

RENATIONALISE BASIC INDUSTRY

BOSSSES in the industries privatised by the Tories are raking money in hand over fist. Yet some of the poorest people in the country are facing impossible charges for these industries' services.

■ The children's charity Barnardo's reports that water metering is forcing thousands of poor people to risk their health, because privatisation has meant bills are far higher than anticipated.

Desperate

Barnardo's reports that larger families and those who need extra water for medical purposes are being especially hit.

Roger Singleton, Barnardo's senior director, said that many of the poorest families 'are being forced into desperate measures, in-

BY THE EDITOR

cluding sharing bath water, cutting down on washing and avoiding flushing the toilet.

'This can leave them at risk of developing head lice and scabies and illnesses like dysentery.'

The charity joined the British Medical Association in demanding that water disconnections — now running at record levels — be made illegal.

Last year alone 21,000 people were disconnected

because they could not pay for their water and the numbers are rising every month.

Only £2.25 a week is allowed for water bills for those on income support, yet the average charge in the Yorkshire area is £3.42, and in the Lower Grange estate in Bradford — where Barnardo's carried out one of its surveys — most families pay between £4 and £8 a week.

■ British Rail, which is being starved of government cash as it awaits privatisation, is shelving its £600m train safety system

in the run-up to privatisation.

The safety system — Automatic Train Protection — was recommended as part of Sir Anthony Hidden's report into the December 1988 Clapham rail disaster, in which 35 people died.

Doubts

British Rail said it would not make the expenditure on the eve of rail privatisation. But there are grave doubts whether the new infrastructure authority — the BR subsidiary Railtrack — would implement Hidden's costly recommendations.

Privatisation has been used by the Tories to try and smash trade unionism in the public sector.

Parasites

Public assets have been sold at knock-down prices, providing rich pickings for the parasites in the City.

This raises the question of the renationalisation of gas, water, electricity, and all the other industries and services handed over to big business.

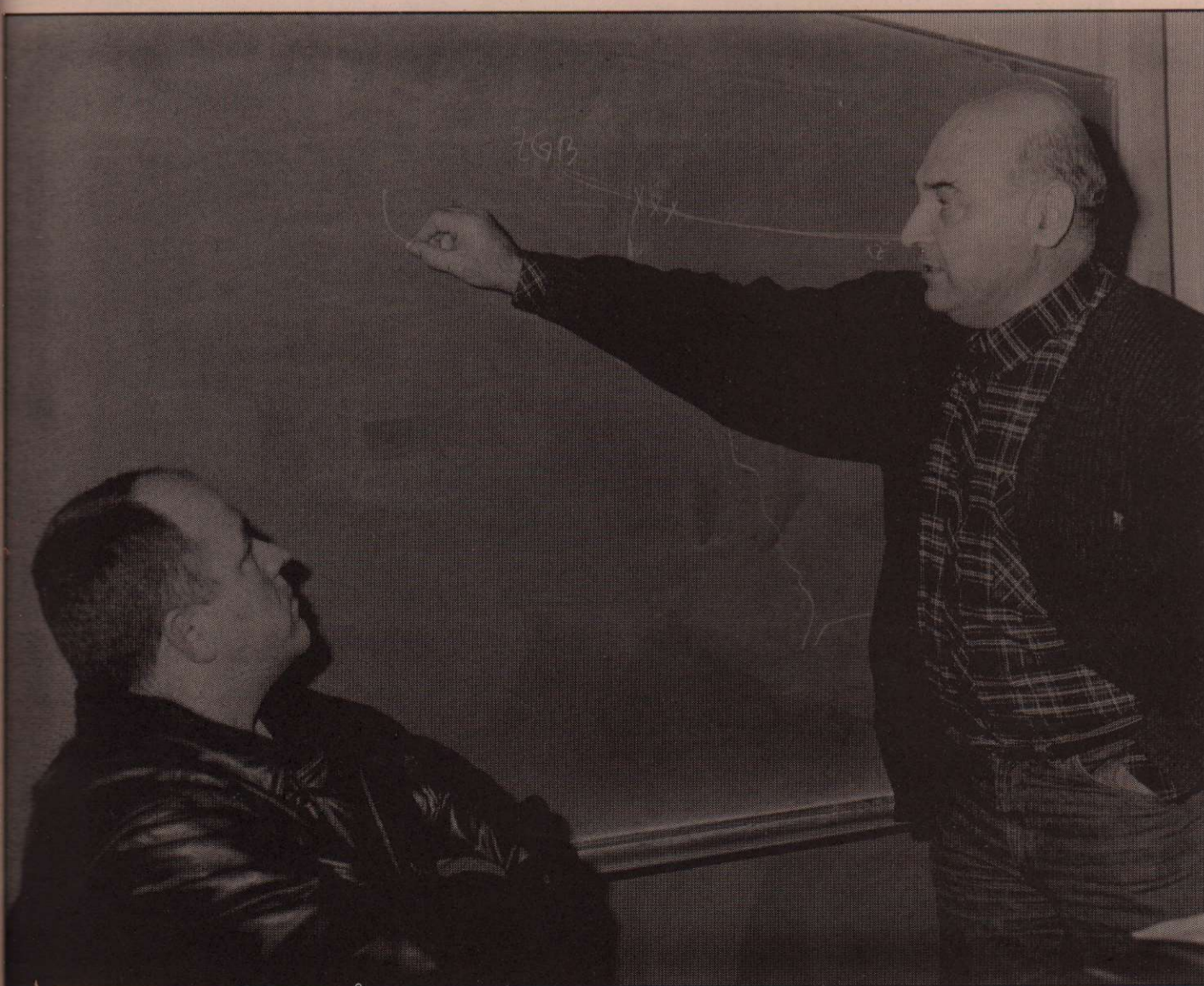
The Labour leaders stubbornly refuse to commit themselves to such a policy

of renationalisation. Their greatest fear is that they might offend the City and the bankers.

The renationalisation must not be of the sort carried out by the Labour government after 1945.

Such industries were run by professional managers in the interests of the capitalist system and workers had no control over them.

The industries privatised over the last ten years must be organised under workers' control and run for the benefit of those who work in them and those who use their services.



Relief as trucks get to Tuzla

THE International Workers Aid for Bosnia public meeting in London on 8 November greeted with relief the news that the group of five who took three trucks on the UNHCR route from Split, Croatia, had arrived safely in Tuzla.

Four of this group had decided — against the rest of the campaign's convoy team — to remove the campaign's logo, travel as humanitarian aid, and apply for 'blue' cards from the UN High Commission for Refugees. The video cameraman decided to accompany them.

Even with this UNHCR recognition, in order to get through, they were forced to give up aid and diesel to the HVO (Croatian army) on their two-week journey.

Faruk Ibrahimovic of Radio

Tuzla and Edo Asceric, director of the Tuzla Logistic Centre in Zagreb, welcomed the news.

'We cannot but admire and congratulate those who risk their lives along this dangerous road,' said Ibrahimovic, who explained that only eight of the trucks on a recent 86-vehicle convoy from Split organised by the Tuzla regional authorities had arrived at their destination. Eight drivers were badly beaten up and an estimated DM30,000-worth of aid stolen.

He told the meeting that these experiences made the Bosnians even more determined to campaign for the opening of the most direct and less dangerous road from Orasje to Tuzla — the northern corridor route (see editorial, page 2).

Friends from the Tuzla Logistic Centre in Zagreb spoke to a meeting in London last week on the eve of their return to Croatia. Faruk Ibrahimovic and Edo Asceric thanked all those who had made Workers Aid for Bosnia's convoy such a success and reported on their visits to the labour movement in Britain over the previous few days.

Both stressed the importance of opening the northern route to Tuzla so that commercial goods could be taken into Bosnia in exchange for salt and coal from the Tuzla region as part of the struggle to rebuild the economy. Faruk drew a map (picture left) to show the importance of the route. Both speakers said they were not interested simply in aid but wanted to fight for the self-determination of their country.

Photo: Marg Nicol

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'Democracy' at work

SPEAKING at the 30 October Workers Aid to Bosnia report-back meeting, Phil Hearse said that the movement should be developed on the basis of three principles: unity, democracy, and internationalism. Hearse is a leading member of the International Socialist Group, 'official' British section of the United Secretariat (USec).

The following day Hearse chaired a meeting in Manchester called by USec. The invitations to this supposed 'international' meeting from these protagonists of internationalism, unity, and democracy were highly selective.

The invitations were confined to members of USec and their sympathisers. No invitation was extended to the two representatives of Tuzla present in Manchester, nor to any of the considerable number of Bosnians who attended the previous day's report-back meeting.

Indeed a USec member, Steve Myers, referred in contemptuous terms to this latter group as 'some Bosnians from Manchester'.

No one was invited to represent the convoy.

When challenged, Hearse said he did not know why invitations had not been extended to those many individuals and organisations around the world who had supported Workers Aid.

The purpose therefore was to restrict the meeting purely to Hearse and Thornett's own USec members and set themselves up as an 'official' International Workers Aid, using the cover of the Manchester report-back meeting: that is what they do behind their phrases 'unity, democracy, and internationalism'.

All these things were flouted by them.

* * * * *

HEARSE insisted that the first item on the Sunday meeting's agenda be 'structures' and not 'aims and activities'. As a participant in the meeting said, this was rather like getting on a bus and then asking the driver where it was going to.

This typically social-democratic insistence on 'structures' in fact aims to limit the campaign, to confine it to the 'political groups' that initially came around it. It is the democracy of the middle class and the labour bureaucracy, not that of the working-class movement.

Such a method fears above all opening up the struggle to the working class. As a speaker at the Saturday meeting, Billy Pye, of the National Union of Mineworkers, rightly said, this talk of structures is actually talk of control — control over the working class, not control by the working class.

Further, Hearse refused to put a proposition to the meeting that there be a special item on the agenda to allow the two comrades from Tuzla an opportunity to speak. In a fit of magnanimity he said they could contribute to the general discussion.

