

TORY STENCH OF DECAY

THE Tory government is falling apart. Each day brings new scandals that expose the hypocrisy and greed that it is eating into the heart of the government.

The situation today has been rightly compared with the Profumo crisis of 30 years ago. Then the Tory government collapsed under the weight of a series of sex scandals.

BY THE EDITOR

A crisis such as the present one has its own logic and more revelations can be expected. But the main lesson for the working class is that this government could be swept from office, given an ounce of fight from the leaders of the labour movement.

A government fond of preaching 'moral virtues' to the working class, and of denouncing those who are forced to survive on state benefits as 'scroungers', has been exposed for millions as a gang of thieves, cheats and liars.

Extols

It extols the family, yet has made thousands homeless and forced hundreds to sleep rough in every major town and city.

But there has been scarcely a squeak from the Labour Party over the last weeks, not even the demand for a general election.

No doubt this is because there are more than a few skeletons in Labour's cupboard, as the Tories and the security services will well know.

But the matter runs deeper than this. The trade union and Labour leaders have adamantly refused to mobilise the strength of the movement against this putrescent government.

Defence

On the contrary: when the working class has shown its willingness and capacity to fight, these leaders have set out deliberately to break up the movement against the government.

This was their role when thousands upon thousands of workers came to the defence of the miners some 15 months ago. The TUC, terrified of what they saw emerging, managed to isolate the miners from the rest of

— but not a squeak from Labour leaders

the working class, and gave the Tories the green light to try and finish off the National Union of Mineworkers.

On every other issue a similar story could be told.

■ The Labour Party leaders have made clear that the vast bulk of the anti-union legislation will remain intact, should they form a government.

■ They have made equally plain that, like the Tories, they will continue to undermine the system of welfare benefits and further extend means testing.

■ These leaders have no intention of doing anything with the industries privatised by the

Tories: Labour will leave them in the hands of the bankers and speculators, who will make millions at the expense of working people.

■ On foreign policy the same story is true. Kinnock, Smith and company supported the bombing of Iraq, just as today they support Tory foreign policy in the former Yugoslavia.

Hammered

In the coming months millions will find themselves in conflict with the government.

■ Those fighting cuts in town hall jobs and services;

■ Those hammered by the

swingeing tax increases that will begin to bite from April onwards;

■ Those subjected to a wage freeze while prices once again start to rise.

Two matters are clear:

■ A united struggle is now urgently required to bring together all those who will be driven to fight the government, to force it from office. But such a movement will have to fight not only the Tories, but also all those leaders in the labour movement who, in effect, allow the Tories to remain in office.

■ Given the government's acute political crisis, the possi-

bility of a Labour government cannot be ruled out: the working class wants to get rid of the Tory government.

But there must be no illusions about what a Labour government would do. Because the Labour leaders stand for the continuation of capitalism, they will do everything to defend this crisis-torn system against the interests of the working class.

In fighting for the maximum unity in struggle against the Tory government, the working class must prepare to deal with any future Labour government.

■ See advert for Community and Union Action Campaign national meeting, on page 2.

Remember Tasleem Akhtar

IN Birmingham, on 6 December, the Tasleem Akhtar Memorial Committee held a memorial ceremony at the spot in Esme Road, Sparkhill, where 11-year-old Tasleem was brutally murdered in a racist attack four years ago. Wreaths were laid, the Fateha prayer was said, and there was a minute's silence.

Speakers referred to racist and fascist violence across Europe, the murders of student Stephen Lawrence in London and taxi driver Ashiq Hussain in Birmingham. In east London, they said, a British National Party councillor had been elected, and Quddus Ali was fighting for his life.

With support from local residents, the Tasleem Akhtar Memorial Committee is urging Birmingham city council to honour the murdered girl's memory and affirm its opposition to racism, by renaming Esme Road, Tasleem Road.

Photo: Mark Salmon



**Workers Aid convoy
report — see p3**

On other pages: Imperialism out of the Balkans! — page 2; UN plays games in Bosnia — pages 4&5; Pablo's Greek chauvinism — page 6; New police powers in Britain — page 7; Ghost of Zapata in Mexico — back page.

Imperialism out of the Balkans!

PRIME MINISTER John Major last week threatened the Serbs with NATO air strikes if they do not free the besieged UN forces in Bosnia. He has also called for air attacks to force open the airport at Tuzla.

Whether the Tory government — until now consistently pro-Serbian — will actually put its threats into action is another matter.

But there is a principle at stake. The working class must denounce all imperialist intervention in ex-Yugoslavia. It must call for the immediate withdrawal of all United Nations forces from the Balkans.

Even if bombing against the Serbs was to take place, it would have nothing to do with either a fight against Milosevic and his fellow Serbian fascists; nor would it be intervention in defence of Bosnia and its right to exist as an independent nation.

Since the war started, the major powers have watched Milosevic and his Stalinist-fascist regime butcher thousands upon thousands of innocent men, women and children.

Their 'arms embargo' — which has in any case been openly breached by the Belgrade regime — was designed to prevent the Bosnian army from getting the materials it required to fight for the defence of Bosnia.

