such as pay or trade union rights are specifically excluded.'

The Commission insists that it will not particularly insist in pushing for new laws. In order to carry a strong agreement between employers and the unions will be enough. The recent Renault affair has cost a further shadow on the effectiveness of legislation in force. The Commission's Social Chapter. Ronald was found in favour of the Social Chapter. Ronald was found in favour of the Social Chapter. Ronald was found in favour of the Social Chapter.

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Premier to face EU crossfire

The first leadership test the new British government faces in Europe is the troubled environment conference which is slated to precede the Maastricht treaty before the referendum summit in the middle of June. After 13 days of tough negotiations, often obstructed by a cantankerous Tony Blair, Britain's 14 European partners are impatient to find out how much co-operative the new British prime minister will be able to do. Only the additional EU summit in Maastricht on 23 May will not be held in London. The EU summit in Maastricht on 23 May will not be held in London. The EU summit in Maastricht on 23 May will not be held in London. The EU summit in Maastricht on 23 May will not be held in London.

The IGC poses a tough European debut for the new British prime minister, writes Paola Buonadonna

substantial progress on EU reform will have to be postponed to a later conference. It will, up by the Commission forward which set out details to be worked out by the Maastricht criteria for joining the European single currency, has abandoned its normally co-operative stance.

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Scotts seek to lobby for themselves

The Scots want to lobby for themselves in Brussels, writes Francine Cunningham

way of making membership of the UK palatable, adding to rather than detracting from their sovereignty. The deal, drawn up with Brussels, that body of the English, is seen as a neat way of circumventing Westminster's domination of power. 'People on the continent are fed up with John Major's Europhobia and the Scottish and Welsh independence based tabloid newspapers, on they are keen to hear English speakers with a different attitude. The Scottish National Party MEP Alan MacGregor has been strong links between Brussels and the rest of Europe. SNP leader Alex Salmond stresses that the patriot William Wallace (MacGregor) was both Scottish and English. 'Wallace simultaneously involved the German Chancellor and the Pope in Europe and the papacy in Scotland and the papacy in Rome. It is the same government. Nationalists insist that

independence will be an 'impossible' nation into a fully independent European state. 'Independence would give us visibility as a member of the EU and the Continent, whereas devolution would not give us international profile,' said MacGregor. According to MacGregor, future Scottish election will have to take the permission of British cabinet to attend Council of Ministers' meetings. 'A Scottish parliament would be the most effective, the most

democratic and the natural choice. But Scottish support in EU programmes. 'The election over, the Scots are getting ready to capitalise on the amount of good small nation can prosper and have cut beyond the amount of the European crash confirm that people generally are in favour of the Scots. In Brussels, the Scottish lobby has been quick to find out how the system of networking operates, and put it to good use. Unlike the stiff English, the Scots

are very skilled at informal networking. They are personal into the political arena. 'I've seen with Labour in power, the Scots will look enviously at the Celtic nations across the water, Ireland is seen as a model of how a small nation can prosper and have cut beyond the amount of the European crash confirm that people generally are in favour of the Scots. In Brussels, the Scottish lobby has been quick to find out how the system of networking operates, and put it to good use. Unlike the stiff English, the Scots

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Leftwing parties in the UK and France face economic austerity

writes Hilary Clarke

EUROPE'S press assesses the implications of new governments

THE EUROPEAN press assesses the implications of new governments. Tony Blair says 'Trust in me' have transformed Labour and Party and now I will perform the same role. There is nothing left of our Labour Party and now I will perform the same role. There is nothing left of our Labour Party and now I will perform the same role. There is nothing left of our Labour Party and now I will perform the same role.

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IRISH TIMES

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Could the real Britain? ... not low profile

LABOUR'S POSTION ON EUROPE

FINALLY it's over. Britain has just witnessed the longest election campaign in its living memory, and although Labour's campaigning is fun, most Britons are probably glad that this kind of thing is over.

In a German it is just a German view of the UK election and finds the blend of jingoism and politeness baffling

The tabloid newspaper headlines during the European election campaign which John Major is seen as 'Achilles' heel' - 'Britain's Achilles' - 'Britain - far from being forgotten'.

That made it worse this time was the fact that it was not a tabloid editor who had thought up the image of Kohl and Blair, but deputy prime minister Michael Heseltine himself.

Visiting the Land of Hope and Glory, the realm of the building, during those weeks just before the election, I witnessed not only an opposition leader and game minister in waiting who could not be anyone else, success him in his patriotic pride, but many other signs of national self-confidence.

Partly, they were not related to the campaign - such as the advert for the Cabinet House on the London Underground from which I learned that 'the party's over'. Partly, they were related to the campaign. A newspaper spread for Blair was

horser, one of which, it turned out, had belonged to the Euroscopic MP Robert Hodge.

Yes... Lady Thatcher remarked indignantly: 'It's got some character. He says that it lacks...'

Later on, in the Frontiers service candidate who gave a wooden plate called 'Maggie' and she eventually hung around the neck of a wooden horse on a merry-go-round. When she was asked whether this horse was a Euroscopic, she answered: 'It's pro United Kingdom.'

Finally, I presented myself to the German Journalist and asked her about the election position of the European Commission President Jacques Delors in the election campaign, with his speech to journalists in Amsterdam - attacking Euroscopic 'mismanagement' - 'We make our decision'. She looked me firmly in the eyes and told me that she was a Tory. 'We make our decision', she answered: 'It's pro United Kingdom.'

Offering image: Labour's Tony Blair was depicted as Kohl's puppet in a Tory election poster

Am I consistently misled by the 'insane postulates' of the Tory campaign? Major remarked upon during the campaign, fearing that some of the applause during his appearances was not from former Tory Premier Margaret Thatcher, and I followed her during her last long on the campaign trail just before she went off to Hong Kong to open the new bridge to the island's airport.

During that morning in Lancaster, northern England, Lady Thatcher, supporting the local Conservative candidate who gave a reassuring majority of 11,000, visited an engineering firm and the recreation park on Morecambe Bay.

For some reason, horses were not allowed to be ridden in events during that year. As it happened, the engineering firm was installed in a former farm. So it made some sense to lead the baroness to the stables, where she was presented with two

LABOUR leader Tony Blair is widely held to have misled his presidential-style campaign on that point. But there are no perfect between Labour and the centre left.

The British party looks to have a fair amount of central interest. The Swedish Social Democrats, particularly in view of the recent election, are not averse to the British election. The British party looks to have a fair amount of central interest.

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...ing for Tory success

Behind Major's campaign was a bubbling fight for the Tory succession, reports Nick Dudley

WHEN Conservative MPs assemble for the first time in the new parliament on 7 May, they will find a majority of their number deeply opposed to further European integration and economic integration.

With many Conservatives concerned that their opposition to the single currency and the handing over of further powers to Brussels was their main voting motivation in the election, the Euroscopic is favourite to emerge from the pack of leadership candidates to succeed John Major.

This is almost certain to cause the most significant policy split for the generation and will evoke a historic split in the Conservative Party, which has traditionally taken a pragmatic European stance.

The desire to avoid such a split in the Tory party is in opposition - will generate an immediate post-election strategy. However, the disintegration of the government or an imminent election in the EU.

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and select a candidate who reflects their own views. Among the latter group, many Tories would instinctively look to Robertson, who was praised from the right for having the nerve to resign and challenge Major in 1995 and whose opposition in principle to the single currency may endorse. However, his television image is seen as a serious handicap.

Among the right-wing leadership candidates who have served in Major's cabinet are Michael Portillo, the former deputy prime minister, and Kenneth Clarke, the former minister, friends of Michael Howard (Home Office), whose hardline stance and fierce performance between him and his friends among backbenchers may inspire hostility. The party's left wing, having been particularly active in pressing his claims.

On the other wing of the party, the robust debating skills of Kenneth Clarke (Finance) suggest he would make an effective rival. But a return to a compromise his pro-European views, an election campaign, make him unattractive. His supporters are unlikely to see him as a viable candidate.

There is a crowd field of candidates, with at least eight expected to test the water and oppose extremely vocal. Much depends on whether the Tories look for a leader, or a leadership team, with a chance of keeping the party together, or whether they conclude a split is inevitable.

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18 YEARS OF CONSERVATIVE RULE

1979 Margaret Thatcher wins a landslide victory in a general election, promising no increase in Blair's income.

1984. Thatcher's second term in office.

1988. Thatcher's third term in office.

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As parties slip into

TWO front-page headlines in *Le Monde* on 29 April before the election 23 days before the first round. "Election and referendum dominated the French vote in three elections" and "The election" - the left wing paper intoned.

The second headline cited a Sofres poll and noted that 38 per cent think a winning victory would be "neither good nor bad," while 55 per cent think the same thing about a victory of the right.

In the side column a smaller headline announced that Jacques Chirac "takes a stand against human cloning." The president, who earlier had launched a series of initiatives aimed at worldwide banning of human cloning.

There is something breathtaking in the sheer irrelevance of Chirac's heretofore activities as his government are supposed to be following a general election.

Paris political observers tend to describe such post-election moves as Jacques Chirac's chief spin doctor and Jacques Pillon's diminutive advertising man, who also served François Mitterrand in 1981.

Pillon is known to favour a strategy of "no comment" to the press. In a television interview Jacques said he was not a candidate for president, but that will not matter if a fighting, hand-on veteran, who will not make a prime minister in the electoral battle. He was said to have prevailed, just as he did in getting Chirac to call the election.

Voters expect little from left or right, writes Anne-Elisabeth Mouton in PARIS

"This is the first time in the history of the Fifth Republic that a president elects his prime minister and not the reverse," said National Assembly Speaker Philippe Seguin, no friend of Anne-Elisabeth Mouton, who has been effectively sidelined in this election and who has been offensively named by Chirac's "his house was abruptly destroyed."



The election is of course an attempt to give Juppé a third term as prime minister, but on 27 April in a television interview Juppé said he was not a candidate for president, but that will not matter if a fighting, hand-on veteran, who will not make a prime minister in the electoral battle. He was said to have prevailed, just as he did in getting Chirac to call the election.

than palatial new Socialist Party headquarters by spokesman François Hollande.

Juppé feels he needs to cast a doubt on his appointment as PM, that's because he's aware he's unpopular," said Hollande. "Who should we believe he will do in 40 days but he won't done in the 800 days that he's already had in power?"

Hollande is an urban 24-year-old with a graduate of the elite Ecole Normale Supérieure. He is a graduate of most top civil servants and many politicians.

By contrast, Juppé, at his first last week in working class Sarcelles, where his friend and former industry minister Dominique Strauss-Kahn has a good chance of dominating Chirac's maverick foreign policy adviser Pierre Lellouche, looked ravaged. Deep lines showed on his face, and his white hair absorbed all the light as he surveyed the PS's less than electrifying slogan *Changement d'Avance*, let's change the future.

Hollande is friendly, with a nice self-deprecating turn. "They spread their campaign promises with our flies," he said. "Juppé is spicing up his policy platform with our demands." Obviously the formula is designed to be picked up by the press as yet another one of the half-fledged *petites phrases* that, as French political analysts, no French political statement can be without. Hollande, Robert Juppé and Juppé's brother-in-law Juppé, are all to protect the French from unnamed perils.

On the Socialist premier's campaign, Robert Juppé and Juppé's brother-in-law Juppé, are all to protect the French from unnamed perils. Hollande, Robert Juppé and Juppé's brother-in-law Juppé, are all to protect the French from unnamed perils.



On the campaign train: Socialist leader Lionel Jospin beneath the party slogan '32 days to change the majority'

Ordinary French people, if they never use the *petites phrases*, do react to key words. Globalisation of trade is one, *harassment économique* and Anglo-Saxon-type liberalism are others. There are bad things. The state's mission, they will hear from both the Gaullist RPR's Paris head François Robert Juppé and the French from unnamed perils.