When one of the Tuzla representatives did manage to speak after the lunch break, and explained why the opening of the northern corridor to Tuzla was now the key question, Hearse refused to take questions arising from this contribution.

Despite this plea from Bosnia, Hearse and company went ahead to adopt a programme which removed this task — the opening of the northern corridor — from the centre of the campaign. Some internationalism here!

Instead they adopted a general propaganda campaign which, as a concession, included the call for the opening of the airport at Tuzla.

Naturally we support this demand. But it is one that requires the rousing of a force in the working class internationally against the United Nations and its backers, including the Tory government.

* * * * *

THE voting procedure on Sunday was a farce and representatives present of the Workers International — the WRP is its British section — made clear that we would be no part of it. Before the meeting USec, in effect, decided who should vote and what weight should be attached to their votes.

We did vote for our own resolution, which proposed that Workers Aid should base itself on the decisions taken the previous day: that is that the fight now be centred, against the UN, on the opening of the northern corridor to Tuzla.

USec voted against this resolution, that is against the clear decisions of the Manchester conference. They are running away from the main question: the class fight alongside the workers of Tuzla, against the UN and all that this body represents.

The isolation of Tuzla is at the centre of the aim of imposing imperialism's settlement on Bosnia.

Those who refuse to take up an all-out fight against the UN are in fact making easier the UN's dismemberment of Bosnia.

Letters**Some 'Trotskyist'!**

I HAVE just read an interview by Mihalis Raptis (Michel Pablo) in the magazine 'Panda' ('Always'); since he has been readmitted to the United Secretariat of the Fourth International [a 'Trotskyist' tendency of which he had been a leader until he left in 1963] I think it worth presenting his views. The translation from the Greek text is mine.

Q. Let us speak about OKDE [Organisation of Internationalist Communists of Greece, formed in 1934, of which Pablo was a member]. The right accused it of acting against the nation. What do you think of that accusation?

A. If you are a real internationalist it does not mean that you do not love your home country.

Although you consider the whole planet as your home, whenever your country is attacked and conquered you must defend it by all means available, including weapons.

The accusations of the right were based on the misinterpretation of internationalism. They ignored that internationalism does not come in conflict with

the defence of the specific home country.

Q. During World War II the Trotskyists reproduced Lenin's views about World War I. They considered all the rivals imperialists. . . .

But in the countries invaded by Hitler should not the Trotskyists have defended them instead of treating the aggressors and the defenders equally?

A. As a secretary of the Fourth International I was responsible for the publication in Paris of 'Worker and Soldier', which we distributed at the risk of our lives, calling on German soldiers to revolt against the Nazi regime.

Whereas the Communist Parties made the mistake of equalising the German people with the leadership, we believed that by making a distinction between them we would also succeed in shortening the war.

Q. Aren't there times when you feel embarrassed at being in the same camp with national-socialist Arabs or, as now, royalist supporters of the Serbs?

A. First of all, I don't distinguish humans by strict class criteria. Of course bourgeois and proletarians have differ-

ences. But I take everyone's quality seriously into account.

I have found many right-wingers respectable, and if I had power I would judge them in accordance with their qualifications.

It is horrible for worthy people to be prosecuted at every change of government just because they are political rivals.

Today I respect all Greeks who are friends of the Serbs. I judge that it is in our country's interests to be on their side, on condition that they do not become, as we are, controlled by the Americans.

I find this a quite probable outcome. I am not an enemy of the American people, but only of their leaders who want to subordinate other peoples. I can't stand anything like that.

Pablo's answers speak for themselves. No comments are needed.

The question arises: will the members of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International continue to co-exist with someone who holds these views?

Panos Athens

Clique politics

IT WAS with a growing sense of anger that I read the letter from Steve Myers in Workers Press (6 November) about the Workers Aid convoy conference on Saturday 30 October, and the so-called International Workers Aid meeting called on the following day.

As a leading member of the Leicester Workers Aid group, one of the largest in the country outside London, I was surprised to hear that the Sunday meeting had anything to do with Saturday's event!

When we had a public meeting in Leicester on 21 October, although there was a member of Socialist Outlook present, no hint was given that the Sunday meeting was for anyone other than Socialist Outlook supporters.

At the end of our public meeting, as we were arranging transport for the 30 October conference, the Socialist Outlook member said that he would not come on our transport as he was staying on in Manchester for 'the international conference' the next day.

No attempt was made to publicise the Sunday meeting, no invitation to this conference was asked for nor suggested, and no proposal was made for delegates, either at our meeting or subsequently.

I would ask Myers: who were the delegates at the Sunday meeting, and who delegated them? Is this your 'approach to basic workers' democracy', an example of how you have 'learnt to work with others in the Labour movement'?

If the Leicester experience was repeated in other parts of the country, the pompous talk by Myers about International

Workers Aid being 'formally established' on the Sunday is revealed as pure hypocrisy.

The same is true for the impressive speeches on Saturday about the need to elect a democratic steering committee.

Another thing. Myers spoke at the Saturday conference about the wrong approach of those groups who thought they could 'parachute into' Bosnia and lecture the people there about what should be done. At the end of the day, it is their struggle, opined this great internationalist.

He then dismisses the position voted for by the Bosnians at Saturday's conference (the majority of those present), and by representatives of the people of Tuzla — for the opening of the northern route — as 'a stupid fetish'. A truly remarkable performance!

I don't really see that we should give Steve a 'right of reply' [to Workers Press' coverage of the conference, as his letter demanded] — what are we in, a law court? — but perhaps we should give him a bit of space, if only to explain his position on the points above.

In any case, why waste our space — anyone who wants to read a full account of the delegate (!) conference on Sunday can always buy a copy of 'Socialist Outlook'.

Paul Henderson Leicester

Are workers dupes?

THE COMMENTS made by Anton Moctonian (30 October) about the UK Gold cable channel made me feel uneasy.

He pours scorn on the TV soaps, sitcoms and other programmes shown on this channel, e.g. 'Eastenders', 'Neighbours',

'The Bill', 'Dallas'. I find this a very elitist approach.

It reminds me of those literary critics who used to dismiss cinema, pop music and other popular cultural forms as 'moronic'. For example critics such as F.R. Leavis and T.S. Eliot used to argue that only 'high' culture could educate people.

This is a very anti-working-class view.

To be sure, there are all kinds of criticisms one can make about the TV programmes mentioned.

'The Bill' tries to tell us that the police are only human, and they are doing a valiant job; the soaps have an irritating blandness. But I think there is a lot more in these programmes as well. It's not simply a kind of gigantic valium trip.

Of course UK Gold piles them up, one on top of each other: but it is explicitly a channel for repeats.

The research being done now in cultural studies is showing that audiences have very complex and sophisticated responses to TV soaps (see for example Ien Ang's book 'Watching "Dallas"'). Their use of plot and character is quite different from other dramatic forms, but it is not 'inane' by any means.

In fact I think sometimes Workers Press adopts an elitist view to culture. I think we should be looking more closely at programmes like the TV soaps and at pop music, popular films, and so on.

Moctonian is getting close to a view of 'workers as dupes'. Who are these idiots who come home from work, switch on 'Neighbours' and ignore the class struggle (and they could be watching Orson Welles's 'Macbeth' as well). That is a parody, but isn't there a grain of truth in it?

Roger Horrocks Fulham

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What does 'instrument of Stalinism' add?

I AGREE with Andrew Burgin (Letters, 30 October) that the fight of the Workers International for the convoy of Workers Aid is a positive result of a long struggle for Marxism against Stalinism and against revisionism in the Fourth International.

But I do not understand his criticism of Bill Hunter, who I know agrees with that appraisal. According to Andrew Burgin, Hunter should not have said simply that Pablo and Mandel capitulated to Stalinism.

According to Andrew, the 'essence' of revisionism in the Fourth International is that 'Pabloism was and is the instrument of Stalinism in the Fourth International'.

I have used the term 'instrument myself, but what does it mean, to insist that 'instrument' is the 'essence', that is not said in 'capitulation to Stalinism' leading to a) a repudiation of the core thesis of the Fourth International' founding programme, the fight to solve the crisis of working class revolutionary leadership, and b) Pablo-Mandel's 'theory' that Stalinism not only was not a counter-revolutionary as before, but in the new condition could lead revolutions (Hunter).

It was in this way that the pressure of Stalinism, unless it had been fought against, would have undermined the programme, policy and theory of the Fourth International in a situation where 'the Fourth International had been decimated in many countries by Stalinist repression and Nazi occupation. . . .' (Hunter).

What is added to this by counterposing Pabloism as a 'instrument of Stalinism', as the 'essence' of the matter, 'not grasped' by Bill Hunter?

Cliff Slaughter Leeds

Workers Press £3,000 monthly fighting fund

In so far: £685.75

THIS weekend sees the second world congress of the Workers International to Rebuild the Fourth International.

Members and visitors will be attending from Russia, Hungary, Germany, France, South Africa, Namibia, Ireland and Britain.

Clearly we have had many experiences and developments of our work and in understanding since the founding conference in Budapest in 1990, when the collapse of Stalinism internationally was only just becoming apparent.

Foremost, the work to build the Workers Aid convoy to Tuzla has made a real change in our relation to the working class and in our task of rebuilding internationalism in the workers movement.

The Workers Press is vital to carrying this work forward.

New postal charges mean that we need extra help — mail costs have doubled to some areas like South Africa (see new subscription rates on back page).

The 200 papers sent to southern Africa mean that an extra £5 will have to be found. These papers are a vital source of communication to our comrades there who are working under extremely dangerous conditions.

Please do everything you can to help us meet our responsibilities in rebuilding the Fourth International and international working-class consciousness.