The Gulf war was launched on the pretext of getting rid of the dictator Saddam Hussein. The cities of Iraq were destroyed in the name of the fight against the 'Hitler of the Middle East'.

But the butcher Saddam remains to this day in power. He carries out murderous attacks against the Kurdish people with impunity.

The war was not about the removal of an 'evil dictator' but about the need to secure the interests of imperialism in the Middle East.

Similarly any intervention by the 'great powers' in the Balkans has always had one aim: to protect their imperialist interests in the region.

The divisions within western Europe, and between western Europe and the United States, about whether to intervene and on which side has likewise never had anything to do with principles. Such divisions simply reflect divisions of interest among the imperialist powers.

* * * * *

AS Workers Press has documented for weeks, the major reason for the continuation of war in the former Yugoslavia is the United Nations. This has been the main body through which the imperialists have operated.

■ It is the UN that has deliberately prevented medical aid and food from reaching the starving people of Bosnia.

■ It is the UN that has blocked the opening of the northern route from Croatia into Bosnia. The opening of this route would lay the basis for the revival of trade between Bosnia and the rest of the world. That is why the UN has done everything to prevent its opening.

Major now calls for the opening of Tuzla airport. In the first place, this would do nothing to help the revival of trade, but would perhaps allow more aid to reach Bosnia.

Second, the people of Tuzla have made clear that they do not want the opening of the airport by the UN because they know that it would then be a tool in the UN's hands to be used against the Bosnians.

All those fighting for the right of Bosnia to exist can place no confidence in the United Nations or any other imperialist body.

The only force that can stop the carnage in Bosnia, that can put a halt to the dismemberment of the country, is the international working class.

That is why the opening of the northern route remains the principal responsibility before the working class of Europe.

That is why we will do everything in our power to lead the struggle for the completion of this task.

Letters

Never too late . .

I APOLOGISE for this late response to János Boróvi's letter in Workers Press (17 July 1993) in which he raised the question of the translation of a passage from Ludwik Hass's article 'Poland at a Turning Point' (Workers Press, 26 June 1993) being 'ambiguous and confused'.

The disputed passage reads: 'In this way he has remained faithful to his electorate, to the working class. He is still their son and acknowledges his roots.'

This referred to the right-wing 'Solidarność MP, Alojzy Pietrzyk, a miner, who moved the vote of no confidence in Suchocka's government.

In the the Polish original it said: 'który na swój sposób docho-wuje wierność swoim wyborcom, klasie robotniczej, której synem jest i do przynależności do której nadal się poczuwa'.

This says exactly the same thing, in three different ways: that this right-wing trade union MP, under the pressure of the working class as manifested in the mass strikes, was articulating the left-wing demands of his mining constituency, and in this way he differed from those former worker-leaders who, in

parliament, openly laughed at his clumsiness in expressing the working-class point of view.

I hope very much that you publish this, if only to point out that it's never too late to answer a letter.

Bozeina Langley
Brighton

The roads to hell

I HAVE read in Workers Press some of the discussion that has arisen over Bill Hunter's interview about 1953 etc. (23 October).

Personally, I feel that this is of historic interest with reference to the various protagonists. However I especially feel that it was not a decisive period — that was earlier — and that the protagonists were travelling on different roads to hell.

In this sense I agree with the concluding paragraph of Al Richardson's letter (18 December). However, the arguments presented seem to me to be inaccurate and untenable. It seems to me to be taking a bit of history out of context to justify his own political position.

He starts with the claim that his and Sam Bornstein's analysis of the period was based on

Vern and Ryan's thesis. Before I deal with this matter, I must observe that this is the second time he has claimed that the late Sam Bornstein had agreed with him. I agree this is a secondary matter; nonetheless, checking the previous statement with other friends, I find no-one else seems to know about it, and it is therefore unprovable, unless of course Sam Bornstein kept these positions secret from everybody else.

The more important aspect is with reference to the Vern-Ryan thesis. Al Richardson challenges the lack of publication of the Vern-Ryan documents in a manner which proclaims his ignorance and simultaneously his intellectual range.

An examination of both his and Sam's book shows on the contrary no reference to Vern-Ryan, but clearly, specifically and correctly the position of the majority leadership of the RCP.

In this context it must be pointed out that Bill Hunter played an active role both as a member of the RCP leadership and in an individual capacity as author of 'The IS and Eastern Europe'.

If he wants to get a clear picture both of the position of the RCP and that of the Vern-Ryan group, I suggest he reads the Spartacist pamphlet on this period called 'Yugoslavia, East-

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ern Europe and the Fourth International'. I say this, although I am not a supporter of the Spartacists.

There are other items he brings in to justify his personal prejudices. A clear example is his reference to J.P. Cannon.

Whether he likes it or not, Cannon with all his faults (who has no faults?) was a major force in creating the Trotskyist movement and tradition.

Owing to his prejudice, Al Richardson blurs over the real and important point he makes.

The truth of the matter is that the crisis of Trotskyism emerged at the end of World War II because of our inability to understand and interpret the new phenomena that emerged after World War II.

To me, the nearest to tackling the problem was the RCP, but it also broke because it failed to understand the fundamental economic character that was emerging — though it made a major step forward, particularly in analysing eastern Europe, and the Stalinist role in it.