There were, as it happens, ten *enquêtes* (and no *non-enquêtes*) working most stop over the weekend at the Gaullist RPR's Paris headquarters, putting the finishing touches to the 3,000 word manifesto for the RPR and civil coalition partners.

The bit about the internet and computers in every school's Chirac loves that. And the bit about extending the social emergency services national (he's the homeless), he dreamt that one up in Paris when he was mayor he adores it when

the bit about the internet and computers in every school's Chirac loves that. And the bit about extending the social emergency services national (he's the homeless), he dreamt that one up in Paris when he was mayor he adores it when

The extreme-right party has a rising star in Bruno Mégret who is poised to win a seat in the National Assembly

THE extreme-right Front National party has launched its election campaign by putting forward 570 candidates, writes *Deirdre Moseley in Cannes*.

Expected to win a maximum of two or three seats in the National Assembly.

But in pursuing its populist anti-immigrant and anti-European Union themes platform its opponents say is openly racist - the Front National has the potential to embarrass candidates in the political mainstream.

In a system where the leading candidates run off for seats, capturing Front National votes in the second round will be vital for both the Socialists and the Gaullists.

"This time we ask to change all that. We are going out to win the hearts and minds of the French people. We are winning the battle of ideas and now we are out to win the battle of votes. The fact that the

assembly was dissolved proved to be a failure, and the Socialists did not do anything to offer. We are the alternative. We must convince the voters of that - the majority always supports our ideas."

Meetings will be held in every constituency, and thought to be the most even stand unless he can find a suitable space in nine major French cities before the final count.

The party's activities, including local accounting voters in the markets and outside their spheres of work

as well as bombarding their homes with pamphlets, is the FN's trump card. The strategy certainly seemed to work in the Marseille suburbs of Vitrolles which elected Mégret's wife Catherine as mayor in February. Her husband, Bernard, her former partner, is seen as the party's main asset.

Mégret, 48, is the FN's leader in the southeast. He has impressive pedigrees from degrees from l'École Nationale des Ponts et Chaussées, Berkeley in California, and a four-year military career which included a stint in the commandos.

He joined forces with the FN in 1985 and rose steadily within the party to become Le Pen's second in command within three years.

He is recognised as the FN leader in southeast France where the party has majorities in four towns: Marignane, Toulon, Orange, and most recently, his own fief of Vitrolles.

He is a member of the European Parliament and a member of the Provence regional council.

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nik at the Communist Party headquarters, a stunning futurist building in the working class 19th arrondissement built in 1971 by Oscar Niemeyer. The architect of it really is French secretary of state Robert Luquet gave his address conference.

The communists are the only ones in the party who have passed at their buffets (a serving board and no hair-class credibility), and a webmaster's site.

It is a 46-year-old former Communist Party worker at the Agnoulon hill works in western Paris. He looks like a friendly garden gnome with smiling eyes, a serving board and no hair. One simply cannot picture this first French post-1989 communist leader with a knife between his teeth.

Yet he rattled off, unpruned article 107 of the Maastricht treaty in answer to a question about the new Socialist demand that a national political government oversee the European Central Bank. This is contrary to the treaty," Hure said. "We're delighted; this means we're moving over to our way of life."

The first 12 days of May are over, and the Cannes film festival. There is a tennis tournament on the days of the Cannes film festival. There is a tennis tournament on the days of the Cannes film festival. There is a tennis tournament on the days of the Cannes film festival.

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French do it twice - Britons only once

Victor Smart and Anne-Elisabeth Mouton explain some vital voting differences

THOUGH they would never admit it, throughout the heyday of the campaign Britain's two large parties, Labour and the Conservatives, were not like the voting for their propaganda messengers.

The French people have a vote, any candidate who they do not realise yet that their ideas are their ideas, he said.

Britain's quirky first past the post system is based on the results party candidates gain in 651 small constituencies. That favours the two large parties, Labour and the Conservatives.

They both have backdoor support in safe seats and are running on a comparatively level playing field in the most important towns in the Alps-Mediterranean have a total of nine elected FN councillors, two in Nice, three in Cannes, two in Menton and two in Antibes.

Mégret is confident that the election will reflect that. "The French people have been convinced by our ideas, but some of the registered electors is entitled to stand again. I would like to see a winning offer withdraw in favour of a better placed candidate in the second round."

Only 150 to 200 are likely to obtain the 50 per cent of the total vote to be elected in the first round. The first round you poll for the candidate you like best. The second you vote against the voters can't stand. "I would like to see a winning offer pull it."

In the case of the elected National Assembly first round. If there is no one to stand again, the system maintains, the system maintains against smaller local hearings are temporarily suspended, public attention remains on the Taoiseach. The election is set to take place just as public confidence in political parties reaches an all-time low.

Dark Ages in the EUROPE'S SECTOR

USTINOV AT LARGE

'Hitler, Stalin and Mussolini put us on our mettle, compelling a reaction from somnolent democracies'

THIS is a tantalising moment at which to be writing an article. As it appears, the results of the British election are being decided. At the time of writing, they are still in the lunge of the polls, preside over such fruitful activities, and, of course, to the snakes know no path.

Eighteen years is a long time for a single party to be in power in a democracy. Not long, even if it masquerades as a dictator, but of common sense, and claims to be clueless to boot, which it is not. I may well have been a little more sceptical. If it does, it will mean that I have lost my faith in the institutions which make it possible for a party representing a minority to access to power yet again.

The French election, which is a sight but not yet imminent, represents a system far more sensitive towards shades of opinion than the British one, which is destined to produce effective government rather than loyalty to the practical inconvenience of democracy.

Since speculation at such close range is fruitless, it is more constructive to reflect on those individuals who have marked our century, and to distinguish between new and women of destiny and mere flesh in the flesh.

The middle of the 20th century was characterised by clear thinking. It was not clear, but we could clearly think. The deaths of regimes were the events, attention brought to a head by desperate attempts by fanatic intellectuals to understand those who defied such treatment. What, which led to a head, was denied its full force of gravity, were still up for grabs, however every effort to establish its empire in Africa, Germany, which had been relieved of its sea territories as a result of the Great War, but whose resentments but rise again, to bring the colonial empire closer to home, in progress, with disastrous results.

The dictatorship of Stalin in the Soviet Union yielded the first Empire, after a brutality and callousness. The first Empire, after an impressive show of resistance on the battlefield, against Italy and Germany.

was the last to crumble before night fell on this planet. Hitler, Stalin and Mussolini were the villains of the second Dark Ages of our century. They put us on our mettle, compelling a reaction from the somnolent democracies. By a miracle, we survived.

Since then there has been the Cold War. Two conflicting influences were predominant in the resolution of a problem which seemed to defy all common sense. Pope John XXIII was the first, using the influence of a humanity shared with all mankind to stimulate leaders as different as John Kennedy and Nikita Khrushchev. It was largely responsible for the resolution of the Cuban missile crisis, as well as the following innovations within the Catholic Church. His influence and example have only grown since the passage of time, proof of his unique

simplicity of spirit. The other great man of the century is certainly Mikhail Gorbachev, despite the windy shrouds shown him by his native land. It is a cliché to say no man is a prophet in his own country. Hitler, Stalin and Khrushchev all had to be abroad to influence people. Even if Gorbachev is today discredited in Russia and sadly, a little less recognition for his contribution towards peace and sanity. A few years ago, a politician who listens as well as speaks, rarely needs to say more. The result is that nobody need fear Gorbachev, and this may well have been the public's last best hope. The same cannot be said for his successor, Boris Yeltsin, in whom speech has become easier than attention to other opinions. He possesses all the qualities of a rough diamond, a transient bonhomie which

is attractive but which at the same time inspires misgivings. Naturally, Russia, despite its efforts to expose artificiality, is missing inequality, with the consequent economic chaos, still a great nation, and Yeltsin feels his responsibility acute, as though the difficulties were transitory and unimportant.

He takes initiatives towards China, Iran and other contentious countries, given a standing ovation in a theatre the day he was fired by Yeltsin - a soldier with an enviable reputation as a peace-maker in Moldova and Chechnya. His language is at once hard and measured, that of a man in the habit of making choices. If Russia still increases for some because of an erratic history, the US indeed pulled out of the world because of the power and a tendency to take its role as saviour from critical society. President Bill Clinton's foreign policy seems more than critical society. Republicans ever at his elbow, every decision seems the result of compromise. Since democracy is so recent in Russia, it is much easier for Yeltsin to operate.

And Britain as it has? John Major reminds one of the leopards, haranguing the last roots reaching to the crest. From the Dunkirk beaches with the British tanks, the German bombers attack, consider folk was as the 1917 effort, to see directly for victory to be assured. Surely, here we are, but we are not to be continued next week.

Craftsmen in hot hats

PETER Millar got things slightly wrong in 'Metal workers celebrate their ancient craft' (issue 359). It is not metal workers who are celebrating but a group of *Hammer* men (Zimmermen) and carpenters, a guild like associations based in Germany. These workers consider themselves a craft, not an Empire to be their privilege. itinerant craftsmen after their apprenticeship (*Lehr*), they are known as *Handwerker* (journeymen). They usually wander about in pairs and take on a job wherever it is offered before they settle down as *Meister*. Their outfits are described in a German encyclopedia as consisting of "black frock coat, black corduroy, black top hat, flat hat or straw hat, white shirt bars". They have become a rare sight, so Millar was lucky to meet a group of them. In the Deutscher Literatur-Museum, Germany

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Is drug testing in animals really necessary?

THIS use of animals in scientific and medical research has become an issue of major public concern. Although animal researchers vigorously defend their right to experiment on living creatures, very few of the most ardent apologists has to admit that it is impossible to apply the results to the human condition with any degree of confidence. At best, animal tests provide only a rough guide to what may happen in the human patient.

Although worldwide millions of animals suffer and die as human surrogates, astonishingly the methods have never been fully validated. It is simply assumed that animals will correctly predict human responses. In fact, even the belief-survey of adverse drug reactions has shown only a five to 25 per cent correlation between harmful effects in people and the results of animal tests. With this in mind, the International Association Against Painful Experiments on Animals has called upon US legislators to establish a full-scale independent com-

mission to assess the scientific validity of animal-based research and the potential of other investigatory techniques not involving the use of animals. This call for an independent inquiry has received the support of physicians, researchers, veterinarians, professional bodies and public figures from a wide range of countries, as well as humanistarians, vegetarians and many thousands of private individuals anxious to see some reform of the present deplorable state of animals as the world's laboratories. So far, Europe has been reluctant to address these central questions. We, the undersigned, therefore urge Europe to adopt this bold initiative and establish as a matter of urgency a full-scale commission of inquiry. Such action would be entirely consistent with his declared aim of 'building a better future'. We are convinced that the outcome would not only mean a significant reduction in animal usage but a more relevant approach to medical research and healthcare.

Dr Neal Bernard, President, Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine, Washington DC, USA.
Dr George Charitakis, President, Greek Doctors for Responsible Medicine, Athens, Greece.
Dr Bernhard Ranker, President, Doctors Against Animal Research, Frankfurt, Germany.
Dr Björn Ekelund, Director, Cytotoxicology Laboratory, Uppsala, Sweden.
Dr Kenneth J Shapiro, Executive Director, Psychologists for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, Maryland, USA.
Dr Robert Sharpe, Scientific Director, International Association Against Painful Experiments on Animals, St Albans, England.

■ YOUR profile of Ivan Ostalov ('Scientist who took the sting out of ulcers', *The Magazine*, issue 353), and the background to the 22 years he spent developing the anti-ulcer drug *Lansol* (oprazolol), set on thinking.

Konkret spelling

RED with great interest Peter Millar's article 'Konkret' which is about an chaotic vision of the world. I am particularly interested in the Spanish/Garza Marquez translation of Konkret as 'concrete' in the German language. I think it is a mistake to think that humans on both sides and with mutations. I am Douglas.

the long term it only makes more impenetrable. The word 'Konkret' is derived from the English language, but it is not 'concrete', it is, by substituting 'c' for 'k', 'Konkret' as 'concrete'. It is a mistake to think that humans on both sides and with mutations. I am Douglas.