Mike Cook
Send money to Workers Press
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Coming soon

SATURDAY 13 NOVEMBER: Walsall TUC march and rally against racism and fascism. Assemble 11.30am, Reedswood Park, Walsall near M6 junction 10.

THURSDAY 18 NOVEMBER: South Newham Action on Policing/Newham Monitoring Project united picket (6-8pm) of Plaistow Police station, 444 Barking Road, London E13.

FRIDAY 19 NOVEMBER: CSC picket of Birmingham magistrates' court, HSE prosecution of Tarmac.

SATURDAY 20 NOVEMBER: Free Oliver Campbell 'Rave for Justice', One Love Community Association, 1 Bishop's Avenue (off Plashett Road), Plaistow, London E13. Admission £2 — 8pm till late.

THURSDAY 25 NOVEMBER: Picket of the Home Office to protest a

year of non-implementation of a new method of transfer of Irish prisoners. At the Home Office, Queen Anne's Gate, London SW1H9AT at noon.

SATURDAY 27 NOVEMBER: John Maclean 75th anniversary meeting, organised by the English Republican Forum, 1pm, Lucas Arms, Gray's Inn Road, London WC1X (near King's Cross).

New attack declared on welfare benefits

BY PETER JEFFRIES

THE government has declared a three-pronged attack on welfare benefits, in the run up to its November budget that will announce further spending cuts and higher taxes.

■ Chief secretary to the Treasury, Michael Portillo, warned last Monday that provision of state pensions for those below the age of 40 could be withdrawn and people forced to make individual arrangements for their retirement.

■ Moves have been announced to cut the government's contribution to statutory sick pay.

Legislation is to be introduced raising the amount employers must pay to those off work through sickness.

Reduced

Until 1991 employers could claim the full amount from the state. That has since been reduced to 80 per cent, and a bill is likely soon to cut it still further.

This is designed to increase pressure from the employers on those who are sick.

The government aims to transfer sick-pay responsibility to the private sector, returning to the system before the reforms introduced after World War II.

■ The government is preparing to slash social security benefits for lone mothers, making their parents financially responsible for them and requiring them to register for work. 'The primary objective of any measures taken will be to reduce the burden on public expenditure caused by lone-parent families,' said a spokesperson.

TENS of thousands of Bri-

tain's mostly vulnerable young people are finding it impossible to survive on the pittance handed to them from social security, the National Children's Home has reported.

Depression

These young people cannot afford to eat properly — and they are suffering from periodic bouts of depression, says the NCH charity's report, 'A Lost Generation'.

Those who were interviewed for the NCH report were receiving an average benefit of £34 a week.



Vigil begins for Kashmiri fighter

ER 500 Kashmiris resident in Britain demonstrated outside the Belgian embassy in London on 31 October (above) against the arrest of a Kashmiri liberation fighter. And last Monday a stop vigil began.

Amanullah Khan of the Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front went to Brussels at the invitation of the socialist group 'The European Parliament', which had organised a debate on the Kashmir question. He was arrested on 18 October in the presence of Labour MEP George Stevenson, and is still in custody. The Indian government has

had an extradition order on Khan for three years. This is for a clear frame-up charge for a murder he could not possibly have committed. Since this order he has been living in Pakistan.

Arms

Questions are to be tabled in the House of Commons this week, but the JKLF will have little faith in the British government, as one-third of all Indian arms are bought from Britain.

Faiz Mahmood (general secretary of the London JKLF) explained that Jammu is a predominantly Hindu region in Kashmir and the Indian govern-

ment, through its encouragement of Hindu fundamentalists, has been urging more Hindus to settle. The JKLF stresses that it is committed to a multi-ethnic society.

The Indian government clearly intends to divide up the region on ethnic lines to preserve its power and influence over Kashmir, which has had a long and terrible struggle for independence.

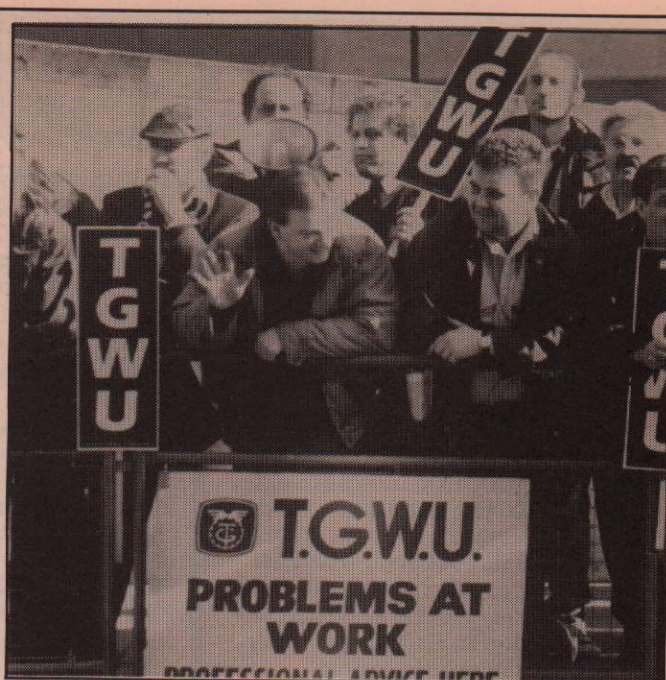
Since World War II India, Pakistan, and the United Nations have repeatedly made statements about the right of the people of Kashmir to decide their future. But the reality has been occupation, suppression of

human rights and continual atrocities. All foreign journalists are barred from Kashmir.

The division of Kashmir, like that of Bosnia, is a question which has to be taken up by the international working class.

Jill Oxley

CORRECTION
BRIAN PEARCE has asked us to point out that there were two misprints in his letter that appeared in last week's Workers Press ('Selective history'). The town name Sarska should have been Savska and the word porazuni should have been Sporazum.



'Come out and negotiate': London busworkers protesting against wage cuts last March

Photo: Rex Dunn

Tories retreat on London bus sell-off

BY ROY THOMAS

THE battle by the busworker and passenger groups to stop the deregulation of London's bus service seems to have had some effect. John MacGregor, the transport secretary, has announced that there will be no deregulation proposals in the Queen's speech — which will outline the government's plans for legislation for the next session of parliament — on 15 November.

Tender

Because this means that all London's services will be operated on tender from London Transport, many of those who were looking to buy into the privatisation in May or

June 1994 will now be put off.

Privatisation of the 11 London red bus companies now seems likely to be postponed until late 1994.

This climbdown by the government — which will delay its attempts to break up London's public transport network and its plans for a free for all on the capital's buses — must be the signal for stepping up the opposition to privatisation.

There have been repeated statements that it is still government policy to deregulate. And it has become clear that the free-for-all bus services outside London have resulted in more buses, carrying 30 per cent less passengers, at higher fares. This has meant lower wages and longer hours for bus crews.

Tube engineers go to the Dogs

OVER 2,000 skilled white-collar engineering staff working for London Underground are to be deported to the Isle of Dogs — a move which will cost them very dear.

The government is trying to rescue the Canary Wharf white elephant by funding the extension of the underground's Jubilee Line to the site in Docklands. As part of this deal, LU have agreed to move 2,200 engineering planning staff. They have been told they will be moved from the London Transport headquarters in Victoria to the Isle of Dogs site.

The LT headquarters building is situated over St James's Park underground station, opposite New Scotland Yard. All LT staff have free travel on

London's underground system, and so travel to and from work free.

The move to Canary Wharf will hit the staff's pockets, since the only public transport to the site is the Docklands Light Railway. This has recently been privatised and LT staff have to pay its full fares. This is quite apart from any extra journey time.

Sway

Charlie Cullen, the assistant general secretary of the white-collar transport workers' union, the TSSA, is quoted as describing the move as 'a political move in an effort to sway the decision for the extension of the underground to go ahead'.

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Inside left

Power failure

APPLAUDING Steve Myers's attacks on the Workers Revolutionary Party at the Workers Aid for Bosnia meeting in Manchester on 30 October — held for its convoy to report back on its experiences — was a representative of 'Workers Power', the group Myers quit in pursuit of a 'Fifth International'. Perhaps his new comrades in the 'United Secretariat of the Fourth International' can work that out?

Urging 'practical and political steps' to set Workers Aid 'on a sound footing' in Britain and internationally, 'Workers Power', having been in the campaign all along, proposed four amendments to the Workers Aid platform 'to strengthen and clarify the campaign's commitment to an anti-imperialist policy in Bosnia'.

That the Workers Aid convoy's confrontation with the United Nations Protection Force, and its struggle to open the road to its intended destination Tuzla, might do more to clarify this than any amendments, apparently hadn't entered their heads. But they agreed to remit their proposals. If it took 'Workers Power' six months to devise amendments, the campaign was entitled to some time to study them.

Workers Aid's programme demands Britain opens its doors 'to all victims of ethnic cleansing and those facing political persecution'. While primarily concerned with the Tory government's inhuman restriction on Bosnian refugees, we had to consider that others, such as Serbs and Croats opposed to the war, might yet need our help too.

'Workers Power' proposed deleting this passage, replacing it with 'to all those fleeing the war in former Yugoslavia'. But Bosnian refugees are not just 'fleeing war', they have been driven from their homes by ethnic cleansing, i.e. genocidal racism. And would we let the government deny entry to an Albanian from Kosovo, or those from Belgrade, because they weren't fleeing war zones?

Another 'Workers Power' amendment would delete reference to support for democratic forces in the former Yugoslavia fighting dictatorship and imperialist intervention. But they would 'give critical support to the Bosnia and Herzegovina forces fighting against the carve-up of Bosnia-Herzegovina'. What if Izetbegovic's Bosnian government decides its war aim is only to grab what it can from the carve-up? Anyway, by 'critical' 'Workers Power' means platonic support.

'Sounds like ...'

ALTHOUGH recognising 'the right of those — black people, lesbians and gays and so on — who are attacked by the fascists to defend themselves', Keith Flett (Letters, 6 November) claims Peter Fryer's call for workers' defence committees 'sounds uncomfortably like a desire to begin military-style confrontations with fascists'.