It recognised, like Morrow, that post-1945 was not the same as post-1918, but it never recognised the character and implication of that difference.

Sam Levy
Forest Gate

Workers Press £3,000 fund In so far: £275.13

AS YOU can see, at this rate we are not going to start the new year on a good note. January is always a difficult month, so please step up the rate at which money comes in so that we will be able to make the fund. I know I've said it many times, but un-

less our readers and supporters let us have enough money every month then the future of the paper is in danger. So please respond as soon as possible.

Geoff Pilling
Rush your money to Workers Press, PO Box 735, London SW8 1YB.

Coming Soon

TUESDAY 18 JANUARY: Wells Street Magistrates' Court, London W1. Tel: 071-436 8600. Prosecution by the HSE of Bovis Construction Ltd and Satchwell Control Systems Ltd, over an accident at the Wilshire Hotel on 22 July 1992, Marylebone Rd, London W1. David Webster died as a result of an electric shock from a live electrical panel.

WEDNESDAY 26 JANUARY: PUBLIC MEETING on the govern-

ment's abolition of safety regula-

tions. The meeting will take place in the Training Room, opposite Southwark Trade Union Support Unit, 42 Braganza Street, London SE17.

Speakers include: John Prescott MP, Nigel Bryson (GMB), Jimmy Fitzpatrick (FBU), Kevin Barron MP, Fiona Murie (CAHIL). Nearest Tube: Kennington.

SPECIAL OFFER — EXPIRES END FEB. 1994

'REVOLUTIONARIES THEY COULDN'T BREAK' BY N.VAN

The fight for the Fourth International in Indo-China

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The book and its author

The Vietnamese workers' movement took shape in mortal conflict with the French colonial regime before World War II.

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As the official Communist Party — under Stalin's instructions — carried out ever-more -ruinous zig-zags of policy, the Trotskyists discredited and defeated them in the workers' organisations.

The Vietnamese Communist Party enforced its power in 1945 by a brutal slaughter of its

Trotskyist opponents — not, as Stalinist mythology pretended, because the latter 'turned their backs on the peasantry' or 'sold themselves to Japanese fascism'.

This book sets straight the historical record after generations of falsification.

It brings alive the political lessons of a period in which the Trotskyist Fourth International and the Stalinist Third International clashed, not in the arena of ideas or slogans, but in life — among workers and peasants who organised and fought in the face of grinding poverty, police dictatorship and war.

Ngo Van was a worker, a Trotskyist and a participant in the events he describes. He was imprisoned in the 1930s by the French colonial regime, and in 1945 escaped the Stalinist massacre.

He fled Vietnam to Europe, where he lives in exile. He combined first-hand experience with years of documentary research to write this book, which is a must for revolutionary fighters of today.

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Saturday 22 January

10 am-7 pm Conway Hall, Red Lion Square,
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DEBATES: 'Is capitalism in decline?'; 'The new world order'; and 'Whatever happened to the USSR?'. WORKSHOPS: 'Marxism and dialectics'; 'International money'; 'The law of value and class struggle'; 'Theory and practice'; and 'Unwaged work'.

Speakers include: Hillel Ticktin, Istvan Meszaros and Geoff Pilling. Unwaged £4, waged £8. Details from: 081-348 5399 or 041-339 8855 x 4377. Write to 'Critique' c/o the Institute for Russian and East European Studies, 29 Bute Gardens, Glasgow University, Glasgow G12 8RS.

Europe's workers must aid Bosnia

Workers International member DOT GIBSON, who is on the Workers Aid for Bosnia's second convoy, reports from Zupanja, on the border of Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina.

THE working class of Europe must come to the aid of the people of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Trades unionists have already shown their willingness to act. They have supported the Workers Aid convoys with aid, trucks, funds and drivers.

But unless their leaders mobilise the full, united weight of the organised working class of Europe, to lift the blockade, open the northern route to central and eastern Bosnia, and to open Tuzla airport, the fate of that small country could be sealed.

At a meeting on 9 January in Orasje, on the Croatia-Bosnia border, two commanders of the HVO, the Croatian military forces, warned members of the Workers Aid for Bosnia Christmas convoy:

'Western governments have created this situation. The United Nations is not here to assist us to renew our multi-ethnic life, it is here to starve us into hatred and division. What you see here today, you could see in the former USSR and all over Europe tomorrow.'

'These Western governments, with their Western way of life, are really hiding a huge economic crisis in their own countries — they are happy that the people of our country are at war with each other. It takes attention away from their crisis.'

One of these commanders expressed his fears: 'Every single commander in this ugly war should come before the war crimes tribunal.'

'And I mean all commanders, from all armies. At the moment I can honestly say that

I have done nothing for which I am ashamed. But if this war continues, I don't know whether I will be able to say that.

'The Western governments must be the biggest war criminals of all, because it is they who support Greater Serbian nationalism and who bring out the deep hatreds and base actions that are becoming accepted as normal behaviour in a country where people have lived together in multi-ethnic, multi-cultural harmony. It is frightening.'