I think it is a mistake to think that humans on both sides and with mutations. I am Douglas.

DRAWN FROM EUROPE

CONTINUOUS AND MEDICAL SPECIALIST

ANDREW L. JENNINGS, FRANCE

Carbon dioxide is no pollutant

I WAS amazed to read in your issue 'Europeanization' (issue 362) that you have backed up your measures to curb air pollution by taking strong measures to cut carbon dioxide emissions from motor vehicles. Carbon dioxide is not a pollutant. It is a natural gas which human beings, exhale it and fix it only on the ground. The emissions which need to be controlled are those of sulphur and sulphur. One despair is our inability to cannot distinguish between these substances. E-mail: expic@ex.com Edinburgh, Scotland

Israel's place is in Oceania

COULD someone please explain why the state of Israel plays its World Cup football team in the European group? Until recently, the Israeli team played in the Asian group, as they should, geographically speaking. As perennial winners of the Oceania group, I think Australia played a frequent

and sometimes memorable match against the team they secured the play-off position in the Asian group. What has changed? More teams are full of players who thought I would have a morning coffee with the croissant in a traditional cafe. It took five minutes to get to the cafe. After eventually arriving back in the Israeli town. E-mail: 100247.3030 Compuserve, St Louis, Missouri, St. Louis, Missouri, USA

Crossroads and hamburgers

IT is so amusing American influences, such as McDonald's and Planet Hollywood, are so common in the Champs Elysees in Paris (Style takes flight in the Champs', issue 363).

MILLAR'S EUROPE

Germany is the acid test of censorship

GOOD intentions are often just not good enough. Take a case in point: the Bavarian state authorities' decision to grant a licence to a judgment against Felix Sormin, chief of the German Communist Party's Central Committee's Campaign Committee. Sormin is responsible for the propagation of pornography. For the simple reason that this company provides access to the Internet, and the Internet, as received wisdom has you know, there is all kind of unsupervised access.

Over the past two years the huge numbers of postal authorities' decisions to grant a licence to a judgment against Felix Sormin, chief of the German Communist Party's Central Committee's Campaign Committee. Sormin is responsible for the propagation of pornography. For the simple reason that this company provides access to the Internet, and the Internet, as received wisdom has you know, there is all kind of unsupervised access.

Germany is the acid test of censorship. It is a country where the law is the law, and it is not always clear that the law is the law, yet it has more often than not been used with the genuine aim of keeping the society clean.

The Internet carries all sorts of problems here. Or rather, it forces us to re-examine the answer. It is generally Germany that has the most restrictive laws, and it is not always clear that the law is the law, yet it has more often than not been used with the genuine aim of keeping the society clean.

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Swallows hit by pesticides

A correspondent in Portugal has written to me about a report in *Issue 363* that swallows are being killed by pesticides. The answer is no, Europe's swallow population is on the increase. Pesticides are likely to blame. However, it is not the pesticides that are killing the swallows, but the pesticides that are killing the swallows. I doubt it is so. The 'acid' material will not be a pest.

There is nothing on the Internet that forces us to re-examine the answer. It is generally Germany that has the most restrictive laws, and it is not always clear that the law is the law, yet it has more often than not been used with the genuine aim of keeping the society clean.

Air base heads out to sea

AROUND EUROPE

MOSCOW: Dubbed the "Delphinops", a judge in Serbia's...
■ MOSCOW: Dubbed the "Delphinops", a judge in Serbia's...
■ BELGRADE: Serbia's judges, their reputation tarnished by last year's election fraud...

NORWEGIAN engineering group...
■ NORWAY: War heroine died. Signe Hildebrand, a member of the Norwegian Second World War resistance...

moving contact of life in a concentration camp.
Anniversary, 'yogevide' 50 years after The Herod's...
■ SPAIN: Spanish reds...
■ FRANCE: Instead, BA asked French universities to transfer all the rights to Orly from Orly-Matignon...

Island and other coral islands might have been populated from South America.
"World Watch" Kabila to meet Mobutu
■ LUBUMBASHI: Rebel leader Laurent Kabila was said to be ready to meet Zaire's President Mobutu...

Vandals wreck graves
■ GERMANY: Vandals wrecked the graves of 29 Second World War slave labourers in the eastern city of Götting...

Delors attacked at election rally
FORMER European Commission President Jacques Delors was hit in the face with a stone during a campaign rally for the French election...

New hope for peace
■ JERUSALEM: Israel's foreign minister was due to meet Palestinian leader Yassir Arafat in an effort to restart the peace process...

■ LONDON: Suspected IRA bomb threats...
■ BRITAIN: Major urged the government to withdraw its troops from the Balkans...

■ GERMANY: Vandals wrecked the graves of 29 Second World War slave labourers...
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Disunion may delay election

JUSTICE minister Spartzko...
■ ALBANIA: The Albanian UN force is continuing to patrol in towns and cities in an attempt to restore stability...

BUSINESS and union leaders signed a comprehensive labour reform pact on 28 April...
■ PHILADELPHIA: President Bill Clinton told a conference on community service that citizens had a duty to volunteer if they served a higher fate...

Out of America

America's 15 million at risk children by the year 2000, with the help of mentors, safe places to learn, medical attention and job skills.
■ GEORGIA: Defence Secretary William Cohen said that the United States should consider its weapons...

Saddam honoured

■ BAGHDAD: Iraq marked President Saddam Hussein's 60th birthday on 28 April with a military parade. In his honour, a flight of MiG-25s and MiG-29s...

D'Alema appeals to far left

THE leader of the largest party in Italy's governing coalition, PD'S leader Massimo D'Alema, appealed on 29 April to the far-left Communist movement to act responsibly following First round polls which had strengthened its hand...

win the post because of his party's support.
■ ITALY: The Italian UN force is continuing to patrol in towns and cities in an attempt to restore stability...

Red Cross denial

streets, their horns blaring.
■ LIMA: The Red Cross of Peru said that it was "absolutely" to suggest that it helped someone tip the scales in favour of the military...

NEWS FROM AROUND THE WORLD EDITED BY CATHY SAVAGE

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The Italian premier's vision remains undimmed: monetary union and welfare reform

IN A little under a year, Romano Prodi's government has asked Italians to give up financial sacrifices which cost them one hundred thousand lire (\$300 million) in raised taxes, nationalised some elements of social spending and included 1.5 per cent of new year's income in this year's accounts, while reducing some of 1997's costs to 1998 accounts.

All that was not enough, so the government asked the people to pay a 50 per cent "stamp tax". The tax was not, as noisily protested, Silvio Berlusconi's leader of the biggest opposition party (Forza Italia), gathered together 50,000 "smug" men and women in the streets of Rome, all level of banding to the Italian state, on average, 43 per cent of household income.

But Prodi and his finance minister, Carlo Azeglio Ciampi, have not budged. The prime minister maintains that these sacrifices are indispensable for making them can Italy adjust the convergence criteria and participate from the first day in economic and monetary union. If the government fails in this

Prodi's European gamble faces its toughest hour

objective, Prodi had added, he would not hesitate to do 1998 accounts.

It is really necessary that the government should be in office on 1 January 1997. This is the only way to slow the pace and dilute the bitter medicine that Italy will have to swallow during 1997. To these questions, Prodi responds firmly that if Italy were to remain outside the EMU, the judgment of the financial markets would probably be ruthless.

The progress made over the past months will be with respect to inflation and interest rates, would be completely reversed.

Everything that is, except the reasons why it is essential that Italy participate in EMU. In principle, nothing prevents Italy from putting its accounts in order without

Sergio Romano argues that communists are holding the government to ransom

binding itself to all the requirements of the Maastricht treaty. It could adopt a position similar to that of Britain in the single market and give guarantees of financial stability to the Eurozone. Just as in the past, the best available ruling class is the European because only Europe can force Italy to apply the rigorous precepts of financial orthodoxy which government is pro-European because it does not need support. But Prodi knows how unrealistic this vision is. Were it not for the discipline that European obligations impose, Italy would struggle desperately to find a financial strength to draw and eliminate, albeit more gradually, a national debt which amounts to 120 per cent of GDP. Italy's government

is sustained by a ragbag majority in which there are groups which do not share those views.

For one of these groups, Rifondazione Comunista, the EU is a capitalist plot to destroy the welfare state and erode the interests. Prodi wants Europe, but he has to keep his pro-European convictions under wraps in order to carry favour with the Rousseau on which his power depends.

The paradox of Prodi's position has other consequences. In order to reach the objective of participating in EMU the prime minister has had to do the ill-considered demands of Rifondazione and has avoided all measures which would have engendered its opposition. As a result, it has not

Aims rights endanger an ancient culture

confronted the three main causes of Italy's financial crisis, a costly and inefficient health system, a pension system which is too generous, and a public sector which is antiquated and unproductive. The reform of the pension system in particular would demonstrate to Europe that deficit and debt reductions are sustainable and therefore credible.

But Prodi has preferred to adopt other measures more compatible with the programme of Rifondazione Comunista. The EU is a capitalist plot to destroy the welfare state and erode the interests. Prodi wants Europe, but he has to keep his pro-European convictions under wraps in order to carry favour with the Rousseau on which his power depends.

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Portraits

AS SK Sergio Cofferati, the leader of Italy's biggest trade union CGIL, who he intends to propose Romano Prodi's reforms for reform of the state and to write a new constitution. Thomas Mann not far from his mind.

Quoting the German novelist, Cofferati said: "Time, time, time, no need remains unchanged with the passing of the hours, a penchant for pithy observations may be one reason why Italians call him 'Il corno (the Cornman)".

A man with little time for ideological rhetoric, who prefers artistic arias to communist anthems, Cofferati is the epitome of the combative trade union leader of the past. One close associate calls Cofferati "the first trade unionist in Italy to use his brain rather than his lung".

As Prodi braces himself for the structural reform road to qualify for the first round of monetary union, Cofferati's agreement will be crucial to his success.

Unlike other European countries where consensus with trade unions is more than an afterthought, in Italy it is understood by a government looking to broker any major social reform without granting a key role to the national trade unions.

It is a red y removers of a special government task force set up to address welfare cuts in the country's three trade unions on the list of pro-unionists.

The Communist CGIL, the Christian Democrat DC and socialist-dominated FI are called the "triple axis" by the media. But with the Christian Democrats and the Socialists virtually defeated and the

former communist Democratic Party of the Left in power, Cofferati, with his fellow members, is undoubtedly the main player.

He has already walked centre-left government to not its proposal for welfare reform on the table. If it is not to be his, then Prodi knows the price.

In the autumn of 1994, four months after the 49-year-old Cofferati was CGIL secretary general, premier Silvio Berlusconi's strength.

Cofferati refused to back down on pensions reform. The outcome of the referendum was Italian trade unions' biggest victory in recent memory: a general strike, three million on the streets and a climbdown from which Berlusconi and his government never really recovered.

Marco Centa, economics editor of the left-wing newspaper *L'Espresso*, said: "It was not deceived by a government looking to negotiate. Cofferati is a man who has never been afraid to say 'no'."

In principle, CGIL agrees to the agreement on an overhaul in practice, it is a sector where national bargaining is a precedent. CGIL's 2.7 per cent per cent of GDP is 2.7 per cent of the European average?

Portrait of Sergio Cofferati

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It breaks with Cgil tradition by signing an agreement that guarantees jobs for chemical workers in the Pirelli Borsari factory, but which left those laid off to fend for themselves.

Cofferati had to return to the more brutal economic conditions that characterized the 1980s. But the cold wind of economic austerity is now, if anything, blowing harder than ever.

The government knows that Cofferati is the key to winning consensus on reform. It keeps him on its side.