Socialist Workers Party members caught in a *military-style* ambush by fascists in east London hadn't sought a confrontation. They were out leafleting. Stephen Lawrence and Rolan Adams weren't seeking fights, they were waiting for buses when they were murdered by racists.

Fascists don't play by your rules, Keith! After the 16 October demonstration in Welling, south-east London, they waited at nearby railway stations to jump isolated anti-fascists going home. Those attacked have the right to *organised* defence. And the labour movement, itself threatened, must back them. That's what workers' defence means. Keith Flett should listen properly.

Charlie Pottins

NICK LEE reviews a recent book by one of Britain's leading radical feminists, Beatrix Campbell, that claims to explain the riots that occurred in several major British towns in 1991.

BEA CAMPBELL is a well-known feminist writer and journalist with a number of books to her credit. She was a member of the 'Marxism Today' faction which left the Communist Party and found its way to pastures new.

Her latest book — 'Goliath: Britain's Dangerous Places' (Methuen, 1993) — on the 1991 riots in Oxford, Cardiff and Tyneside, contains some perceptive accounts of life on housing estates like Meadowell in Newcastle and Blackbird Leys in Oxford; estates where a combination of capitalist crisis and political indifference by the labour movement is consigning a whole generation of working-class people to the scrap-heap of unemployment and demoralisation.

But 'Goliath' is also useful for making clear exactly where Marxism and radical feminism must inevitably part company both as an analysis of the current crisis of capitalism and as a search for new forms of political organisation. A

'At times the account sounds more like Los Angeles than anywhere in mainland Britain. One is left with the impression that in very different circumstances these youth would find organising a revolution absolutely no problem!'

spirit of pessimism and the impossibility of change permeates her book from beginning to end.

Campbell is quite right, of course, on a number of things. That the origin of the battles between unemployed youth and the police, and the joy-riding in stolen cars which was the occasion for such confrontations, is rooted in the rapid decay of traditional industries — the motor industry in Oxford, shipbuilding on Tyneside.

She is also undoubtedly right in seeing a contrast with the 1981 riots in the early 1980s in Brixton, Toxteth and other places. It is not just that then the rioters were mainly black youth and now they are mainly white. The black community in Brixton took to the streets for a clear political purpose: to protest

at racist policing. These riots shocked the ruling class. Lord Scarman was sent to investigate, and police chiefs were told to get their act together with 'community policing'.

Ten years later no one buys that sort of liberal rhetoric any longer. Community policing is an irrelevance. On the estates Campbell is talking about the police and local authority bureaucrats mostly never came anywhere near the place. The riots here had none of the embryonic political consciousness of Brixton in 1981; they were simply celebrations of criminality. 'The riots did not represent revolt, they were simply larger displays of what these neighbourhoods had to put up with much of the time.'

And what they had been putting up with was the terrorism of organised criminal gangs of unemployed aggressive young men. 'Houses were set on fire, roofs were cleared of tiles, walls were stripped of radiators, houses were ram-raided, residents were robbed, threatened and pestered by gangs of lads who seemed beyond society's reach. Victimisation was a way of life.'

So this time there was no Lord Scarman, no rhetoric about 'strengthening the community'. No Michael Heseltine, when he was environment secretary, with coach loads of businessmen driving around the inner city looking for 'investment opportunities'. Instead a shared desire among the politicians to get the issue off the front page as quickly as possible.

'No political party sponsored any discussion in any neighbourhood about what the people had lived through and how they would recover. At most the political parties sought to explain the riots or rather explain them away,' says Campbell.

Debate was closed down. According to a Labour councillor who had spent the night of one of the riots in the neighbourhood: 'We were instructed not to talk to the press.'

Fearless against police

THE account given by Campbell of the criminal gangs, particularly in Tyneside, and their level of audacity and organisation during the riots is quite stunning. The youth were utterly fearless against the police. They 'targeted individual

Mary ra fer

officers, followed them home and attacked their houses and cars'.

They pulled up BT manhole covers and cut off the telephones so that no one could call the police or fire brigade. They burned down an electricity sub-station, cutting off all communications and television. They demonstrated a co-ordinated strategy by setting fires to lure the police into traps.

At times the account sounds more like Los Angeles than anywhere in mainland Britain. One is left with the impression that in very different circumstances these youth would find organising a revolution absolutely no problem!

But it is on precisely this point — how to turn this wild destructive aggression into a constructive political struggle — that we must part company with the author. Her agenda is altogether different. She attempts to develop a radical feminist explanation of the riots through a concept of what she calls 'lawless masculinity'.

'Among unemployed men' — so the argument goes — 'poverty produces an identity crisis; their unemployment leaves them without a role. Is it a wonder, we sigh, that they turn to crime?'

However . . . unemployment reveals a mode of masculinity whereas the common sense notion has been that it causes a crisis of

masculinity.' What this seems to say is that unemployment and the undoubted loss of identity previously gained through work and class organisation have served to reveal something of the true 'nature' of men, masculinity, which is basically about the oppression of women.

'Masculinity established its identity by enforcing difference, by the exclusion of women. Unemployment denies that difference its institutional framework. The social space men inhabit becomes solely local and domestic, and that is the space they share with women. Difference is reasserted in a refusal to co-operate in the creation of a democratic domesticity.'

In other words men in general (presumably) and working-class men in particular have been traditionally concerned to oppress women by excluding them from wage labour.

She goes on: 'Men's quest to purge women from the world of work, and their struggle to gain privilege for their own pay packet, at the expense of women, was expressed symbolically in the notions of the breadwinner and the family wage.'

By this stage capitalism and class have disappeared from the argument entirely. The effect of unemployment, Campbell is arguing, has been to upset traditional patriarchy based on men at



At times Campbell's account of the actions of the gangs is more like Los Angeles — seen above during last year's battles — than Britain

Marxism vs Radical Feminism

work and women at home, and drive men into the home, where they are unable to treat women as equals but turn to crime and aggression as a way of maintaining their traditional patriarchal authority.

Half-truths and distortions

CAMPBELL is indeed quite explicit that there never was any real class struggle between working-class men and capitalism.

A contempt for working-class men, and for the labour movement in general, could be read into passages like this:

'When capital withdrew from the industrial areas which were the cradle of . . . the "respectable working class" then the historic compromise between capital and men, mediated by the labour movement, collapsed. The authority of the labour movement man with his . . . union card, his pride and his prejudice against women was at an end.'

For a Marxist, this argument is full of half-truths and distortions, quite apart from the implied insult to generations of working-class men who spent their lives in struggle against capitalism and defending their families in the best way they knew.

First, the notion that 'men' fought to exclude women from industrial labour is just not true. It was surely the Victorian ruling class that saw the family unit endangered as a source of 'moral

discipline', and brought in legislation to keep women at home. The role of the male 'breadwinner' and the 'family wage' was not a conspiracy worked out by men to keep women in subjection, though it has undoubtedly had such effects.

And men have undoubtedly developed patriarchal attitudes. But it is idealist fantasy to see this in terms of some eternal cosmic struggle to dominate women, rather than as the result of several generations of family life under capitalism in which men have in-

ved in a crisis rather than in a celebration of male identity.

Resolving a crisis

A CRISIS can be resolved in different directions. One lies in the jackboot and Union Jack of the British National Party. Another lies in the re-emergence of solidarity, in which the undoubted ingenuities of these young men can be recruited to progressive struggles. For Marxists, as for socialist feminists, history has not suddenly stopped.

There can be no going back to older patriarchal attitudes, because the type of capitalist economy and family structure that produced and sustained them is in crisis. But Campbell can see this only as the occasion for young men inventing new ways to oppress women. Nothing else is possible. We are dealing, it appears, with wild beasts. The anti-poll-tax movement gets a passing mention but is seen as having come to nothing.

Radical feminism has a powerful in-built pessimism in the form of the eternal struggle between men and women. History can only go around in circles. Campbell can find no basis for any alternative future whatever.

So her book ends on the pessimism which permeates it throughout. 'It is hard to imagine anything in *fin de siècle* Britain that will change the conditions of existence among the poor people. A young boy, asked what he wants to be when he grows up, says: "I don't want to be a dad, I want to be a robber."'

'Radical feminism has a powerful inbuilt pessimism in the form of the eternal struggle between men and women. History can only go around in circles. Campbell can find no basis for any alternative future whatever.'

deed been seen — including by most women — as family breadwinners.

This role carried with it a strong injunction against crime and violence, especially to family members.

From such a perspective it might be better to see the rootless, aggressive young men today on the run-down housing estates as invol-

City Lights

Juggernaut veering off course in Japan

JAPAN's car makers are on the rack and the screws are being tightened. Sales are falling for the third year running — and this after decades of virtually unbroken growth.

As the 1980s drew to a close Japanese car companies over-indulged themselves with an excess of models and features, follies for which they are now paying dearly.

Most of the country's 11 vehicle makers are in the red, or at best they are just breaking even. And the majority of those which are still making a profit are doing so only because of subsidiary activities — in the case of Honda, for example, thanks to its profitable motor-cycle business.

Even Toyota, the strongest producer, will this year fall into an operating loss for the first time in its history.

Competitiveness of Japanese companies abroad is being threatened by the yen's strong appreciation — up 20 per cent against the dollar this year alone. On past performance, it would take seven years to cut costs by a fifth to meet this increase.

But time is short and the car makers are putting enormous pressure on their components suppliers to lower prices and speed up delivery.

For three decades car production in Japan rose dramatically, from less than half a million units in 1960 to 13.5m in 1990. The industry survived previous world recessions with scarcely a blip. Any weakness in the home market was compensated for by a successful drive in export markets.

This time things are different. The length of the downturn at home is without equal and, with many overseas markets weak or in recession, the former remedy of exporting a way out of trouble is unavailable.