Bombing

The so-called no-fly zone is openly used by Serbian planes, which have now begun bombing raids on the areas held by Bosnia and HVO forces. The commander said that everybody can see with their own eyes that these Serbian planes are breaking the UN 'rules', but nothing is done against them.

One plane was shot down and the story is told of how the local people went to the wreck, found that the pilot was Russian, bound up his body and then took it to the local sawmill, where it was sawn into pieces.

It is difficult to feel and express what is going on here. The threat is of the very break-up of humanity itself. Starvation looms. It is in this situation that the Tuzla authorities are fighting so hard to maintain and defend their multi-ethnic town.

And it is into this situation that a handful of mainly young and mainly unemployed people came, with Workers Aid, with some trucks full of aid and demanded the lifting of the block-

This is the letter sent from the Workers Aid convoy to the Croatian minister of defence demanding that the northern route to Tuzla be opened. It was sent from Zupanja, 10 January 1994.

To Gojko Susak, Minister of Defence, Government of the Republic of Croatia, Zagreb.

Dear Sir,

We write to request that you arrange for the blockade on the northern route from Orasje to Tuzla to be lifted.

We know that this route is a 'blue' route designated by the UN security council. Yet the UN has taken no steps to carry out this decision. Therefore it is necessary for all those who want to ensure the delivery of aid and medical supplies to central and eastern Bosnia to take action.

Our humanitarian aid convoy is in Zupanja. We received permission to leave Croatia from here. But we are unable to pass until you give permission for the HVO forces to clear the way.

Yours faithfully,

Dot Gibson, on behalf of the Workers Aid convoy.

ade of the northern route to the Bosnian mining town of Tuzla!

It is quite understandable that these HVO commanders find it hard to believe. But both for the people of this region and for the whole of Europe, it would be as well for them to grasp that this group is deadly serious, and is learning some hard lessons.

Not one single member has expressed a desire to quit. The overwhelming response at all times has been a determination to reach our goal.

Tested

No one believes any more that it is enough to have some good ideas. Everyone realises that it is in life that ideas, and the people themselves, are tested and developed.

After being held up in Zagreb for 13 days, the convoy reached Zupanja to find that, even though we had the Croatian government's permission to leave, Croatian Defence Minister Gojko Susak would not give the

go-ahead to lift the blockade. This issue is part of the talks begun in Bonn between President Izetbegovic of Bosnia and President Tudjman of Croatia.

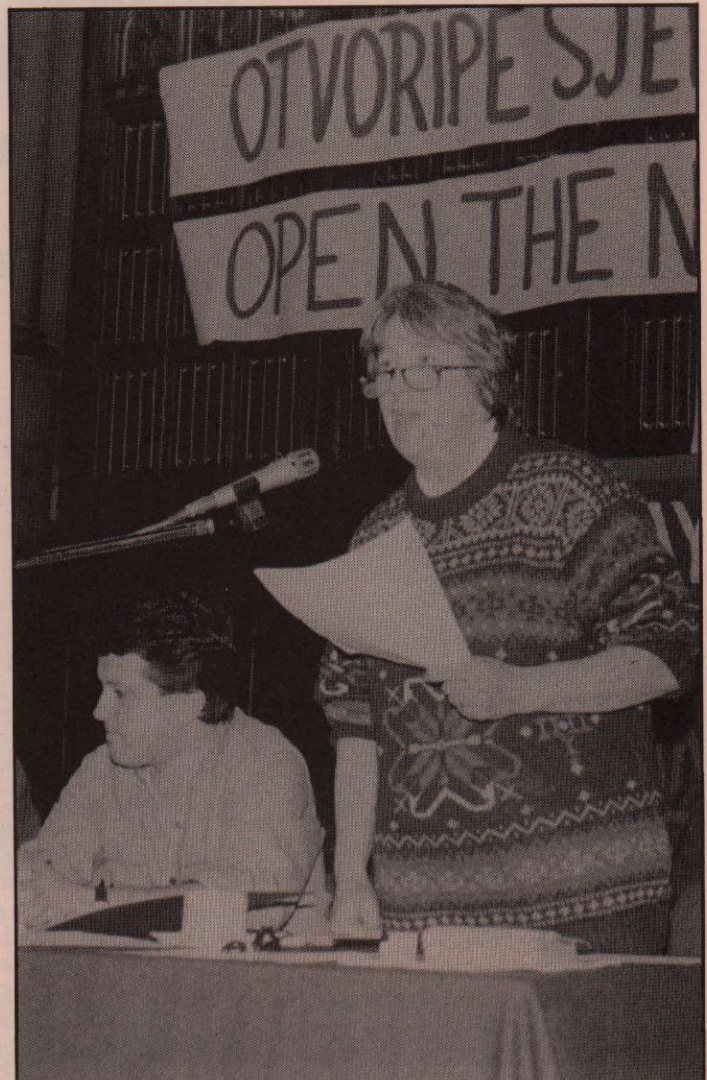
It has therefore been decided to distribute some aid to refugee camps, leaving the original six trucks loaded and ready, with their customs papers and permission, to move with the next convoy. We will now return to campaign in the working class to build up pressure for opening the northern route.

Messages/resolutions, calling for the northern route to Tuzla to be opened, should be faxed to Gojko Susak on Zagreb 427594.