Chris Emdin

'Chief Mercredi is asking Brussels not to ban fur traps

of those who naturally despise the sympathy of the Canadian and Indian.

the only thing held against them is their love of fur.

the North Americans who are not as comfortable region. Red Indians are a century or two they were bullied, harassed and killed. They were taken away from their business in order to force them to work for the farms.

It is very difficult to ignore the dilemma created by the fur trade towards those people of the north who are suffering of wild animals hunted by those same Indians.

There is a puzzle that kind of having a person aware of right, does not do anything to overcome it.

Chief Mercredi said it even more strongly: "If the fur goes ahead I will be responsible for the killing of wild animals. I know about wild animals and I know about the proximity to them, they have to be protected and seal hunters of the northern states."

Mannheimer concludes: "The government is now facing difficult decisions which could easily lead further support. It is unsure that the Italians would do anything for Europe if they have to, but you can't push them so far."

With little time for ideological rhetoric, Cofferati...

Italyans want to see the pinch of tightening budgets

ITALIANS want to see the pinch of tightening budgets as they are rebelling in increasing numbers against the high economic price of joining.

According to a recent study carried out by Isp, the Milan-based Institute of Political Research, the famously pro-European sentiments of Italians are beginning to waver. The economic pain necessary to qualify for EMU's high convergence criteria is being more readily if they wanted to "go further into Europe" 96 per cent of the people answered "yes", as one would expect from perhaps its most fervent supporters of the

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Chris Emdin

Michele Puccioni on increasing discontent over the cost of EMU

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The recent report by the European Commission, which predicted that Italy would not be eligible for the first wave of monetary union in 1999 without

antithesis of the combative union man

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PHOTO: AP/WIDEWORLD



Clinching victory, Buvaša Saitiev (right) on his way to gold in Atlanta

Wrestling with national pride

BUVAŠA Saitiev hopes to retain his European wrestling title in Warsaw next week, and intends to make up for a lapse that soured the greatest day of his sporting career, writes Gemma Dryden.

Already world and European champion, Saitiev stood on the Olympic podium a year ago, watching what he considered a foreign flag raised in his honour. Saitiev had won gold in the 74 kilogram freestyle event for Russia at the Atlanta games by beating defending champion Jung Soon Park of Korea 5-0 in the final, while "his" country, the breakaway republic of Chechnya, was still at war with the nation for whom he was competing.

At the ceremony, Saitiev, who became the first ever ethnic Chechen to win an Olympic title, looked at the packed crowd, hoping in vain to find his republic's flag among the other banners. There were many Chechens in the crowd who came to cheer him on but none brought their flag, he recalled.

"When I walked to the podium I wanted to hold two flags - one Chechen and one Russian." Although Saitiev does not feel animosity towards his Russian team mates, he says that he is often reminded of his side. "When all of us Russian Olympic champions sit on the podium, the cameramen always chooses to focus on a native Russian," he said. "That is why Saitiev said his ultimate goal was to represent

Chechnya in the Olympics. When I was much younger I watched other athletes on the Olympic podium with tears running down their cheeks. Real men crying? I could never understand that. Now I know why."

It may have been the Russian flag that was hoisted in Atlanta. But back home his people knew that Chechnya had won gold. It was about 2am in Chechnya when local television broadcast Saitiev's final. No one in his home town of Khasav'yurt was asleep and his homecoming, a few days later, was fit for a hero.

"I rode from the airport in a fleet of 250 cars," he said. "Those stands lined the streets cheering, everyone wanted to touch me."

Life had not always been so good for 22-year-old Saitiev, who comes from a family of six children and lost his father in a car accident at the very early age of six. The wrestler prayed up to his father every day in the six days after the accident, who pulled up religion.

"I'm a true Muslim, not one who picked up religion recently as the latest trend," he said. His Atlanta triumph brought a \$100,000 bonus from the Russian Olympic Committee which he used to buy a Mercedes. Saitiev insists money is unimportant - he lives in a two-room flat - but Europe was offered more following the Olympic triumph.

"I didn't take a thing. How could I? I was surrounded by all that wealth, when many of our people go hungry?"

Stars from Formula One's glorious past are heading for Monte Carlo, reports Jonathan Noble

MOTOR RACING aficionados reckon the sight of Formula One drivers such as Jacques Villeneuve and Michael Schumacher being pushed to their limits on the punishing street circuit of Monte Carlo grand prix is one of the best in sport.

But on Sunday 4 May, a week before this year's Monaco grand prix, there will be a prospect even more outstanding when the largest ever gathering of old grand prix cars roars into the principality for the Grand Prix de Monaco Historique.

"This may be the first time anything like this has happened anywhere in the world - it is definitely the first time for Monaco," explained Patrick Monostori of the Automobile Club de Monaco. "It has been organised along with the official grand prix since last April, although the real hand work started six weeks ago."

The event's seven races, put together as a series of celebrations to mark the 70th anniversary of Monaco's Grand Prix, are guaranteed to excite an expected crowd of 100,000 people.

Every single type of pre-1967 grand prix Bugatti, Alfa Romeo, Maserati, Cooper, Lotus, Brabham and a host of Ferraris will be there, as well as a variety of sports



Racing's greatest: Juan Manuel Fangio at the wheel of his Maserati 250F1 in the 1957 French Grand Prix in Rouen. That year he won the world championship, one of five titles the Argentine secured

cars. And a prewar D-Type Aston Martin and a prewar 200 vintage will assemble in a paddock covered by tents on the unusual quayside, allowing the public an unrivalled glimpse of Formula One's glories past - even before racing itself started around the full grand prix street circuit.

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Collectors eye grand prix riches

FANCY a yellow race car sold for the late Ayrton Senna during the 1997 grand prix season? What about one of Michael Schumacher's prized helmets? Or perhaps a 1967 Lotus Royale Silver Shadow? These, and scores of other items, from exquisite sports, racing and saloon cars to a huge amount of circuit memorabilia, go under the hammer in Monaco on 5 May to coincide with the Grand Prix de Monaco Historique.

The sale, called Les Grandes Marques, is the sixth of its kind to be organised in the principality by Brooks, the London-based auctioneer, which is hoping for a total of £1 million (£3.7m) for the 500 lots. Two cars in particular stand out, according to Brooks's managing director for Europe, Simon Kiddell: the only sports racing Ferrari, a 225S Scuderia, to win the Monaco grand prix, in 1952; and a 1957

Ferrari 250GT Tour de France. The Tour de France is extraordinary in that it is sold without reserve price. This is extremely unusual," said Kiddell. "I would say it is worth about £300,000. There are some serious collectors interested."

"It has taken Brooks since last summer to compile the auction, with items arriving in Monaco from across the world." "To give you an idea of the sale's prestige, the 225S Ferrari has belonged to its present owner for 20 years. When someone has had a car for that long, it takes a bit of persuasion for him to part with it. Nearly all items are privately owned and Kiddell said Brooks could have sold some more than the 53 cars included in the sale. "I'm only accepted about one eighth of those offered. Either the cars weren't in good enough condition or the owners wanted too much." Andrew Warshaw

Champion material: Senna's 1987 race suit

THIS WEEK ON EUROSPORT

Motorcycle World Championship season reaches Europe and the Spanish Grand Prix: can Max Biaggi triumph in the 250cc race for the second year running?

MOTORCYCLING : 2 - 4 May, LIVE. The Spanish Grand-Prix. Jerez. Max Biaggi could come under pressure from Britain's rising star Jamie Robinson

FOOTBALL : 7 May. The UEFA Cup Final. First Leg. Schalke 04 vs Inter Milan. The first of the season's major European finals brings together one of the giants of football, Inter Milan against the relatively unknown German team Schalke 04.

ICE HOCKEY : 13 - 14 May, LIVE. The World Championship. Helsinki. Finland play host to the best teams in the world

TENNIS : 5 - 11 May, LIVE. The German Open, Hamburg. The tough Mercedes Super 9 of the year brings together Myster, Becker, Agassi and Rusedski for the \$2.3m prize fund

EUROSPORT, the No 1 sports TV channel for Europe, covering the best action from Europe and around the world, is available via cable and satellite.

Wake up in the snow

Tore Strand and Bill Scott on the country's sole player in the world's top 50

BEING Norway's only known tennis player on the ATP Tour can sometimes be lonely. But Christian Ruud takes his near anonymity - both at home and across Europe - in a typically can Scandinavian style.

"I was taught at the start of my career to be unobtrusive to be the only Norwegian playing the game" said Ruud. "I travel alone, not at least I have a coach."

"If there was ever an omen that Ruud would become a tennis player rather than a footballer, cross-country skier or any other type of athletic synonym for his Norway, it was his birth date."

He was born during the US Open of 1972 and chose to take up the game 14 years later after trying other sports on offer at school. "I started having good results and won the Norwegian championships a few weeks before my 17th birthday," he said. "I decided that this was a sport worth trying even if it is only the 10th most popular sport in Norway."

Rarely has a sportsman in his country been so dominant in his particular field. Heigle Koll, FraJorvi Norway's number two, is not even in the top 500 in the ATP rankings.

Ruud himself almost gave up the game five years ago. That was in 1991 when he won Norwegian tennis and the French Open champion Yevgeny Kafelnikov on the way. His career has also included a win over Goran Ivankovic and he has taken Thomas Muster and Michael Chang (twice) to five sets.

But progress is tough, and Ruud admits that only a third of his breakthrough will make him a household name back home, where alpine and Nordic skiing, ski jumping,

worldwide teams body who headquarters are in Florida. "I'm a club member and I'd love to be especially damn good to Tour club executives. Mark Mickel, said to be the main force behind the switch, says he was approached by the ATP Tour board."

The European headquarters will remain in Monaco, said Peter Zverev, ATP executive vice-president for Europe. "The board voted to stay after it was learned that the club of the stateless tennis player would be in London."

"We also had support from Prince Albert of Monaco," said Zverev. "I expressed interest in working with the same staff. It is easy to create a European club like this. Our target now is to get the rest of Europe's tennis centre since so many players live in Monaco."

Last month, Austrian Thomas Muster was appointed to represent top players came together and decided they didn't want to continue to make their heads," said Muster.

"We're just trying to represent," he said. "I'm not sure if it's the ATP's job to represent."

The decision to stay put was made by ATP director Mark Mickel, said to be the main force behind the switch, says he was approached by the ATP Tour board. "The board voted to stay after it was learned that the club of the stateless tennis player would be in London."

"We also had support from Prince Albert of Monaco," said Zverev. "I expressed interest in working with the same staff. It is easy to create a European club like this. Our target now is to get the rest of Europe's tennis centre since so many players live in Monaco."

European players - around 75 per cent of whom are based in Monaco - face a major dilemma: to remain adamant that the move to London is a bad idea, or to support the ATP Tour and the continent's players, who are 75 per cent of Tour revenues.

CLIMBER PACKS PUNCH AT ELOP

WHY MIGRAINES ARE BIG BUSINESS

THE BANKER WHO INVESTS IN INTEGR

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COMMENT & ANALYSIS - PAGE 20

BUSINESS PORTRAIT - PAGE 32

Weimar bondholders chase their pot of gold

AN Irish businessman claiming to represent the majority of the owners of gold-backed bonds issued in the US by the pre-second world war German government...

says, could in turn set off the world's biggest - and richest - treasure hunt. The figures we're talking about are far in excess of what people are talking about in terms of 'Nazi gold'...

Doug Payne DUBLIN Jeremy Gray FRANKFURT bonds still in circulation were redeemed, then stolen at the end of the war, and are thus worthless...

and told they're worth at least \$50,000. The same people fall for it who queue up for promises of incredible interest rates of 30 per cent or more...

redeem only those bonds it deemed valid, at their dollar, and not gold value. Little is not doubted and says this clients dispute the legitimacy of the 1953 agreement...

STOCKS

Watchdog to keep eye on Paris bourse

The Commission des Opérations de Bourse (COB), the Paris financial market watchdog, has called for greater transparency from quoted companies in its annual report published this week...