In Europe, new car sales have dropped 16 per cent in the first nine months of the year and the European Community has forced a drastic cut in Japanese shipments, under the present system of 'voluntary' monitoring of car exports.

In the United States, the rising yen is forcing Japanese manufacturers to raise prices more rapidly than their American rivals. Markets are being lost: the Ford Taurus is now displacing the Honda Accord as the best-selling car in the US.

Nissan's troubles are particularly acute, with an over-capacity in the home market of some 400,000-500,000 units.

The company has already announced the shut-down of its Zama plant near Tokyo. Job cuts of 5,000 have already been declared, with Honda reducing its assembly-line workforce by one in ten.

It is now suffering serious over-capacity and a surplus of labour, and a programme of plant closures is well underway.

Europe's car makers will gloat at their peril. The productivity of the car industry in Japan is still the highest in the world. The current restructuring will further widen the gap between Japanese car plants and their competitors in Europe.

The task of reorganising the European industry looks awesome indeed.

Share fantasy

THE aim of turning Britain into a 'share-owning democracy' has been one wheeled out by the Tory party at every election for the last 40 years and more.

To spread share ownership, to make 'everybody a capitalist', was one of the supposed purposes of the privatisation that began in earnest in the 1980s. There was 'a vast untapped yearning for a direct stake in the ownership of British enterprise', said the then Chancellor Nigel Lawson in 1984.

Indeed, it was on the basis of a wider shareholding that the Labour leaders told us that it was increasingly impossible to speak of 'capitalism' in the traditional sense. The question of the ownership of the means of production no longer mattered; what was vital was whether the giant corporations were run efficiently in something called the 'public interest'. Anyway, Marxism was an out-dated dogma.

Figures now released by none other than the Treasury tell their own story about the spread of share-ownership. It is true that there are now more shareholders than there were in 1981, with one in five now owning some shares. But the newcomers' holdings are minuscule.

Many people who bought shares in British Gas, in BT, and in other state sell-offs quickly sold their holdings, thereby making a very modest, one-off gain. Thus British Gas had 3.1 million shareholders shortly after flotation, but only 2m at the last count.

In fact the privatisation programme had nothing to do with widening the ownership of shares. Apart from providing rich pickings for the parasites in the City of London, its chief purpose was to destroy the centres of trade union power — in the pits, on the railways, and in the public sector.

One day, perhaps

IF THE idea of a share-owning democracy is a fantasy, so too is the idea that Western firms and banks, by pouring capital into the former USSR, would quickly and painlessly restore capitalism to those countries.

Indeed, so small has been the import of foreign capital that no one in the government seems to be measuring it. Best guesses suggest that such capital last year came to a paltry £60 million.

With a few exceptions, the hundreds of foreign companies that have set up offices in Moscow and other cities have used them as distribution points for goods or as intelligence-gathering posts.

Most of these companies pledge that they will invest one day — but certainly not tomorrow.

Among the exceptions are the giant US tobacco companies. Facing shrinking markets in the West, they are looking to sell more of their cancer-inducing products in the former USSR.

Thus Philip Morris — for whom Baroness Thatcher is a highly-paid consultant — has proposed building one of Europe's biggest tobacco plants in St Petersburg, and R.J. Reynolds, another US tobacco company, has plans for the same city.



The anti-poll-tax fight gets only a passing mention from Campbell — that it came to nothing

On the picket-line

ON FRIDAY last week I joined the civil service unions' picket-line at the main gates of the British Museum, mounted by British Library staff on strike.

They were taking part in the biggest mass walk-out by civil servants for 12 years.

My fellow-pickets were old friends who, with their predecessors, have carried thousands of books from the stacks to my desk in the reading-room over the past 45 years.

I was glad to hear that a mere three or four of their colleagues had crossed the picket-line and that most readers too had voted with their feet, leaving the reading-room, I was told, almost empty of readers. Which was just as well, since no books were being issued that day.

Everyone I spoke to expressed intense anger at government plans to put their jobs up for sale, and at the inroads that 'market-testing' had made into the service which they have traditionally offered, and in which they take deep pride.

One excellent feature of one of the leaflets I handed out, many to tourists from abroad who were visiting the British Museum, was that it was printed in French and German as well as English.

How to fight fascism

YES, I do agree with Keith Flett (Letters, 6 November) on the need both for unity in action and for mass participation in the anti-fascist struggle.

But, as I see it, neither of these laudable aims conflicts with the need for workers' (or community, or local: the exact name is immaterial) defence committees and defence squads.

But to brand this last aim as 'a desire to begin military-style confrontations with fascists' and as '[F]ocusing on small squads of "hard" men and women to fight the Nazis' is to miss at least two points.

First of all, as my colleague Charlie Pottins makes clear elsewhere in this issue, it's a bit late in the day to avoid 'military-style confrontations with fascists'.

Such confrontations have already begun, irrespective of anyone's desires. The point is not to avoid them, but to make sure that they are won — and that the greatest possible number of fascist skulls are 'acquainted with the pavement', as Bob Archer and Bridget Leach put it in Workers Press on 23 October.

Second, it's a bit late in the day — 35 years late, to be precise — for Flett to be taking issue with me for advocating the formation of workers' defence committees and workers' defence squads.

If he cares to go to the London School of Economics library, or the newspaper library at Colindale, and to look up the file of 'The Newsletter', of which I was editor, for the summer and early autumn of 1958, he will find that I put forward then precisely the same call, in a signed article headed 'Sweep the racials off the streets'.

That was the time of the 'Notting Hill' white riots, which in fact took place in Notting Dale, and which are analysed, with a wealth of detail, in Edward Pilkington's shamefully neglected book 'Beyond the Mother Country' (1988).

Thugs recruited and indoctrinated by Sir Oswald Mosley's Union Movement played a prominent part in those would-be lynching parties, just as thugs recruited and indoctrinated by the British National Party play a prominent part in the present-day wave of racist attacks.

But it was not I who originated this call. It appears, with slightly different wording, in the

PERSONAL COLUMN

1938 Founding Programme of the Fourth International:

'It is imperative wherever possible, beginning with the youth groups, to organise groups for self-defence. . . .

'A new upsurge of the mass movement should serve not only to increase the number of these units but also to unite them according to neighbourhoods, cities, regions.

'It is necessary to give organised expression to the valid hatred of the workers towards scabs and bands of gangsters and fascists. It is necessary to advance the slogan of a workers' militia as the one serious guarantee for the inviolability of workers' organisations, meetings and press.

'Only with the help of such systematic, persistent, indefatigable, courageous agitational and organisational work, always on the basis of the experience of the masses themselves, is it possible to root out from their consciousness the traditions of submissiveness and passivity; . . . to inflict a series of tactical defeats upon the armed thugs of counter-revolution; to raise the self-confidence of the exploited and oppressed. . . .

It is noteworthy that Trotsky, who drafted this programme, does not counterpose the building of 'the mass movement that is required' to the building of self-defence groups. To him, the two go together.

Keith Flett, who does counterpose them, might usefully ponder this.

Anything goes?

WHEN quoting anyone else's written words every writer should take great care that the quotation is absolutely accurate. Every quotation, even if you think you know it by heart, should be checked and double-checked.

And if, for any reason, a word or words are omitted, the normal practice is to put three dots — a sign known as an ellipsis — to indicate the gap.

These elementary rules of sound scholarship are no longer observed, it seems, at Brasenose College, Oxford.

One Vernon Bogdanor, a luminary of that ancient college (it was founded in 1509), reviewing a new biography of Disraeli in last weekend's 'Independent on Sunday' magazine, had occasion to refer to the criticism of Disraeli's 'Young England' radicalism by Marx and Engels in their 'Communist Manifesto' (1848).

He quoted Marx — no mention of Engels — as saying that these 'feudal socialists' were totally unable to comprehend 'the march of history'.

But what Marx and Engels in fact wrote was 'the march of modern history' (emphasis added).

Now, at first glance, this may seem a trivial error, and hardly worth drawing attention to. But by 'the march of modern history' Marx and Engels specifically meant the rise of the bourgeoisie and the transition from feudalism to capitalism.

By silently omitting the word 'modern' and failing to insert the customary ellipsis, Brasenose's Bogdanor obscured and distorted the meaning of the text he purported to quote.

Was this a slip, such as all of us make from time to time? Or is it simply that, where Marx and Engels are concerned, academics feel that the normal principles of scholarship don't apply?

Peter Fryer

Television

Enduring the unendurable

Review by Jeff Jackson

MOSTAR, from where Jeremy Bowen filed his front-line report — 'Unfinished Business' (ASSIGNMENT, BBC2, 2 November) — is the most vicious theatre of war in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Since May, in the eastern part of the city 60,000 people — most of them Muslims — have been under siege from Bosnian-Croat forces aided and abetted by the Croatian government.

The programme memorably conveyed both the determination of those besieged to win — against all the odds — and, perhaps most powerfully of all, the unendurable suffering of the ordinary citizens of this once picturesque and now completely devastated area.

Compassion

Bowen's hard-bitten professionalism could scarcely conceal the compassion he felt for these people, trapped as they are in an unjustifiable living hell.

Two minutes into the programme the limp figure of a civilian, hit by sniper fire, was being trundled unceremoniously by wheelbarrow to a nearby fire-engine — the only transport available — and taken to hospital.

It was already too late by the time they got there, but the doctor went through the motions of examining the body out of respect for the dead man's distraught wife. There were many such moments in this harrowing film, some less tragic but nonetheless moving for the indignity and humiliation caused to the victims.

At one point, three old people appeared in no man's land. A husband and wife, both in their 70s, had been thrown out of their home by Croat forces. The husband was wearing three shirts and carrying two umbrellas, all he managed to take with him as he left. His wife was still wear-

ing her night-clothes. As their 84-year-old neighbour appeared, she sat down exhausted, right in the line of sniper fire. 'Don't sit there,' a soldier called, going to her assistance, 'they'll kill you.'