The same message should be sent to the Republic of Yugoslavia calling for through-passage on that road.

But above all, the campaign must expose the UN's despicable role in using starvation in this dirty war (see pages 4&5).

The trades unions of Europe must act now to save Bosnia-Herzegovina, and rebuild internationalism in the working class.



Dot Gibson speaking at the Workers Aid report-back meeting for its first convoy on 30 October. Photo: Alan Clark

WORKERS AID FOR BOSNIA National Steering Committee meeting

5 February
2pm **10am-5pm**

Highfields Community Centre, Leicester

All local groups and other interested individuals are invited to send a representative

For further details please contact: WAB, PO Box 9, Eccles SO, Salford M30 7FX. Phone: 061-707 1584 or 071-582 5462.

'Don't work for Camden'

BY LIZ LEICESTER

LOCAL government workers in Camden, north London, have won official union backing for a national boycott of jobs within the borough.

The public service union, Unison, is supporting the boycott in an attempt to get the Labour council to withdraw a two-tier contract, which gives far worse working conditions to new employees, or those who change jobs.

Over a year ago, the council announced its intention to change the contracts of the entire 6,500-strong workforce. All employees would have been hit except teachers, who have a separate negotiating process.

Proposals

Among the threatened proposals were:

- A longer working week;
- Opting out of national and regional agreements;
- The right to change terms and conditions in future without negotiation;
- An end to the right to flexible-working and job-sharing;
- More stringent conditions for adoption, and maternity and paternity leave; and
- Drastic reductions in carers' and dependency leave.

Though the unions made concessions in many areas, they would not give way on the



Camden workers demonstrating against threatened sackings by the council in 1992

'variation clause', which would be a fundamental attack on the unions' bargaining power.

The council abandoned the negotiations and declared that it would be implementing the two-tier contracts from 18 October, creating an underclass of second-class citizens suffering working conditions far worse than their fellow workers.

The unions believe that, if the terms of this lower-tier contract become widespread, the next target will be the entire workforce, possibly through the termination of existing con-

tracts and the issue of new ones with the worse conditions.

Camden's Unison branch secretary, David Eggmore, has said that it is 'an utter disgrace that any employer, let alone a Labour council, should place its staff in such a position'.

A special general meeting of the Camden Unison branch agreed to boycott all Camden posts until the two-tier contracts are withdrawn. A motion passed unanimously calls on all Unison members not 'to apply for, attend interviews for, or accept appointment to, a boycotted

Camden post'; it instructs the branch executive committee to consider expulsion if members break the boycott.

Leaflets and publicity material have been prepared to hand out to those who may turn up for job interviews unaware of the situation.

Publicity being distributed nationally by Unison says: 'Don't work for Camden.' It calls on potential job applicants not to apply for Camden jobs, but to support the boycott and the fight for fair terms and conditions for everybody.

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Inside left

There's only one Secours Ouvrier!

WHO raises the banner for Secours Ouvrier (Workers Aid for Bosnia) in Paris? Our comrades in Workers Aid, and the Workers International, of course! On the last Saturday before Christmas over 5,000 people marched through the French capital, denouncing genocide and ethnic cleansing.

Bosnians were joined by Croats, Albanians, student groups, and established French anti-racist organisations like LICRA and MRAP. Former 'Socialist' prime minister Michel Rocard was booed by crowds who chanted 'Milosevic assassin!', Mitterrand, Balladur, complices!' (Milosevic is the Serb president, Mitterrand and Balladur are France's president and prime minister respectively.)

The readers of Workers Press will be proud to hear that Workers Aid was active both in the preparation and the demonstration itself, writes a French comrade in the Workers International to Rebuild the Fourth International. 'Workers Aid activists had made sure that their unions would be represented. ... Workers Aid's leaflet, printed in a union workshop, ... was in everybody's hand.'

So what about Ernest Mandel's United Secretariat (USec), the 'actually existing Fourth International', as French representative Catherine Samaury proudly calls it? This international grouping, supported by 'Socialist Outlook', Alan Thornett and Steve Myers in Britain, set out to split Workers Aid last October, by proclaiming its own 'International Workers Aid' after failing to get its way in the Manchester report-back conference for the campaign's first convoy.

Myers claimed that opening the vital northern route to Tuzla was just a 'WRP obsession', arguing the urgent thing was to get aid through anyhow. So what have his USec comrades done?

'Those who had attempted to split Workers Aid in France have simply abandoned it,' writes our French comrade. A speaker from the Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire (LCR), USec's French section, made no reference to the first Workers Aid convoy nor to any Workers Aid campaign. 'The LCR didn't have any banner, only a leaflet entitled "Mais quelle Europe nous préparent-ils donc?"', and stressing the fact that France was not accepting refugees. This flyer advertised the weekly paper "Rouge" ... but there was not one seller of "Rouge" around.'

'By printing "section française de la Quatrième Internationale" on their title, the LCR is giving a false image of Trotskyism. They are doing great prejudice to the Fourth International and the time will come when, like Rocard, they will have to face the booing and hissing of crowds.'