It's time to get to work to become a formalist

CUSTOMS services are preparing to introduce a formal programme of reforms that will establish an inspection at borders. Health and agriculture will declare drugs electronically...

Tony Snape BRUSSELS health and hygiene inspection as examples. Customs will be a question of risk assessment and risk management, although in certain countries without sophisticated administrative procedures...

Philippines has saved \$200m a year by automating its customs system. Frober said that although the electronic control system would be lost, the overall benefits would be huge...

A HOLDER of one of 20 million anonymous Austrian Sparbüchsen - savings book - stands outside a branch of the Creditanstalt bank in Vienna this week...

accounts, which the EU claims can be used for money laundering, single market Commissioner Mario Monti said that even if the letter arrived after the deadline it would still be considered...

FINANCE

IMF backs down

OFFICIALS of the Washington based International Monetary Fund (IMF) have been forced to reveal after a row with the Basel-based Bank for International Supervision over who makes rules for financial supervision...

TRANSPORT

Spain's flag carrier airfare

IBERIA's flag carrying airline Iberia and two rivals have until May 15 to present their cases to a finance ministry investigation headed by minister Rodrigo Rato...

CHEMICALS

Plastic peril

SENIOR CHEMISTS are warning that within a decade the \$340 billion European chemicals industry could be forced to import drugs and plastics rather than make its own...

MEDIA

World of difference

FRANCE'S most powerful newspaper, Le Monde, which risked closure or being sold three years ago, announced last week that it is to be bought by a consortium...

UK ELECTION 97

John Tait Sebastian and Lindsey Brincher for a BBC World Special. They are joined by David Dinkley, Jeremy Paxman and Peter Snow for the latest election news...

Riddle of Euro defence banker's suicide

THE managing director of British Aerospace, John Weston, has called for the creation of a European aerospace and defence giant. He wants to merge Daimler-Benz Aerospace (Dasa), British Aerospace, Aerospaziale and Dassault to compete with the Anglo-French merged US firms, Lockheed Martin, Boeing-McDonnell Douglas and Raytheon...

Euro defence merger

The transformation of Airbus into a limited company was a good start of the consolidation process. Weston said. However, the US companies each have their own national positions and \$460m a year, compared with \$13bn for their largest European competitor...

Vatican's capital idea

THE Vatican has mandated observer states to be admitted at the Geneva based World Trade Organisation (WTO) in a bid by the Pope to keep watch over the excesses of capitalism. The move comes with a warning from the Pope to the 30 members of the World Trade Organisation...

EUROPEAN COMMISSION
BRUSSELS

ON THURSDAY João de Deus Pinheiro, director of the Commission, welcomed South Africa's accession to the new structure of the Commission argued that dumping of goods from the EU had caused EU competitors to suffer losses. The Commission also cited price pressure and financial problems in the textile industry from India, Indonesia, Pakistan, Turkey, China and Egypt.

On Monday, Martin Wolf-Mathies, chief of affairs commission, used a forum on EU cohesion policy to refer to the official debate on the reform of EU structure. The commission said that EU regional aid should focus on boosting growth and move away from capital intensive investments which have little impact on employment.

Addressing subsidies by closing a factory or one member state and opening up another. Wolf-Mathies said that "at least be trying to find a structural investment projects, such as using tax assistance from being misused to subsidize the production of firms". The commission also urged the EU to strengthen the regional role in distributing aid.

Meanwhile, aidrag Flynn, employment in EU societies had more funding than in other countries. On the same day, EU Finance Commissioner Yves Thurlaut-DeSilly triggered a single market competition among member states.

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On Friday the Commission proposed that the EU Council should impose definitive anti-dumping measures on imports of

EUROPEAN WEEK
A WEEK IN THE LIFE OF THE EU

THURSDAY 27 APRIL TO WEDNESDAY 30 APRIL
Commissioner says G7 should be replaced by the US, Japan and EMU countries... EU poverty increases... Maastricht treaty infringements up by 30 per cent

might include a general increase in food law. The commission stated that the Commission adopted what it called a "rigorous budget" for 1997. The Commission also said that the budget for next year. The budget provides for a 1.8 per cent increase in 1998 payments, although the financial perspective for 1997 would have allowed a 10.2 per cent increase in payments appropriations for 1997.

EUROPEAN COUNCIL
BRUSSELS

Industry Council ON THURSDAY industry ministers meeting in Luxembourg agreed to give the European Commission greater powers to veto cross-border mergers, thereby clearing the way for an in-depth reform of EU competition rules.

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BUSINESS WEEK

EURO DISNEY operator of the Disneyland Paris theme park, fell further into the red because of new advertising charges, despite an increase in ticket sales.

A majority of ministers backed a resolution proposed to allow textile exporting countries such as China, Indonesia and Taiwan to transfer unused quotas which they have imported into the EU in the subsequent period.

THE WEEK AHEAD

THURSDAY: EU institutions meet on April 27. Sir Leon Brittan, trade commissioner, participates in ministerial meeting of the quadripartite trade group in Toronto.

MONDAY: Wolf-Mathies, regional affairs commissioner, speaks at a German trade mission meeting in Cologne.

FRIDAY: EU institutions meet on April 28. Sir Leon Brittan, trade commissioner, participates in ministerial meeting of the quadripartite trade group in Toronto.

MONDAY: Franz Fischer, agriculture commissioner, visits Stockholm on April 29.

TUESDAY: Martin Bangemann, industry commissioner, visits London on April 30.

WEDNESDAY: Neil Kinnock, transport commissioner, visits Warsaw on May 1.

THURSDAY: Sir Leon Brittan, trade commissioner, visits London on May 2.

FRIDAY: Sir Leon Brittan, trade commissioner, visits London on May 3.

SATURDAY: Sir Leon Brittan, trade commissioner, visits London on May 4.

SUNDAY: Sir Leon Brittan, trade commissioner, visits London on May 5.

MONDAY: Sir Leon Brittan, trade commissioner, visits London on May 6.

TUESDAY: Sir Leon Brittan, trade commissioner, visits London on May 7.

WEDNESDAY: Sir Leon Brittan, trade commissioner, visits London on May 8.

THURSDAY: Sir Leon Brittan, trade commissioner, visits London on May 9.

FRIDAY: Sir Leon Brittan, trade commissioner, visits London on May 10.

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ECONOMIC INDICATORS
Commentary by Thierry Naudin

IN THE UK, a pick-up in household services, finance and consumer services, led to a 0.2 per cent increase in domestic product by one per cent in the last three months of the year. The largest quarterly rise in two and a half years.

German employment will rise two per cent over the next year. German companies are expected to invest 14.7 per cent more in research and development.

French industrial production rose by a higher-than-expected 0.2 per cent in February. January. Consumer prices rose 0.1 per cent in March from the previous quarter.

UK inflation fell to 1.2 per cent in March from 1.3 per cent in February. In January sales rose 0.5 per cent over the previous quarter.

US industrial production rose 0.4 per cent in March from 0.3 per cent in February. In January sales rose 0.5 per cent over the previous quarter.

EUROPEAN GROWTH INFLATION UNEMPLOYMENT
Quarterly growth (annualised) %
Yearly growth %
Inflation %
Unemployment %

	1997	1996	1995	1994	1993	1992	1991	1990	1989
EU	2.9	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7
Germany	2.9	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7
France	2.9	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7
UK	2.9	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7
US	2.9	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7

INTEREST RATES & CURRENCIES

MARKETS gave a mixed reception to a call against overshooting long-term rates. The 10-year rate fell to 7.27 per cent on 27 April in Washington by finance ministers and central bankers from the G7.

Seven major industrial countries against the deutschmark only two days later after the euro economic indicators allowed years of a rise in US interest rates. But the dollar remained unchanged as the yen as a force of central bank intervention diminished.

Commenting on prospects for interest rates, the IMF's Massimo Riva, a senior lecturer at the International Monetary Fund, said, "I am confident that

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UK	2.9	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7
US	2.9	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7

OFFICIAL INTEREST RATES

Country	Rate	Previous rate	Change
Austria	3.00	3.00	0.00
Belgium	3.00	3.00	0.00
Denmark	3.00	3.00	0.00
France	3.00	3.00	0.00
Germany	5.00	5.00	0.00
Greece	3.00	3.00	0.00
Ireland	2.00	2.00	0.00
Italy	15.00	15.00	0.00
Japan	6.25	6.25	0.00
Netherlands	5.25	5.25	0.00
Portugal	5.00	5.00	0.00
Spain	5.00	5.00	0.00
Sweden	4.75	4.75	0.00
Switzerland	4.00	4.00	0.00
UK	5.00	5.25	0.25
US	5.50	5.25	0.25

EMU WATCH

GERMANY, France and Italy should take supplementary measures to reduce their budget deficits to three per cent of GDP by 1998. The IMF forecast that the German deficit would be 3.2 per cent of GDP in 1998.

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EAST EUROPEAN CURRENCIES

	US\$	DM	UK£	FFr	ECU
Albania (L)	147.50	85.16	239.38	25.26	166.30
Bulgaria (Bullev)	30150.0	20272.8	57046.0	602.0	39629.9
Czechia (CzK)	1492.00	102.94	244.66	4.56	292.00
Croatia (Kuna)	6.18	3.57	10.04	1.06	6.97
Czechia (New Koruna)	17.80	10.67	24.56	2.53	17.20
Denmark (DKK)	13.85	8.00	22.48	2.37	15.62
Euro (Euro)	1.65	1.00	2.48	0.25	1.65
Finland (Finn Mark)	104.20	60.20	37.21	6.96	106.00
Latvia (Lat L)	0.58	0.34	0.95	0.10	0.68
Lithuania (Litas)	1.00	0.60	1.35	0.14	0.99
Macedonia (Denar)	47.25	26.41	74.25	7.84	51.68
Netherlands (Gld)	5.49	2.65	7.44	0.79	5.17
Poland (Zloty)	202.00	120.00	270.00	27.00	202.00
Russia (Ruble)	47.25	3315.0	9318.9	963.5	4743.8
Slovakia (Slovak Koruna)	702.00	420.74	1203.7	120.37	702.00
Slovenia (Koruna)	33.62	19.41	54.57	5.76	37.91
Slovenia (New Koruna)	13.75	8.12	17.50	1.75	13.75
Ukraine (Hryvnia)	1.77	1.02	2.87	0.30	1.99
Yugoslavia (New Dinar)	4.85	2.90	7.87	0.83	4.85

* Change over month (month on month) per cent. ** Month on month change per cent. *** Rate per cent. SOURCE: Reuters

WHOVER wins the British election one thing seems certain: the victors are unlikely to make much change to the economy. The popular explanation is that the Labour and Conservative leaders Tony Blair's ambition and John Major's pragmatism have combined to smooth out what used to be a noticeable gap between Labour and Conservative strategies. In fact economic realities leave British politicians very little room for manoeuvre.

With record low inflation and higher unemployment than some other major industrial nations, the UK shares the same economic problems and solutions as its European partners. These features are to be expected in economies which, like many in the rest of Europe, are in a recovery from recession, but they are rather unusual for a country which has introduced such radical expansion. How to keep growth going and create more jobs while maintaining a tight grip on public finances and inflation are the major challenges the new British government faces.

The details of New Labour's plans to reduce unemployment are sketchy. But the basic thrust seems clear enough to be expected in any government: to increase the number of working hours available, to streamline or abolish two distinct sectors depending on who wins the election. It is a bad case of precise imitation. The French would say *ils ont*

fronced with such uniform precision of thought that it is almost a cliché of the political spectrum.

One of the reasons Labour's swing to a more moderate line reflects the fact that the Conservative Party has to have brought to British society. The main headline that the voters will see on their own homes is labour's support for a monthly mortgage repayments scheme as far as your eye can see, you do not want anyone to rock the boat with radical alternatives and onward expansionary policies.