The old and the weak like these arrive every day. The soldiers say they've heard so many accounts of brutality, inhumanity, and dispossession they can hardly bear to listen any more.

A group of 500 refugees made their way across a rickety bridge at night. As they crossed they became the target of sniper fire from the Croats who had just expelled them.

The people spoke of persecution, rape and murder. A woman, whose sons were taken away and had their throats cut, told Bowen: 'I only live because I have to, only because I have to. What sort of life is this?'

Another woman, filmed in silhouette, said that ten men

raped her and robbed her before she was expelled. 'Luckily they didn't kill me. Well, lucky as far as being killed is concerned, but the rape . . . Her involuntary gasp of breath explodes into the microphone. 'Sometimes my brain simply stops working, I can't get my thoughts together. I'm fighting on my own. It's difficult.'

Suffered

'Everything they've suffered since the war started has made one essential fact very clear,' Bowen told us. 'If they're going to survive it's down to them. No one is going to come to the rescue.'

'The people here are surrounded by enemies and long ago they stopped dreaming about international military intervention. But they think they can win this war because they have nowhere else to go, because their suffering has made them strong, and because they believe they have a simple choice: to fight or to die.'

Programme guide

Saturday 13 November 'Earthquake India'. Programme visits refugee camps, talking to survivors of the 29 September earthquake which devastated the state of Maharashtra in western India (7.05pm, Channel 4). **THE GREAT DEPRESSION: 'The Road to Rock Bottom'**. The second programme in this documentary series sees hungry farmers marching to demand food and World War I veterans marching to demand the bonuses Washington owed them (7.05pm, BBC2).

Sunday 14 November **HIGH INTEREST: 'Global Gamble'**. By buying stakes in airlines around the world, British Airways is bidding to be one of the few global airlines of the future (5.15pm, Channel 4). **'As It Happened — The Killing of Kennedy'**. The definitive account of the assassination of John F. Kennedy 30 years ago (7pm, Channel 4).

Tuesday 16 November **'Do Schools Fail Children? A Users' Report.'** A group of young people brought together to establish what their schools have really done for them (7.45pm, BBC2). **40 MINUTES: 'Shattered Dream'**. Compiled



JFK's killing is told as it happened on Channel 4, 14 Nov

over a ten-year period, this film is about protest climber Edwin Drummond who has scaled everything from the San Francisco Tower to Nelson's Column in pursuit of his objective: 'One World, One Family' (9.45pm, BBC2).

Wednesday 17 November

STATES OF TERROR: 'Betrayal'. This new series begins by uncovering the secret life of Silke Maier-Witt, a member of the Red Army Faction and on the most-wanted list for 15 years, who fled to east Germany under the protection of the Stasi secret police and, when the Berlin wall came down, betrayed her colleagues (9.45pm, BBC1).

Thursday 18 November **CRITICAL EYE: 'Animal Acts'**. There are 21,000 people on the police's Animal Rights National Index, the great majority of whom are engaged in perfectly legal protest. The programme looks at the use of the laws of conspiracy, the 1986 Public Order Act, and the libel laws against protesters (9pm, Channel 4). **BLOOD AND BELONGING: 'Dreaming a Nation'**. Borders imposed in the 1920s made the Kurds a stateless people. This report witnesses their suffering at the hands of Iraqi, Iranian and Turkish forces (9.30pm, BBC2).

Selected films

STROMBOLI (1950). Ingrid Bergmann as a refugee who

escapes internment by marrying a local fisherman. This is the great Roberto Rosellini's original version (Sunday, 2.30pm, BBC2). **TRUE LOVE** (1989). Nancy Savoca and Richard Guay's feature debut about an Italian wedding in the Bronx (Sunday, 10.15pm, Channel 4). **SIDEWALK STORIES** (1989). Director Charles Lane's contemporary silent comedy drama about a homeless man's struggle for survival on the streets of Greenwich Village (Friday, 12.20am, Channel 4).



A little girl is helped to find her mother in 'Sidewalk Stories', Friday on Channel 4

Air France retreat launches European strike movement

THE partial retreat of the French government in the face of the determined struggle of Air France workers over cost-cutting plans in the state airline seems to have given workers across Europe greater determination in the fight to defend their working conditions.

In Germany, Belgium, Italy and Spain employers are facing increasing resistance as they demand job cuts and greater flexibility in an effort to reduce costs.

Many of the struggles are as much about job security as pay, and many are directed at governments as well as private employers.

Despite the celebration by the employers of the decline of trade union power, this is not necessarily having the imagined effect on militancy. France, the centre of recent strikes, has the lowest level of unionisation among the largest industrial countries — members of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

Even though levels of unionisation in France are higher in

the public than the private sector it was the weak hold that the trade union bureaucracy has over the rank-and-file that prevented an early conclusion to the struggle at Air France.

This dispute is in any case far from over. Negotiations for a fresh package of cuts are due to start next year. Strikes are likely later this month at the computer firm Groupe Bull, the aluminium producer Pechiney and several other privatisation-threatened companies.

A day strike by post office, rail and telecommunication workers took place last month over proposed sackings and pay cuts.

Influence

In Spain and Belgium, two countries strongly influenced by developments in France, union militancy seems to have been fuelled by the Air France strike.

Labour unrest is looming in Germany over the threat of mass redundancies, efforts by employers to cut labour costs and sharp reductions planned in welfare benefits paid by the

state. The key here may well lie in the engineering industry where the bosses have announced the termination of current wage and holiday contracts, due in any case to expire at the end of the year.

Last week in Bonn, 120,000 building workers protested at government plans to scrap their winter lay-off payments. It was the largest union demonstration in the city in recent years.

A week earlier, tens of thousands of steel workers in the Ruhr had protested over threatened cuts in welfare benefits.

More than 200 towns saw demonstrations last week by unemployed workers protesting at the 'destruction of the welfare state'.

At the end of September 60,000 coal miners had demonstrated against the proposed closure of the Haus Aden-Monopol pit at Bergkamen and workers occupied a nearby power station which is planning to switch to cheap imported coal.

Among jobs threatened are 14,000 at Mercedes, after cuts of 22,000 in 1992 and 1993. A further

16,000 jobs are due to go at Deutscher Aerospace, and in the machine-tool sector alone employers aim to shed 50,000 jobs.

Restraint

In Spain, union leaders met government ministers last week to discuss wage restraint and more flexible labour regulations. But demonstrations are being planned for later this month over the very economic policies the union leaders are negotiating over.

Unrest over wage restraint is highest among the 70,000 steel workers at the state-owned INI group, following a management decision to delay wage rises.

Faced with rising unemployment the 'socialist' government wants to peg wages below the rate of inflation. The government and the employers are determined to scrap the costly dismissal procedures machinery.

But the fight against sackings is also mounting with Volkswagen's troubled Spanish subsidiary SEAT announcing 9,000 redundancies.

The force of impotence

The United Nations Protection Force has become an agent of misery rather than of succour for siege-gripped Sarajevo.

WHY has the siege of Sarajevo not been raised? Why has Tuzla airport not been opened? The answer appears to be that the siege can only be raised by the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) but it is in fact UNPROFOR which is enforcing the siege.

This is not as surprising as it may appear. As we were informed in the summer, its own members admitted that UNPROFOR was corrupt from top to bottom.

Attention, unfortunately, was then concentrated upon the bottom end, where Ukrainian soldiers could be charged with passing drugs to Sarajevo prostitutes. It might have been a great deal more useful to have focused on the top end, the policy makers.

There was no international outcry when Barry Frewer, the UN spokesman in Sarajevo, solemnly declared in August that the siege had ended. It was obvious rubbish and universally recognised as such but no one appeared to ask why UNPROFOR should want to put across such misinformation.

At the time, international pressure to end the siege was very heavy. If UNPROFOR wished to restore some measure of normality to Sarajevo life, that was the moment to press for it. But UNPROFOR did not. It did exactly the opposite. It endeavoured to undermine the pressure by belittling the need for it. Why?

Relief

The use of the airport to bring relief would transform the situation for the whole Tuzla area, the region most important to relative normality in Bosnia. There is no argument against its use: it is an excellent airport and Bosnians and the aid agencies have pleaded for it.

But the UN has steadily blocked its use while shedding crocodile tears about the ever-increasing threat of famine throughout central Bosnia. Why?

UNPROFOR has been instructed to use 'all necessary

The following article, which denounces the role of the United Nations Protection Force in carving up Bosnia, is by Leeds professor of theology Adrian Hastings and appeared in the 'Guardian' on 2 November. Among his examples of the blocking of aid to the region he mentions the Workers Aid for Bosnia convoy to the mining town of Tuzla. We reprint the article with the agreement of the author.

means' to bring relief to the so-called 'safe areas'. It has never done so. It has never once forced through a convoy against even the smallest Serb barrier. In consequence, many starving towns have not received food in months. Why?

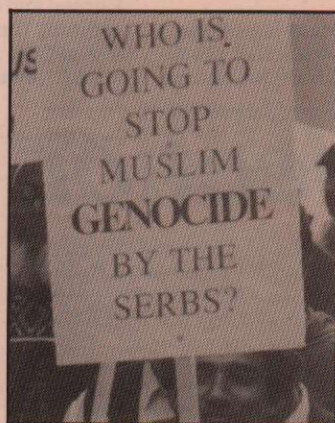
Barry Frewer even had the audacity to declare that a UN resolution declaring a town 'safe' must have no practical effect unless the Serbs who had been making it unsafe agreed to stop doing so. Why has the UN security council allowed UNPROFOR to render its resolutions absurd?

In the last few weeks, the large workers' aid convoy to Tuzla, incorporating lorries from many countries, has failed to get through to its destination. Not only was UNPROFOR consistently unhelpful, it is believed that it actually gave instructions that the convoy was not to be assisted in any way. Why?