No conferring

LABOUR says it could win control of up to seven more London boroughs in the May local government elections, leaving the Tories with only three or four. But with worsening cuts, competitive tendering, and bankers banging on the door for their money, what policy does it offer?

London Labour Party's annual conference is due to be held in February, but the party hasn't the wherewithal to hold it. An appeal to major trades unions to pick up the tab for the conference has been rejected.

The way Labour councils are treating trades unionists, is this surprising?

Charlie Pottins

Bosnia: the games played by the UN

TO ALL concerned, peace-loving people, organisations, religious institutions and media representatives who believe in justice, fair play and the establishment of truth, we earnestly request your assistance in exposing the conspiracy of the United Nations in Bosnia.

We detail below a personal example of the UN's obstructive policy, which is one part of its conspiracy to prevent humanitarian supplies getting through to a devastated people.

The principal aim of this obstructive policy in Bosnia is to use humanitarian aid blackmail to force Bosnia's president, Alija Izetbegovic, to sign away territory to Serbia and Croatia, thereby achieving dismemberment of an independent, sovereign state.

The incident we wish to relate concerns the world's largest containerised mobile hospital, built in South Africa and destined for all the people of Bosnia, irrespective of religion or political affiliations.

The hospital was transported by a South African naval vessel, courtesy of the South African government, to the Italian port of Trieste. From there it was shipped to the Croatian port of Ploce, where it has been lying since 12 September 1993 collecting dust, courtesy of the UN, while 56,000 people are trapped without medical facilities in Mostar, only 66km away.

The hospital is self-sufficient, with its own generator, ambulance, patient disaster bus, and 38 containers of state-of-the-art medical units and back-up, for which the South African company received a manufacturing design award.

The medical units comprise two theatre units, an intensive care unit, a sterilisation unit, an X-ray unit, a dental unit, all in standard shipping containers, which can be deployed and be fully functional within 12 hours.

Obstructionist policies

OUR encounter with the UN's obstructionist policies started in August 1993, when we were informed

This is a shortened version of a pamphlet — 'The Games the United Nations Play' — which has been published by Workers Aid for Bosnia. The text comes from a South African organisation, 'Gift of the Givers', and was sent to Workers Aid by the Tuzla

that any aid destined for Bosnia has to be approved by the UN first, if an armed escort is to be provided.

Accordingly, we approached the World Health Organisation (WHO) — the first arm of this organised-crime network — for its approval of the hospital, which was being provided in accordance with Islamic principles that demand that humanitarian aid is for all victims of war irrespective of religious affiliation, since all human beings are created by God Almighty. We chose Zenica as the area to which to send the

and use when necessary, thereby destroying a fully functional hospital.

WHO went on to say that it could not approve the hospital because no documentation had been received — yet this had been received, through our lawyer, on 10 August and again on 13 September. A video tape was even given showing the functioning of the hospital.

We travelled all the way from South Africa, 8,000km away, yet were given a meeting of only 20 minutes with WHO because it was

Logistic Centre in Zagreb. Although Workers Press does not agree with everything the pamphlet says, it is a damning indictment of the role of the United Nations in the attempt to destroy Bosnia.

trucks, especially if the containers weighed more than 15 tons. It was given clear manufacturer's specifications detailing that the medical unit containers were four tons in weight (except for four units which were approximately eight tons each) and therefore could easily negotiate the mountainous passes to Zenica.

As for the containers for the back-up supplies, which were heavier, we agreed to empty the containers out into low-tonnage trucks to facilitate easy access across difficult roads.

We were then told that to reach Zenica we had to pass four front lines, and therefore it was almost impossible to transport the hospital to this area. We later established that convoys had gone through in spite of the front lines. However, to be reasonable and to be flexible, we were prepared to consider Tuzla as a second option because it is also a 'mixed' area. Tuzla was also considered a problem area for reasons similar to Zenica.

Mostar was then selected as a third option, for many reasons.

1. It was only 66km away from the port of Ploce, where the hospital was gathering dust and had already been vandalised.

2. There was only one front line to cross.

3. It fell within the UN mandate, which says that aid should be allocated to well-demarcated areas of need. The east bank of Mostar perfectly fitted the description as medical facilities were non-existent, with approximately 12 people being injured each day and roughly five people dying each day because of the war. This does not take into account disease-related deaths.

4. The Bosnian government, non-governmental organisations, the media and, surprisingly, the

'The principal aim of the UN's obstructive policy in Bosnia is to use humanitarian aid blackmail to force Bosnia's president, Alija Izetbegovic, to sign away territory to Serbia and Croatia, thereby achieving dismemberment of an independent, sovereign state.'

hospital, as refugees of all denominations, including Serbs, Croats, and Muslims, are in this region.

WHO responded by saying that a hospital was not needed, while we discovered that they were intending to convert a steel factory into a 500-bed facility. This had been five months in the planning stage and would take a minimum of 120 days to complete, if it was started at all.

Common sense dictates that any hospital would be welcome in an area with 1 million refugees. The Bosnian government, numerous humanitarian organisations, and the media all confirm that a hospital would be most welcome in Zenica.

WHO recommended that we remove the equipment from the hospital and give it to them to 'store'

'busy'. An international protest campaign was launched against WHO, which bowed down within 48 hours and decided that a hospital was needed in Zenica after all.