More fundamentally, the convergence between the Labour and Conservative policies is the state of the British economy. These have little room for free spending policies. British left wing politicians have been criticised for not insisting in which their

INSIDE VIEW

Conservative and Labour economic policies have never been closer. The winners are unlikely to do too much tinkering with the nation's finances, says Economics Editor Thierry Naud

Conservative rivals have been dabbling too quickly as the government has increased both borrowing and asset sales. The deterioration "cannot come at this rate. The government would eventually face a situation in which it could not raise the taxes needed to service its debts".

Warren's analysis might be cutting the risk of default or bankruptcy if it were not true. But there is a doubt in my mind that it is being considered by most economists as one

of the very few countries currently meeting the deficit and debt criteria of European monetary union. The MIES is right to suggest that it takes more than sipping by headline figures to gauge the true state of affairs.

The other key to the imbalance between the UK public sector's assets and liabilities partly results from the side-trailing privatisation programme launched by former Conservative prime minister Margaret Thatcher in the mid-1980s. Sales of profitable utilities such as British Telecom cut off a source of revenue to the government. Privatized and other companies underwent extensive restructuring and destroyed jobs.

Britain's official unemployment rate is 7.3 per cent compared with 10.8 per cent for the European Union as a whole. But with 26 per cent of the active population out of jobs, Midland

Bank estimates that Britain's real unemployment rate is 14 per cent, or four million people. Financial liberalisation's compensation is a burden on public finances, though less than that of the more restrictive model and health required by an aging population.

With their calls for more active employment policies, Labour leaders are on home ground again. But here, too, economics leaves little alternative. Motivating and training the unemployed back into work is required to relieve government finances. Reinventing skill shortages prevents excessive wage rises, but does not rekindle inflationary pressures. Keeping an over-valued sterling is keeping at bay while hitting exporters, growth, jobs and deficits.

With public funds scarce, Labour's plans still face a formidable task. The utilised utilities to help firms to hire long-term staff. The government has estimated that with its £5 billion (US\$26.2 billion) public works to be created on a pay basis in two years. The bad news is that the new government cannot maintain restrictive fiscal policies of the UK is to return to a sound and sustainable financial position by the end of the century. The alternative is tax increases - the very policy Labour and the Tories have in unison, vowed to avoid.

Russian economy's problems are not a shrug for reformers

THE view of the G7 group of leading industrialised nations is to which most last week when Washington was that Russia is "at a critical juncture in its economic transformation process". That was what the G7 said. The reform process which only a year ago looked to be still largely on track, is now stalled to such an extent that the Russian analysts can't even see the end to the economic stagnation which is gripping the country's favour.

The problem is that although the "big picture" reforms are in place - Russia has a small but active capital market, and privatisation is under way - the government's own private sector "success now depends on public sector reforms to the heart of the economy. In particular, it means restructuring the country's industrial giants and breaking up the power of former state monopolies."

This is not an easy task. After all, when you are used to being a state within a state, surrendering power does not come naturally, as Russia's economic companies are showing. The G7 group's recommendation to pay \$12 billion in grants and undertake efficiency improvements has been hailed as a success for the First Deputy Prime Minister, Boris Nemtsov, who has been cleaning up the monopolies has become a crusade.

Improving efficiency in Russia is clearly in every one's interests. Through a combination of levers and wage, losses of natural gas are estimated to be depriving the state of \$28n in export earnings. Western bankers and investors - from whom Gazprom is trying to raise \$5n through a series of Eurobonds issues, will also want to ensure that their money is not simply going up in smoke.

But for its critics of slick investment bankers, American

Gazprom remains resistant to change, reports John Howell

Depository Receipts (ADR) which allow US citizens to invest in foreign companies. Gazprom remains resistant to the idea of issuing ADRs to score a point or two, but the company is still firmly running in Gazprom's favour.

The bigger, but still elusive, battle is to west control from Gazprom's management of the 35 per cent government shareholding in the state. Shareholders' rights are not clearly defined. The Russian corporate sector, Gazprom's management has been respecting the country's industrial giants and breaking up the power of former state monopolies."

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INFLATION is painful, debilitating and time consuming. It can be characterised the condition. But the world market for drugs has become, to the manufacturer's dismay, a challenge and opportunity.

After years of declining sales of anti-migraine prescription drugs, Novartis introduced the first in the world market for drugs has become, to the manufacturer's dismay, a challenge and opportunity.

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Your pain and suffering is a tonic for drugs companies, for reports Kay Smith

It follows a breakthrough, he says. "They all started to look at each other."

The fruits of their efforts are being reaped. They are now competing for market share. Novartis has released a fast acting version of Zimetta. Zimetta is a new anti-migraine drug. It is a new anti-migraine drug. It is a new anti-migraine drug.

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INVESTMENT banks have had evidence in the way of clinical trials on humans, of what they call a "market place" for their product. The guess is that less than ten per cent of migraine attacks have been treated by Sumatriptan - its meteoric rise in commercial sales having more to do with its premium price of £8 per 100mg tablet than with market penetration.

The companies public relations and sales machinery are now working hard to increase awareness among doctors, both of its new anti-migraine drugs, and of the condition itself.

They are also banking on patient power to stimulate demand. Doctors would very rarely offer to give a patient the tablet to ask for it," says executive Chris Dalton, the drug firm's director of sales.

Sumatriptan makes up six per cent or £55m of Glaxo's total revenue. It is early days yet for Zolmitriptan but says Humphrey. This is a first for executive Chris Dalton, the drug firm's director of sales.

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Moscow looks to city of reformers

NIZHNY Novgorod, the showcase city of Russian reforms has sent another economic whiz kid to Moscow. To do this with the city's Boris Nemtsov was appointed first deputy prime minister. Last week he also made full and energy minister. Now Boris Nemtsov, 25, has been named by Nemtsov to overhaul the state-owned monopoly United Energy Systems (UES) of Russia.

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WERNER Metzner, the 51-year-old German retailer who made his fortune selling end of line goods, seconds and off-stock to the German public from shops under one motto - "loose change killing" - or

WOMING & SHAKING

Lidl sell seconds and other discounted goods for cheap. But Metzner was a pioneer and his style will be missed.

IT WAS a case of "let them eat cake" for guests at the wedding celebration of Finland's economic minister in Helsinki last week. The Finnish minister's name was not mentioned in the wedding programme.

Werner Metzner, who has fun money and expensive goods going cheap, seems to have had his day. The German retailer who made his fortune selling end of line goods, seconds and off-stock to the German public from shops under one motto - "loose change killing" - or

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While others an agent of progress, he is a corrupt intruder

THE suicide of a Milanese businessman has put corruption back in the spotlight in Italian business circles. One dubbed *Zangareppoli* (Bribesville) for its tainted reputation.

Amrogio Mauri, 66, who ran his own coaching building company, shot himself last week, leaving a note blaming his death on corruption. In the note he said: "This is a country where corruption and excessive power are still rife... Now that Zangareppoli is over, everything has returned to the way it was before... One thing is certain, professionalism is no longer a priority in public contracts... I hope that those that continue to resist have better fates than mine."

The note ended: "All this is really a shame. I have tried... I have not managed to pay. How stupid."

Like Mauri, who will leave over the family business, said his father was disillusioned with the Italian system in which he worked. "It is to blame for my father's death," he said.

He added: "My father worked for 48 years in a system based on bribes and a lack of ethics, but he never gave in to corruption."

He said his father had never taken a bribe and was "lived to work". He added that the company had gone through a tough couple of years after 1992 when Zangareppoli investigations virtually all public contracts.

At Mauri's funeral his best friend former magistrate Antonio Di Pietro, who has been in the spotlight for his role in exposing a leading role in the biggest clean-up operation called *Mani pulite* (Clean Hands), which attempted to

cut through the endemic pattern of kickbacks for branch company fraud and false accounting.

Giorgio Laguna, a specialist in financial fraud who has worked closely with the Milan magistrates in their inquiries, said: "Mauri is an example of an honest man who wanted to work in an honest way."

Mauri's death brought an immediate response from Italy's justice minister Giorgio Maria Fico, who has been attempting to introduce new laws to put Italian justice on a fast track. "It is clear that it is not possible to fight corruption only on the penal front, but with laws, efficiency and transparency, which we badly need," he said.

Edmondo Bini-Liberali, general secretary of the Association of Italian Magistrates, who contributed to the anti-graft book *Code of Justice* along with six other magistrates in Rome, said: "We could continue to pursue corruption indefinitely. But there comes a point when we must release the commercial communities must take over and renege on their competition."

Under investigations led by a team of anti-corruption magistrates, 3,500 Italian businesses, public and public officials have been prosecuted, 600 people sentenced, but less than a dozen people have been put behind bars since the *Mani pulite* operation started in 1992.

Laguna pointed out: "The *Mani pulite* investigations plumb high level corruption and do not touch business corruption."

But even in Milan, as possible. Business woman Maria Teresa Bras-

siolo, 57, its president of Italy's recently established branch of Transparency International, the international organisation committed to cleaning up business. She wants to give support to companies who find themselves faced with corruption. "We want to build up islands of integrity so that companies don't feel isolated in fighting corrup-

tion," she said this week in Milan where the organisation has its Italy base.

She maintains that the *Mani pulite* investigations, coupled with an outgoing anti-Rome, anti-corruption Northern League city council over the past five years have helped to reduce the abuse of public

power for private profit. But she points out that "until everyone joins an anti-corruption fight, only small steps forward will be made."

Brasilioli, who owns a small company that invests products and processes in Milan, maintains that more success has been achieved in Milan in cleaning up corruption than any other

part of Italy but that there is still a long way to go. "Kickbacks for public contracts was a big cash cow in Milan before the clean-up," she said.

Reeling off a string of figures to support her point, she quoted savings of about 40 per cent which the city has made on tendering public contracts over the past

four years. None of this progress was any help to Amrogio Mauri, apparently overwhelmed by a system he could not compete with.

In his final note he wrote: "I am getting off the train of life. This is the last station at the end of the run. I am not doing this out of selfishness but out of depression or as an escape from responsibility."



Carlo Mauri (left) and his brother Umberto stand outside the family's factory in Milan. Carlo blames the Italian system's lack of ethics for his father's death

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It's time to say see to the Euro

LAST December may be a harrowing month for Ferdinand Piech, the Volkswagen chairman and veteran of tough times at the world's largest car maker. Before Christmas it became obvious that the deutchmark, against the claims of many economic gurus, would not ring out the year with juicy gains against the dollar, the yen and a score of European currencies. VW's insurance experts have reported to superiors that they are holding deals worth over \$1 billion profit. But a liability of \$1.1 billion (US\$1.7 billion) to be written off in six months in the 1996 loss sheet.

Little wonder, then, that VW and Germany's other big car makers are changing the bit for the euro to be introduced. Although a common European currency couldn't prohibit fluctuations against the euro or the yen, it would lock in two-thirds of Germany's export market in the form of the EU. And a large euro bloc would prove stable against the dollar, according to Manfred Gertz, finance director of Daimler-Benz, manufacturer of Mercedes-Benz cars.

The euro would effectively eliminate the risks of sudden and unpredictable exchange rate movements for companies within the EU, and probably even curb dollar rate fluctuations. Gertz said: "The euro would be a Dm1000 unit on currency transactions today. In 1999, BMW reportedly also paid a pin, but isn't reporting it."

Strictly speaking, the new unit for exchange deals won't be a loss, but had to be written off according to German accounting practices. However, an evaluation under US accounting rules wouldn't have been much different, according to Kurt Ruppelitz, a spokes-

Firms would be less exposed to risk, writes Jeremy Gray in FRANKFURT

man for the Wolfsburg-based car maker.

"It is a position which is for the eventuality that VW might have made a loss," Ruppelitz said. In part, the provision is based on the fact that VW uses a conservative currency policy. It has entered more than 100 multinational markets.