The UN refuses to allow even Bosnian parliamentarians to leave Sarajevo at the invitation of parliamentarians abroad. It has refused to allow Bosnian artists to exhibit at the Edinburgh Festival. It now allows journalists and others leaving Sarajevo to carry only six letters each.

Foreigners are increasingly being prevented from visiting Sarajevo, not only by the UN but also by the Foreign Office. The three Labour members of parliament who went there recently did so entirely against the wishes of the Foreign Office. Why?

A UN High Commission for Refugees official in Geneva recently admitted confidentially to a friend who was trying to arrange to get someone out of



Message in London this year

Sarajevo that if the person in question was a Croat, Serb or Jew it could be done, but if she or he was a Muslim, there was no chance. Why?

The International Court of Justice at the Hague reaffirmed in September its earlier provisional judgment that what is happening in Bosnia is indeed genocide as defined by the International Convention on Genocide, to which the British government is a party. It is the only case ever to be so defined by the court.

It is, however, noticeable that UN officials, [EC mediator] Dr Owen and Foreign Secretary Hurd carefully avoid any reference to genocide, and Dr Owen instead repeatedly asserts that it should be seen as a matter of mutual aggression. How a legitimate government can be guilty of aggression within its own borders he has yet to explain.

The genocide of the Bosnian Muslim community has reached a very advanced stage. Probably at least a quarter of its

total population is now dead or maimed. The UN has the full military capacity to end the slaughter when it will and at least stop all heavy shelling.

Mr Goodland, minister of state at the Foreign Office, wrote to me in August: 'On 9 August the North Atlantic Council agreed on the operational options for air strikes. This has given a clear warning to the Serbs and to others. The Serbs must be left in no doubt that air strikes may be carried out if they continue to strangle Sarajevo and other safe areas.'

Since then, the shelling of Sarajevo and Maglaj has got worse, but there is not the slightest indication that UNPROFOR or NATO intends to do anything about it. Why?

Prevent

There is only one thing that UNPROFOR is now insisting upon and that is the attempt to prevent the world from obtaining news about what is going on. That policy is remarkably close to the appeal of Mr Hurd to the media to write less about Bosnia. Why?

There appears to be only two feasible explanations for this, both profoundly discreditable. One is that senior UNPROFOR officials in Bosnia (actually based mostly in Zagreb or Belgrade) are actually committed to ensuring a Serb victory and are systematically misleading governments of the West.

The other is that they have received instructions from UN authorities to go on squeezing Bosnia until it surrenders to Owen's Geneva settlement terms, agreeing to validate ethnic cleansing and to sign away the unity of their country and the legitimacy of their government in return for their lives.

Unless Bosnia agrees to legalise the victory of violence on terms which violate every principle of the UN charter, they will be wiped out. What other explanation is there for UNPROFOR's behaviour, which violates both humanity and the law?

Bronwen Handyside reports

Two nations



Rights and wrongs

WHATEVER the rights and wrongs of the two recent cases in which college students accused of rape were exonerated in the courts, there are aspects to those trials which confirm that for class society's attitudes to women, 'Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose' ('The more things change, the more they stay the same').

In both cases it was only the women's sex lives which were dragged into court and used against them. In one case a witness said of the woman that she was known as the 'college slut'.

If the young man in either case had led a sex life similar to hers, he would have been described as the college 'Don Juan' or 'Casanova', or less elegantly, as the college 'stud'. In any case he would not have been held up for public contempt because of it — rather the reverse.

The other outstanding feature of both cases was the fevered — nay, hysterical — spirit of the media coverage.

Unsurprisingly, the tabloids' righteous anger is not wheeled out in response to the large increase in the number of rapes announced in the crime figures each year and every year. It is only employed in this way on the — rare — occasions when a woman can be deemed to have made a false accusation of rape.

These occasions have to be made much of, because of the ruling stratum's uneasy conviction that none of their treatment of women would stand up under much scrutiny. If they can create the impression that women often cry rape, they can perhaps continue to throw up enough dust to get away with it.

In the same way a general hazy conviction has been created that women are bad drivers, when the briefest glance at the statistics tells you what every insurance company on the face of the planet already knows — that men are involved in far more accidents than women.

The media's squawks had hardly died down when far off in the primeval swamps we heard the hideous bellowing of maverick Tory MP Sir Nicholas Fairbairn, who announced to a Commons committee that there was no such crime as rape.

Loveable old Sir Nick said that women were 'tauntresses' and said that they were participants rather than victims in such situations.

Fairbairn, a Scottish QC and a former law minister, said that in his experience rape accusations were made because of 'remorse, contrition and bitterness'. He added that he had defended many accused of rape and none of them had been convicted: 'The reason was because they were false complaints'.

Fairbairn also poured scorn on the notion of rape within marriage, saying it was a 'bed and board contract'.

Fairbairn lost his job as Scottish solicitor-general after he approved the decision not to prosecute a case against a rapist. The victim won the private prosecution she was forced to take out.

Old Sir Nick would cut quite an amusing figure with his humorous plaid suits, if one were not forced to wonder what happened to the other women in the rape cases he defended.

Everyone in their place

IN THESE scary times when such hideous notions as 'date rape' rear their ugly heads, it may be reassuring to some of us to contemplate a few facts and figures recently released by the Department of Employment.

ings of full-time male manual workers in August 1993 were £277. For female manual workers it was £178.90. For male white-collar workers it was £422.40 — for female white-collar workers it was £271.40.

Political cleansing

WESTMINSTER city council has put great effort into swinging the vote in some of its wards by selling off council housing at knock-down prices to capture Tory voters. The ward of Bayswater was unexpectedly won by Labour at the last local elections — by 230 votes.

Tina Harpham and Terry Clark are typical examples of the Tory voters Westminster has pulled out all the stops to attract. They moved into a flat which had belonged to a life-long Labour voter.

'I had spent years on the waiting list without anything happening,' said Miss Harpham. 'But as soon as we put our names down to buy a flat, things moved quickly.' Mr Clark said: 'We were offered a one-third discount and ended up paying £36,000.'

Something from nothing

DOWN in the City of London there are stranger beasts than Nicholas Fairbairn stirring. Does anybody know what, exactly, is an 'arbitrageur'? No? Well meet Kaveh Alamouti, in charge of the crack 'arbitrage' team down at the Japanese Tokai Bank Europe.

Last year he made £9 million — not in the way that you and I make money, but by speculation on the currency market.

He was greatly assisted by Britain's withdrawal from the European exchange rate mechanism — financial experts say this helped create the currency fluctuations essential to successful 'arbitrage' last year.

The 'Guardian' (28 October) explained the whole process in a very helpful way. 'You are walking up the street and see someone selling oranges for 9p each. But you have just passed a man buying oranges for 10p each. So you buy from the former and sell to the latter, secure in the knowledge that you have a market.'

It makes you wonder why you didn't think of it yourself really.

Judge excludes dispossessed

AND another one of those quaint old judges handed down another one of those lovable, quaint old judgements last week.

Lord Justice Schiemann decided that discount 'warehouse clubs', pioneered in the US and which sell everything from computers to bulk bags of beef, are legal in Britain.

The company 'Costco' operates warehouses where private customers shop alongside wholesale traders after purchasing the same 'club membership' for around £20 a year.

The judge said Costco club membership rules were legitimately designed for the sound commercial reason of attempting to 'exclude the poor and dispossessed who buy little', and 'who indulge in shoplifting and thus contribute to what in the trade is euphemistically referred to as "shrinkage"'. 'Wouldn't you have thought that it was the poor and dispossessed who need a method of buying goods cheaply?'

If you have any material for this column, please send it to me at Workers Press, PO Box 735,

Book review

Struggling on the land

'Skilled at All Trades: a history of the Farmworkers' Union 1947-84' by Bob Wynn. Published by the TGWU and Front Line.

THE abuse of those working on the land comes through very clearly in this book, which is very much an in-house history. While those land workers who set out to organise to secure a better standard of living are no longer transported to Van Diemen's Land, as were the Tolpuddle Martyrs, history shows they get little more respect now than they did then.

In 1833 the men of Tolpuddle established a 'Friendly Society of Agricultural Labourers' to 'preserve ourselves, our wives, our children from utter degradation and starvation'.

cultural and Allied Workers became part of the TGWU in 1982. This was not from choice — a merger had been rejected by the 1980 conference in Cromer — but because of the steady loss of jobs on the land.

Parts of the country that had employed tens of thousands of farmworkers now employed only a few hundred. Even the organisation and recruitment of those in the food processing and packing factories could not make up the numbers.

While the Dig for Victory Campaign of World War II and the shortage that followed should have led to an improvement of wages and conditions for landworkers, some 50,000 prisoners of war and later over 83,000 displaced persons from eastern Europe were used to keep down wages.

ment's Manpower Commission refused to agree an order for a £4.10s minimum wage. The union leadership protested that skilled union members were being dismissed in favour of prisoners of war. This body of forced labour represented 25 per cent of the labour force on the land.

Removed

The union's executive stated that if these workers were removed the resulting labour shortage would force farms to pay better wages.

A history of struggles for safety on the land, against the deadly T254 spray, and to put an end to the medieval system of tied cottages are set out in detail. As is the little-known fight to get compensation for farm-

work when hundreds of thousands of sheep and cattle were destroyed during the foot-and-mouth epidemic. While farmers were paid for the loss of their stock, the workers got nothing for the loss of their jobs.

This history provides a useful insight into the move in the 1950s and 1960s to keep the organised workers under the control of the very right-wing union leadership. Union full-time organisers who supported CND were hauled before the right-wing executive.

'Skilled at all Trades' is a useful book for those who seek to understand the struggles of landworkers, and the opposition they faced not just from the employers and the state, but also from sections of their own leadership.