WHO passed its recommendations to UNHCR [the office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees] — the second arm of the 'dismemberment advocates in Bosnia' — which promised that it would take all necessary steps to deploy the hospital once the approval was obtained. But nothing was further from the truth.

Mountainous conditions

UNHCR first claimed that the road to Zenica was too mountainous and therefore not passable by container



Workers Aid collecting much-needed supplies for Bosnia, in Leeds last August

Photo: Tony Myers

games the UN

UN agreed that this was an ideal area.

We were optimistic now that the hospital would get the attention it so rightly deserved. Wrong again! First the UN cited a budget problems as the reason why it could not move the hospital: it had received only \$60 million out of an allotted \$120 million for Bosnia.

We offered to pay for the transport, to which the UN responded that it had no container trucks. An investigation of its warehouses, and individual questioning of unsuspecting UN personnel, produced evidence to the contrary.

We produced a letter from the Bosnian government, which was personally delivered, stating clearly that the hospital was the number one priority in the country — the letter received neither acknowledgement nor positive response.

Numerous conditions

NOW the United Nations continued to pile on numerous conditions, despite its promise to take full responsibility for deploying the hospital after WHO approval had been obtained.

We complied with all of the conditions, but success was just not within our grasp. More conditions followed, which made it clear that the UN mandate was definitely to

UN could not help us, as UNPROFOR [the UN Protection Force] will not escort private trucks.

After repeated pressure, the UN said that we *could* move the hospital from the port to its warehouse at our own expense, to save us continued port charges — but unfortunately there was no storage space.

On 23 September 1993 the UN informed us that it would move the hospital to Mostar with UNPROFOR once conditions became safer, and that we would have done much better to leave the hospital in Italy for as long as necessary until conditions settled. Also, that we were wrong to have taken the hospital to Ploce, and that we should rather have taken it to Split because it could have been moved from there to Zenica.

This was outrageous. *First*, the UN tells us it cannot deploy the hospital in Zenica, and *then* it blames us for not putting the hospital in a port near Zenica. After telling us on 23 September that Mostar is very dangerous, it goes ahead and delivers 12 containers of aid in this very same Mostar on 24 September, and many more times since. What is its conspiracy against the hospital?

After an international protest campaign is launched against it, the UN makes the excuse that the

'Men, women, and innocent, defenceless little children have paid the price of delay with anxiety, agony, operations without anaesthetic, loss of blood, and death. The UN has soaked itself in blood, has violated basic human rights, and is responsible for genocide in Bosnia.'

dismember Bosnia using aid blackmail as a ruthless weapon to force the Bosnian government to sign the Owen-Stoltenberg plan.

Even more conditions followed:

1. We were asked to donate the hospital to the UN in writing and it promised to deploy it in Mostar within 24-48 hours. The UN responded to our letter by saying that it must respectfully refuse the hospital because it did not have the logistical capacity to move it.

2. The UN then said that we should provide our own trucks to move the hospital because it had no trucks (repeating the old story). And we were warned in advance that we would be unsuccessful, as no private company would be willing to take the risk. To the UN's dismay, we found a company prepared to help us.

3. The UN then said that we should find Croatian drivers for these trucks, but again stated that we would be unsuccessful. Again, to its dismay, we proved the UN wrong.

4. Then we were asked to provide flak jackets and helmets for the drivers — leaving us to wonder what role the UN is really playing in Bosnia.

5. In any case, we were told, the

containers are 'enormous' and that it is a logistical problem. Yet these were no more than standard shipping containers, a fact it could have clearly ascertained if it had had the courtesy to come and inspect the containers, which were only 18km from the UN's warehouse in Metkovic.

Soaked in blood

MEN, women, and innocent, defenceless little children have paid the price of delay with anxiety, agony, operations without anaesthetic, loss of blood, and death.

The UN has soaked itself in blood, has violated basic human rights, and is responsible for genocide in Bosnia. It is desperately trying to achieve the dismemberment of that country.

It will never succeed. Bosnia has numerous sterling individuals and organisations, of all races and religions, standing by its side.

Bosnia will *never* fall. The UN will collapse before that. God Almighty will ensure that.

Truth will out, justice will be done, retribution will be exacted by God Almighty. We appeal to you to circulate this information as widely as possible.



'UNPROFOR... Why do you want Tuzla to die? Let the convoy through' — the message to the UN in Zagreb from Workers Aid last October during its first convoy

Photo: Tony Myers



A woman in a refugee camp in Bosnia last year. The UN has obstructed the mobile hospital from South Africa

Sewell-headed critic

THIRTY-FIVE 'members of the art world' — their own description of themselves — have laid into Brian Sewell, art critic of the London 'Evening Standard', accusing him of 'virulent homophobia and misogyny' and calling for his resignation.

They include practising artists, critics, dealers, publishers, and a light dusting of professors. They think London deserves better than Sewell's 'dire mix of sexual and class hypocrisy'.

Sewell has hit back, in an article printed in the 'Standard' one day last week. Here, among many other provocative statements, he told his readers there is no such thing as West Indian culture.