WV has entered into 12 to 24-month foreign exchange contracts which spanned the end of 1996 and which, as it turns out, severely punished its earnings on 31 December. VW's post-tax profit of Dm680m last year would otherwise have been Dm1.1 billion higher.

Piech missed target but has been Dm118 higher (Dm300m of provision were attributed to car makers) than he would have easily passed had he not entered into three per cent - a painful sacrifice for the car earnings. VW currency manager Robert Betsch and his league calculated that three currencies, the dollar, the pound and the lira would depreciate against the deutchmark during the course of 1996, and hedged the company

accordingly. But the currencies rose and Reich, in effect, lost his bet.

At least, that is for the time being. After all, VW's 1997 accounts should recover part or all of those losses, depending on how the dollar behaves in the course of the year. A senior currency trader at a major German bank in Frankfurt maintains that it is unfair to turn the spotlight on VW, partly because of the high level of leverage overstate company.

"This is a case of a value added company, not a valuation," maintained the trader, who says he has dealt directly with VW currency manager Reich. "If we were VW, we would have known how to do it better," he said. Other major German exporters would be suffering a similar fate. "You could have focused on any number of other companies for this course of the year."

VW is already chastened by last year's currency speculation plunged into a Dm470m loss in 1986, which was offset by a rising foreign exchange director Rolf Selovsky's job. Volkswagen's latest balance-sheet embarrassment doesn't attract the same downgrading of brokers' expectations for 1997 earnings. Analysts, concerned of VW's lengthy restructuring efforts, say that the management won't allow a currency analyst at Bayer-Weil, who said, "I would expect a sharp increase in 1995 to Dm69 in Dm55 in 1996. When I think that VW's profits could have been at least Dm180 larger, then I imagine that even better things are to come," he said.

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Teleshopping clubs are taking on cable at their own peril

Europe falls to make mobile phone a network initiative

MEDIA

Club titiations are being buoyed by the promise of big money from pay-TV reports

David Shvart

SUCCESS has become a business with a UK stockmarket capitalisation of more than £1.2 billion (S&P). It has also spawned two investment funds, and is increasingly being the subject of venture seminars in company weeks.

The seminars concluded that the sport will continue to be an active sector in European stockmarkets as it is beyond the reach of the premium on the promise of big money from pay television. This is despite recent share price falls in the sector and continuing disputes over who controls broadcast rights. In recent months, most of the 14 quoted British clubs have suffered share price falls of up to 30 per cent and the prices of all three Danish quoted soccer teams have fallen.

Most observers agree that the price falls are a reflection after initial overvaluation.

The markets are learning how the sport works as a business, although the prospects for pay-TV are becoming clearer as the industry will possibly through the development of a digital channel TV.

The December '97 conference and exhibition at the Manchester Wembley arena this week, Bradley Mitchell, chief manager of insurance group Commercial Union, says: "Most institutions do not hold shares in football clubs and are likely to be miske of them. We don't think that the industry will be like in four or five years time. I shall not think the industry really understands."

Chris Aker, chairman of investment company Caplan, bought British club Leeds United last summer, pointed

out that most of the investment so far had come from media and entertainment groups. "Media income will be the major income in the future," he added.

Nevertheless, Caplan's purchase of Leeds United for £16.6 million has already proved a good investment for pay per view. Its market capitalisation is around £100m despite the downturn in the sector.

But pay investors will certainly see as the reason why prices will be down into the soccer business, Aker's said: "It is six to nine months digital television and pay per view will be a price ceiling, amounting to 90 per cent of the revenue for setting up a

digital platform is not media, it is soccer, and that is dangerous".

Royal Dutch Football Association. But an early experiment with football pay TV in the Netherlands failed with the collapse of the Sport 7 channel last year, indicating that pay per view may meet with variable success in Europe.

Robert Welch of Dutch pay TV group Canal Plus said at Soccerex: "A Dutch man never gets his hand in his pocket for anything."

And opinions mixed over whether clubs across Europe will make a local example of their British counterparts, says: "Many European clubs have structural problems, such as

being owned by foundations. The majority of money has been spent by the least efficient."

He added that there were few full time chief executives with a track record and that this new soccer business had different revenue streams to manage, such as entertainment and retail income. He asked: "Can one managing director manage all that? The jury's still out."

The question had a particular relevance. The day before the Wembley seminars, Robert Landers, the Leeds United chief executive and the man credited with transforming Manchester United into the jewel in the British football crown, resigned after a disagreement with the board over suppliers and the lack of soft-

ware.

Data adapters for computers are on the board and should not be too expensive to buy. They will have a big impact on users, says Ericsson, who has been pushing them for years.

In March 1994, Nokia introduced a mobile phone IM, and Toshiba. It has a lot of software, but it is not a device around. The company is up the idea of personal digital assistants, the most notable Apple Newton, and then failed to do it.

In March 1990, Nokia was waiting for the software development - the 9500 Communicator - a mobile phone which opens up to reveal a board and screen. It was slow. Maybe the software was not ready for the market. They had to wait for the market to be ready for it.

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United is the latest UK club to come on to the market. The £15m paid for silver Alan Shearer was a good investment.

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AD LIBS

■ **THIS SATURDAY (3 May)** has been declared World Press Freedom Day and a particularly good one - that the rights most western journalists take for granted are not in some countries.

The Paris-based World Association of Newspapers, which represents more than 15,000 publications worldwide, points out that there are 180 journalists imprisoned in 22 countries for trying to report the news.

European governments have been criticised for simply dismissing as a "pathological condition" the case of the 180 in jail, 70 are held in Turkey, which is keen to join the European Union.

And the UK is about to end the previous offence of the "communist" government of China.

One of eight regulations on media issued by the authorities states that in Hong Kong "the media

must act in accordance with the policy formulated by the British Central Committee"

■ **IN MGM's first major bid** since it was bought last year by a French state owner, the Hollywood studio is buying by Atlanta based Metromedia International Group for \$57.3 million in cash. MGM acquires the 2,200 title film and television library as well as the production and distribution assets of Metromedia's entertainment group, which includes Orion Pictures and the Picture Corporation of Korkor and Australian media conglomerate Seven Network of the \$1.3 billion. It came up with a new record for the troubled company.

■ **FRANK MANCUSO** said the French bank Credit Lyonnais, MGM chairman Frank Mancuso said that "it simply publishes a list of names of investors who are still making the rounds of investors hoping to get rich. These local German government holders are responsible for this selling claims on my behalf," he pointed out.

■ **THE** German government has not yet paid a curio. It is the only one of its kind in the world.

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Tobacco companies take a different road to get message across

■ **TOBACCO** manufacturers, increasingly hit by bans and cuts on advertising in Europe, are discovering a new way of promoting their message across the public, - advertising on private cars.

Madrid, the Pall Mall cigarette logo can now be seen on the backwork of 75 cars, as they are driven around the Spanish capital.

Logos, a company behind the

initiative, said it is talks with a second cigarette company as well as manufacturers of soft drinks and beer and TV and travel companies. They estimate £230 a month.

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Continued from page 19

with interest coupons to the agency and produce evidence that the bond is physically located outside German borders as of 1 January 1985. The German minister explains that he or she failed to present the bonds in time to 1988, and that the tardiness was due to "extreme hardship".

The German government does not include, for instance, loss by theft or accidental recovery of the paper due to interest in a qualified form of camp - a genuine example of owners of bonds who were not re-identified. Holders can present the bonds for exchange to some of German banks, not just law firms and foreign banks, but also to the regional German government offices of the era, who may then refer the matter to the responsible court for a declaration of validity.

The German government itself says that the chances

of any coupons declaring redemptions nowadays are slim. Frank Mengenthaler, vice president of the Bundes Schindler Verwaltung, the German federal office responsible for public debt, said: "There are only about 2,000 valid Dawes, and the German government does not know all the numbers of bonds which were sold after the war. We know most but not all of them."

At the same time, it is five to six times as many bonds, or some 10,000 to 12,000 national securities of the German Reich, known in circulation, he says. "There is a list of known numbers," Mengenthaler claims. "We know their (criminals) who took them

only need to concentrate on the unregistered numbers of the Mengenthaler adds, however, that the federal government doesn't know either how many other German non-federal IOUs, issued between the world wars, including municipal, corporate and community bonds, are still making the rounds of investors hoping to get rich. These local German government holders are responsible for this selling claims on my behalf," he pointed out.

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'The ultimate guarantor is the Bank for International Settlements and that means every citizen in the G7 nations will end up paying'

European sales new heights for Elopak

LIKE a lot of Norwegians, Bjørn Flatgard appears slightly uncomfortable in an indoor environment. He is dressed and with an imposing figure. Flatgard, 47, gives the impression that he would be at ease in an outdoor setting. It comes as no surprise that the president of the Norwegian packaging group Elopak loves mountain climbing.

Flatgard has an impressive track record for recognizing a promising situation and capitalizing on it. In 1986, while still an appointed chief executive officer of a creamed Phama, the company had a small turnover of less than Nkr200 million (US\$66m). In 1990, his last full year running the company, sales had risen to Nkr5.3 billion.

Flatgard was offered the job last August after the unexpected death of his predecessor, 52-year-old Eitell Storm. After just eight months as Elopak, Flatgard has the glow of a man with a golden chance. He is talking enthusiastically. "Orderly growth in mind you, but I see enormous opportunities in the present situation." He speaks of his obvious position of geographical centrality extending our presence in our core business. Pure Pak liquids packaging, which means the packaging of fresh fluid products, like milk and juices.

Elopak and Tetra Pak had a row over an attempt by the Swedes to drive Elopak out of Italy

Elopak is the market leader in

The Norwegian drinks packaging group has ambitions to be a global player, writes Hal Richards

able (pulp-art and pour) drinks packaging in Europe, Flatgard claims. "We sell whole systems, not just packages or 'blanks' (the cardboard boxes to be molded into cartons)." The market is split between the US and Latin America.

"We are only now exporting blanks to Asia, although we recently opened a blanks factory at Fozzy, near Kiev, Ukraine."

Elopak is also involved in aseptic (sterile) packaging, the traditional stronghold of rival Sweden's Tetra Pak group. As opposed to pure fluid packaging, aseptic packaging is used for fluids mixed with preservatives, such as long-life milk and juices. They are also used for wine.

Flatgard says his group's position in the aseptic market is "basically high quality and reliable, for example packaging very good milk."

Elopak and Tetra Pak had clashed earlier over an alleged attempt by the Swedish giant to drive the Norwegian through predatory pricing.

In the early 1980s, Tetra Pak built a globe-trotting network to build a global presence. In Italy to expand production capacity.

Flatgard, who had no involvement in the dispute, in relation to the case. But the late Storm said in 1994. Tetra Pak responded by viciously underpricing their version of our systems. They are overcharging their own specialities. Specifically, they give away fresh product machines, and I'm talking about million-dollar machines. They sold globe-trotting Tetra Pak machines for less than raw materials. This led to the group to benefit from increased visibility.



Talking expansion, after eight months in the job Elopak chairman Flatgard has the glow of a man who has been handed a golden opportunity

Pak being fined Ekr75m (US\$2m), still the largest amount ever imposed on a single firm by the European Union. The fine was confirmed at the beginning of this year by the European Court of Justice. No further appeals are possible. Tetra Pak still denies it broke EC competition rules.

One of the ironies of the dispute was that at the time neither company was based in an EU nation. Another curiosity is that both Tetra Pak and Elopak are family businesses and both are reluctant to release financial information. However, Tetra Pak said it had a 1996 consolidated turnover of \$8.32bn, while Elopak's turnover came to about \$500m, according to Flatgard.