TASKS FACING POLISH SOCIALISTS

THE ANTI-LEFT psychological terror in Poland of the last four years has been partly broken by the recent election results here. This success must be strengthened and increased. Everything possible must be done to transform this left spontaneity into a conscious, anti-capitalist and pro-socialist movement.

The election results are a signal that the period heralded by the 'Autumn of the Peoples' in 1989 is coming to an end. After the fall of the 1871 Paris Commune this anti-left feeling lasted a whole decade, now it is only four years — history is accelerating!

Trotskyists and all authentic left socialists, revolutionary syndicalists, and other groups related to them need to work out a line of action in relation to the 'left' coalition government resulting from the election.

At its centre should be the task of doing everything in order to avoid a situation where all those who voted

From LUDWIK HASS in Warsaw

for the left will reach a conclusion that their votes were wasted.

We should not, 'as a principle', throw obstacles in the path of the coalition government and rejoice at their every misfortune. We must not say 'I told you so'!

Pressure must be mounted on this government, with the demand that it realise the election promises of its parties. At the same time we must defend it against the right's attacks. We must ensure that the left does not

become synonymous with the rule of the Stalinist elite. One task facing the independent left is to reveal the hidden past which has never been acknowledged by the former ruling bureaucracy.

Already former 'comrades', who for the last four years have kept quiet, are getting ready to take high positions and begin to boss everybody about again. This will be a return to the 'old shit' which Marx warned about.

What is necessary now is to explain to the people continuously and persistently the complete difference and un-

bridgeable contradictions between Stalinism and real communism.

It is a question of life and death to build a new Marxist party, which will not have any points of contact with the old Stalinist PUWP. This will require a hard information and propaganda effort.

In contrast to the conspiracy of silence of the whole Polish press — including 'Trybuna' — about the struggles of workers' organisations in Europe and elsewhere, which is aimed at hiding the deep economic crisis that has settled over the whole capitalist world, including the USA, we must

inform and present the facts before workers.

We need to talk about the fight of our political comrades in the re-capitalising countries of eastern Europe, about their organisational efforts, and about co-operation with fraternal groups from other countries.

In this way we shall lay the foundations for the rebuilding of the international solidarity of the workers' movement. We need to act to contribute to the building of an organisation as a component of the revolutionary international. Let us have the courage to speak openly and act in this spirit.

New mood shown in election

IN POLAND's recent elections the three lists considered by public opinion as oppositional and left altogether received 5,944,600 votes, some 3,322,400 more than in 1991 — an increase of 126.7 per cent.

In comparison with the parliamentary election two years ago, the number of unspoiled votes increased by almost a quarter (2,577,600, or 23 per cent), while the number of those entitled to vote increased by only 161,100 (0.6 per cent). But electoral participation only increased by 8.9 per cent, from 43.2 to 52.1 per cent.

This means that more than 2,366,500 of those who did not vote in 1991 because they thought the elections could take place without them, that everything was hopeless anyway and already decided, decided to vote this time.

Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej — an electoral bloc of the social democratic party (former Stalinist party), old trade unions (OPZZ), women's organisations, youth and other groups, including a fraction of the old Polish Socialist Party — gained most of these new supporters with a vote of 1,470,500, despite being continuously accused of having a 'communist' background. If only this were true!

Similar attacks were levelled against the peasants' party, Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe, which co-operated with the Stalinist regime. It received 1,151,700 new votes.

The small group of left 'Solidarnosc' trade union activists and a number of former Communist (Polish United Workers Party) activists making up

Unia Pracy — free of this original sin — obtained only 700,200 votes.

The Polish results can be placed in a wider trend of electoral successes by socialists and social democrats in Norway and Greece, in the north and south of Europe.

The aggressive utterances by conservative Unia Polityki Realnej leader J. Korwin-Mikke about the general demise of socialism have turned out simply to be a propaganda trick, or the wishful thinking of an ordinary reactionary.

To the electoral success for the left must be added the 761,400 votes (5.5 per cent of unspoiled votes) cast for the peasants' party 'Samobrona' and the politically dubious Party 'X'.

Power

These parties too stood not only against the governments in power since 1989, but also against their nationalist-authoritarian rival — the Konfederacja Polski Niepodległej.

Both of these parties opposed the newly-rich, including those from the old and new nomenklatura, careerists, and swindlers in high positions and their accomplices who cheated billions of zloty from the banks.

They called for full employment and social security, subsidised holidays for workers and their families, including holidays for schoolchildren, and for a free national health service.

This combination of reactions, attitudes and demands in Poland in 1993 is synonymous with left spontaneity — some

polemicists in the pay of the newly-rich call it populism.

There were only 2,577,600 who did not vote in the previous election and it is hardly probable that all of them would have voted for one of these parties. Even in that unlikely event there remain 744,800 voters unaccounted for.

They are those who in 1991 voted for the 'Solidarnosc' candidates — generally speaking not for the left — and who, in the last 23 months, have changed their political sympathies.

This would imply that one in ten voters has undergone this transformation. But life is not that simple.

Some voters who took part in the election in 1991 did not vote this time. Others among the new voters cast their vote for the post-'Solidarnosc' candidates.

Therefore the number of those who changed their orientation can be doubled. This means that one in five of the supporters of the 'free play of market forces', 'market economy', and similar wonders from the storeroom of the European past have changed their views.

The change is being explained by journalists — from the orthodox 'Polityka' to the popular 'Gazeta Wyborcza' — as being due to voters being simply led on by their negative reactions, their dislike for the last four governments.

These journalists are frightened by the present mood. But if they were correct it should have been the 'patriotic' and strikingly 'anti-left' Konfederacja Polski Niepodległej

which should have anticipated the gains and profited by them.

After all, they were not compromised by any participation in any governments. But not only did they not gain anything, they even lost 71,700 votes, or 8.3 per cent of their 1991 total.

The political profile of Poland in autumn 1993 is also characterised, even more by the defeat of the 'centre-left' parties — in reality the nationalist right — of Unia Demokratyczna.

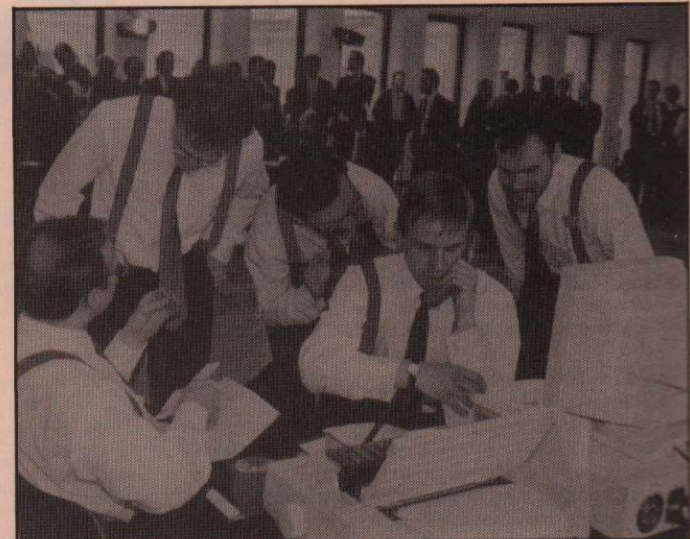
This major force in the attempted 'transformation' — the Polish counter-revolution — received only 79,900 new votes. This is only a handful in comparison with the gains of the left lists, and the 761,400 new votes for the marginal parties.

This is a defeat for a layer of the bureaucracy, that social parasite in the degenerated workers' state. Only individuals from this layer — not necessarily from among the hardliners — remained in Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej.

On the contrary they are the backbone of Unia Demokratyczna. After all the leading personality in Unia Demokratyczna is Marcin Swiecicki, former secretary of the central committee of the Polish United Workers Party.

This party is full of sons and daughters from the highest echelons of the nomenklatura — usually operating under assumed names.

In the pre-electoral campaign they were trying to frighten Poland with the threat of all sorts of plagues, in case of the electoral victory of Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej.



Poland's stock exchange in the former Communist Party HQ

Yeltsin's dictatorship

What Russian workers have to say about it

Monday 15 November, 7pm

Friends Meeting House, 173-177 Euston Road, London NW (opposite Euston station — use the garden entrance)

The military attack on the Russian parliament has been followed by police repression and media censorship. All this comes on top of soaring prices, economic chaos and the outbreak of national conflicts throughout the former USSR.

Workers bear the brunt of these changes. In Ukraine they have already voiced their opposition in a gigantic strike movement. Our meeting will be addressed by a Russian worker recently victimised for trade union activity, and a Moscow university student — both members of the Socialist Workers Union. Russian section of the Workers International to Rebuild the Fourth International. Questions and discussion welcome.

Organised by the Workers Revolutionary Party (Workers Press), PO Box 735, London SW8 1YB. Enquiries: 071-582 8882.



Ukraine miners strike against Gorbachev government in 1993

Workers Press

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UN blamed for Cambodia's child prostitute explosion

BY BRONWEN HANDYSIDE

UNITED NATIONS troops stationed in Bosnia are currently under investigation following reports that some soldiers were seen using a Serbian-run brothel in which Croatian and Muslim women had been forced to work.

The day after the investigation was announced, a damning report laid much of the blame for the explosion of child prostitution in Cambodia over the last two years at the door of the 22,000 international troops and staff of the United Nations interim administration (UNTAC).

Between December 1991 and May 1993, when UNTAC was functioning, the numbers of

women and children involved in prostitution in the capital, Phnom Penh, rocketed from 6,000 to 20,000, and more than 3,000 UN soldiers caught sexually transmitted diseases, according to Defence for the Child International.

According to the author of the report, Eva Arnvig, a Danish clinical psychologist who has just returned from Cambodia, the UN did not test UN soldiers for HIV before they went, and partly as a result, infection with the virus dramatically increased throughout Cambodia's brothels.

Fear of AIDS meant a sudden rise in the number of very young girls taken — in some cases kidnapped — to work in Cambodia's brothels.