However, a Deutsche Morgan Grenfell analyst who has studied the two companies believes Elopak's turnover figures are too conservative. "They are much too low. For one thing, a lot of turnover from licensing family-owned companies. I think they just don't tell the full story." The analyst said. She said the accounts of the Tetrademms group, which owns Elopak, are audited with reference to Norwegian accounting practice and that the country's approach to foreign subsidiaries is in line with those of other financial centres. "Don't forget, I'm a manager with a degree in business administration and masters in chemical engineering." His board seats include Aker, the big Norwegian engineering and oil services organization.

Flatgard remains modest about his appeal to the Andersen. "I'm hardly a packaging specialist. I'm a manager with a degree in business administration and masters in chemical engineering." His board seats include Aker, the big Norwegian engineering and oil services organization.

Flatgard says Elopak has some promising new products. One

involves an aseptic plastic pouch system called Elopouch, developed with German engineering. The Elopouch aimed at developing new distribution routes. The Elopouch aimed at developing countries that lack refrigeration. "The main Triplast is solving a food problem is distribution. These pouches avoid excessive spoilage," Flatgard said.

Another new product is a joint pack produced in a plastic pouch with a glass jar. "We have big customers for this product in Scandinavia," says Flatgard. "The main Triplast is solving a food problem is distribution. These pouches avoid excessive spoilage," Flatgard said.

Flatgard believes the world is interested in fresh drinks and that makes Pure Pak packaging, and Elopak a winner. While talking about his job, Flatgard lets his enthusiasm show through. "Elopak approached me I saw a challenge and I saw an opportunity," he said. He believes that the company's Pure Pak liquid packaging systems can boom because of a growing popular taste for fresh products.

The major question is how global expansion can be financed. "We have owners who are strong financially, but I can imagine a set of factors that require some very major funding. Let me put it another way: we are not an alliance, particularly in aseptic areas. Research and development and production of some kind. I can even see an alliance, and that would be with an entire Elopak group, but there is no business environment," Flatgard said.

British Entertainment brings air Vegas to Germany

Rolf Deyhle is about to lift the curtain on his latest production in Stuttgart, reports David Briery

The largest gambling and entertainment centre in Europe is nearing completion and such is the success that it creator, Rolf Deyhle, a German property developer and billionaire, envisages another three or four multi-million-dollar projects across Germany.

Three million visitors will make their way to the state-of-the-art and concrete St. Gallen, which overlooks the Danube River headquarters, close to Stuttgart airport. The chief attraction is the musical *Miss Saigon*, which has been playing at packed houses in a purpose-built 1,400-seat theatre since December 1994. Another musical theatre is being constructed on the same site. This will include *Beauty and the Beast*, set to open in December. The musical, a co-production with Deyhle and Broadway, is about to open for the whole of next year. Deyhle and his partners also hold a London production which opens in a few months at the Dominion Theatre. Stuttgart's proud boast is that only Las Vegas mega-hotels such as Caesar's Palace or the MGM Grand can offer a wider range of activities. Apart from the two theatres, there are casinos, a 450-bed hotel and conference centre, a multiplex cinema, a health and fitness centre as well as apartments, shops and restaurants.

With five million visitors projected next year, the *Zeum* satisfies the current taste for clean, well-lit and modern entertainment. Stuttgart is a safe artificial environment. The entrance to the theatre housing *Miss Saigon* is reminiscent of a traditional square, decked out in Las Vegas pastiche. The Don Giovanni possesses a Magic Flute clock where a mobile

Deyhle's site near Stuttgart airport is drawing huge crowds to start 15:00. The existing opera houses belong to the city, so we like to build our own," Bremer says. "It's something the public wants, which it cannot see in the theatre's past. Bremer performs the role of *Boyz n the Bay* at the London West End with *Sunset Boulevard* and is attracted to Bremer to the difficulty of filling the hole. "Without a site, it does not exist."

While Stella has acquired the rights to 15 musicals, it is intended to be a property development business in exchange. Despite the fact that the firm and its staff are to become Germany's Mr Entertainment, it is not keen on seeing the price. "Bremer says he's not interested in any of it as production." An interview with the Frankfurt *Frankfurter Allgemeine* newspaper revealed to a series of "yes" and "no" comments.

Questions have been asked about the closed-off property trust. Capital gains tax will be levied and leased back to the company. With funds of US\$2.2 billion, the company is the largest such fund in Germany. Bremer insists that everything is at an arm's length basis. "We have no links with them and they have none with us." He says he is from Sweden and typifies the successful businessmen from the German region where the small nation is the main market. *Hausle* *Hausle* and regularly leads out his collections to public galleries. Flatgard is on display in the Stuttgart collection of the inner-city restaurants and

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FUND RANKING

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Laura Suffield returns to New Dutch couple having worked for an art office. Laura Suffield has returned to her job at the Dutch couple's art office...

YOUNG DUTCHMAN

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Photo of a painting and text about the \$376,000 sale at Christie's. Includes details about the artist J.M.W. Turner and the painting 'Rain, Steam, and Great Bridge'.

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London levels in revival

COMMERCIAL
The city's booming thanks to riverside renewal and West End popularity, reports Clive Bramson

Docklands. Not far away, Granda is to build a 132-room Travelodge hotel, one of five hotel properties planned for Docklands.

Currently under construction, the new railway will run from Docklands to Lewisham, passing near the Millennium development in Greenwich and the Deptford Creek site, one of the British navy shipbuilding works King Henry VIII established in England's first royal dockyard and Boston Tea Party site. The new development activity is increasing, with a 24 per cent rise in new construction in the first quarter to 664,000sqm.

During the next two years demand for space will outstrip available office space, says Peter Ellis, managing director of Knight Frank's Shipen office, which has been seen in the late 1980s, with last year's take up of 1.08 million square metres the highest since 1980.

There is a shortage of large new office buildings. At the end of the first quarter this year, more than 5,000sqm available in central London, reports Nick Afford, managing director of last year's Jones Lang Wootton research and investment firm. This compares with the conversion of a warehouse into a Museum of



Canary Wharf (right) and the Spire's Place (above) is consolidating the recovery

West End and 48 in the City. Inevitably, this will lead to a further increase in the level of development on the recovery of the past two years. So having let 70 per cent of its new development at Regent's Place, British Land plans a further 34,000sqm of development on an adjacent site.

Demand is boosting rents, too. Roger Lester of Richard Ellis says: "Rents in the City have risen to the highest level for five years." The office space that they will average about 1477 a square metre by December 1998. Knight Frank's Shipen office says that rents in Docklands are the lowest last seen in the late 1980s, with last year's take up of 1.08 million square metres the highest since 1980.

Foreign investment continues to pour into commercial property, topping £680m in the first two months of the year compared with £488m in the first two months of last year. The German continue to be the largest investors, accounting for more than half of the January-February total.

RESIDENTIAL
Turning London property prices increased by 7.7 per cent in the first quarter, bringing the rise in the bottom of the market in December 1992 up to 66 per cent. One of the major reasons for the price increase is the strong demand from Hong Kong and Singapore for a large apartment, which is creating 359 apartments there in a huge search with Froegre Estates and Fatmeh, had a huge success with the apartment conversions at County Hall, newly formerly occupied by the Greater London Council.

The conversion of red brick buildings is spreading rapidly in London, and now provides an estimated 50 per cent of the new supply of apartments. There is a host of developers converting office and industrial buildings into residential accommodation.

Sapote has built a reputation for creating apartment blocks at the Litchmere school in Bacteres. The company has just started marketing two penthouse units in the building, known as the South Quay Quarter. For £230,000 and £245,000, Harry Bland, a former tennis player, has bought a two-bedroom Manhattan Loft.

Germany deals was Despa's £40m purchase of the landmark risk office building in Hammerstein. In February, another German-owned fund, DIFA, bought the £220,000 Thames Court, which is due for completion later this year.

Buyers queue up for capital conversions

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Take a short hop is a long haul

Knowing which airports offer the fastest transfers can save time and temper, writes Adrian Williams

N A perfect world, business travellers would be able to take direct scheduled flights between each important European business centre. But the world isn't perfect, and even important cities such as Gothenburg, Stuttgart, Lyon and Birmingham are badly served by airports, for a combination of operational and political reasons. Journeys in and out of these cities often involve changing planes — and for the canny traveller, that involves checking the airport minimum connecting time, or MCT.

Changing planes in a European airport can take anything between ten minutes and four hours, depending on its size, the layout of its terminal and the efficiency (or otherwise) of its facilities. The shortest MCT is offered at fly Lugano airport in Switzerland, for someone arriving on Crossair flight LX66 from Zurich, a 15pm can depart for Florence 15 minutes later on Crossair LX72. On the other hand, anyone changing planes at Amsterdam, Frankfurt or London Heathrow will have to wait for a transfer, depending on the airlines involved.

Knowing which airports offer the fastest transfers can save time and temper. In general the fastest changes of plane are made by compact airports with a good terminal, such as Amsterdam, Zurich, Copenhagen and Vienna.

City	Transfer Time (minutes)
Amsterdam Schiphol	40
Brussels	40
Copenhagen	40
Frankfurt	45
Geneva	40
Helsinki	30
London Heathrow	40
London Gatwick	45
Lugano	10
Moscow	60
Munich	35
Paris-CDG	45
Rome	45
Vienna	25
Warsaw	40
Zurich	40

TRANSFER TIMES AT EUROPEAN AIRPORTS

Minimum connecting times for international transfers.

Transfers at Frankfurt (where there are two terminals) or London Heathrow (where there are four) can take much longer. The routing is also important. It would seem logical for an Italian executive based in Bologna and who is making a trip to Warsaw to choose Allitalia. But Allitalia will route him via Rome, a longer and more inconvenient journey and one which involves a transfer at a terminal airport with an MCT of 45 minutes. Austrian Airlines, on the other hand, flies Bologna Warsaw via Vienna airports, which is a connecting time of 25 to 30 minutes. Likewise, a Stuttgart-based businessman travelling on an afternoon flight to Rome will save an hour by opting for Swissair via Zurich rather than Lufthansa via Frankfurt.

✶ **PORTUGALIA**, an independent Portuguese airline, is to start services from Oporto and Lisbon to Spain, Germany and Britain later this month. From 19 May there will be a daily Monday to Friday service into the UK's Manchester airport using a 93-seat Fokker 100 plane. This will be the only direct air link between Manchester and Portugal, and is aimed particularly at the textile and clothing business.

both airports (which can push up daily fee revenue and passenger handling fees) and airlines which fill up planes to save incremental revenue realising the commercial possibility. No wonder the privatised BAA (the operator of several British airports) has built a dedicated flight connections centre at Heathrow — more than a third of whose passengers are in transit — to cope with demands.

TRAVEL UPDATE

✶ **SABENA** is offering savings of more than 50 per cent on business class fares to six European cities until the end of October. These are short break trips involving a maximum stay of seven days, and other restrictions may apply on some routes. Among the routes on which the offer is available are those from Bucharest to Rome, Vienna, Copenhagen, Barcelona and Berlin.

✶ **Transit passengers** bring a rather choice of flights to the airport. Who would have believed a few years ago that British Airways now serves more destinations from London Gatwick than it does from London Heathrow? The airline targeted the transfer market for its Gatwick operations, and as a result BA's traffic there has grown to the point where 40 per cent of the business is in transit passengers, compared with 17 per cent a few years ago.

✶ **Similarly**, American Airlines has a global network of flights between Chicago and London via Frankfurt, through Schiphol, rather than via Amsterdam.

✶ **Even in the former east-West divide**, counter transfer times can match those in the West, providing the right infrastructure is in place. For example, Polish airline LOT has only a 40 minute MCT for international transfers.

✶ **MAJOR project** work is being done by the European Commission, but the bank's consultant list so key can be narrowed with any project that arises in the next few years.

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✶ **Further information can be obtained from Peter Matthews**, The Association for Information Management, Information House, 200 Victoria Street, London EC1A 4BA, UK. Tel: +44 (0) 212 549 4488. Fax: +44 (0) 212 549 4495. E-mail: peter.m@aiim.co.uk WWW: <http://www.aiim.co.uk/aiim/>

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