Ranged against Sewell, who was once a close friend of the Soviet spy Anthony Blunt, are such luminaries as the sculptor Rachel Whiteread, whose plaster cast of the interior of an east London house recently fell foul of a gaggle of uncomprehending local-authority philistines.

It's interesting to note that Sewell's employers seem to think he is a veritable master of English prose. But for my money his writing is altogether too self-conscious — too like a peacock spreading its showy tail and strutting about — to be wholly admirable.

Except to say that instinctively I'm on the side of innovative artists against those who hate and fear their work and therefore traduce them, I don't feel competent to comment further on this controversy, which so far has generated more heat than light.

But Sewell's dismissive throwaway remark about the non-existence of West Indian culture can't be allowed to go unanswered.

'CULTURE' being a word with many meanings and at least a score of definitions — including 'That which made Hermann Goering, Hitler's henchman and founder of the Gestapo, reach for his revolver' — Sewell's remark is capable of many interpretations.

Culture in the broadest sense is one of the essential attributes of human beings. In this wide sense it includes that basic human activity, the making and use of tools, and archaeologists implicitly recognise this when they speak, for instance, of the Mousterian, Aurignacian, and Solutrean 'cultures' in Europe.

If Sewell means his words to be taken absolutely literally, then he is saying that dwellers in the Caribbean are no better than animals — the sort of crass observation that defenders of slavery used to make in the 18th century, when they said transported Africans were 'brutes' akin to apes, who could be humanised only by slave labour.

I don't think even Sewell, though apparently capable of endless absurdities, would want his remark to be glossed in such a preposterous sense.

What he does seem to mean is that the culture of Caribbean peoples is beneath his notice — unworthy of serious examination by a learned critic of 'high' 'European' culture.

This tells us pretty well everything we need to know about Sewell. It calls to mind the Revd H.C. Beeching's jesting lines about Benjamin Jowett, 19th-century Master of Balliol, Oxford:

First come I; my name is Jowett. There's no knowledge but I know it. I am Master of this college: What I don't know isn't knowledge.

What Sewell doesn't recognise as culture isn't culture. Sewell doesn't know the first thing about Caribbean culture. Therefore there isn't any. Q.E.D.

Sewell's attitude is a throwback to the empiricist philosopher David Hume, for whom European culture was inherently superior to all other cultures, and who found, therefore, a causal link between 'race' and culture. It's a throwback to the

PERSONAL COLUMN

notorious 'Minute on Indian Education' penned by the celebrated historian Lord Macaulay in 1835, when he was legal adviser to the British colonialists' Supreme Council in India.

While admitting that he had 'no knowledge of either Sanscrit or Arabic', Macaulay confidently declared that 'a single shelf of a good European library' was 'worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia'.

Macaulay, whose father Zachary had been a West India merchant, declared his belief in the 'intrinsic superiority of the Western literature'.

From this self-satisfied cultural chauvinism it was a short step to putting 'For Europeans Only' notices on Indian railway carriages, station waiting-rooms, and park benches; so that even in the late 1960s, long after independence, expensive restaurants in Lahore barred anyone not in European dress.

Sewell's position, not least, echoes the more recent view of Professor Arthur Pollard — a founder member, believe it or not, of the Association for the Teaching of Caribbean, African and Associated Literatures — that 'with the possible exception of [V.S.] Naipaul, there really is nothing in African and Caribbean literature to match in quality those works which are normally found within the substantive body of texts set at Advanced Level'.

The really sad thing about Sewell, and Pollard, and all the other latter-day Humes and Macaulays, is that their rigid cultural blinkers are depriving them of much pleasure and much instruction.

I could fill this column many, many times over with the names of West Indian poets and novelists whose work, if the Sewell-headed critics would merely glance at it, might expand their horizons, give them much food for thought, and above all blast their ignorant prejudices to smithereens.

But lists of names mean little. So here are a few lines from that eloquent Guyanese poet John Agard, written in response to fascist attacks on black bookshops, and showing where Sewellism, unchallenged, can lead:

*Threatening letters were not enough
vicious scrawls on the shop windows were not enough
no they would have to get more tough*

*After all to keep Britain white
It's a danger
To have a nigger
Who can read and write*

A TAKE AWAY
*we can tolerate
(a curry won't do any harm
once in a while)*

*especially when it's late
and the chippy's closed
and let's face it mate*

*the Paki shop
stays open until midnight
(comes in handy when you're
a bit short on cornflakes)*

*but those black bookshops
we don't appreciate O no
mate*

*at a bookshop TAKE AWAY
we draw the bloody
line...*

*Those black bookshops don't
go for the palate
They go for the mind
open the eyes of the blind
yes man them black bookshops
can liberate...*

*and from the battlefield glass
of a splintered black bookshop
window*

*a multitude of mouths scream
truths that explode
from the very heart of the
Third World.*

*and words
blossom
into bombs*

Peter Fryer

Television

Kafka's New Year trip

Review by Charlie Pottins

FORGET strikes, riots or bombs; for disrupting life in the capital you can't beat the Metropolitan Police and the management of London Transport. On New Year's Eve, as the Met closed all streets around Trafalgar Square, I set off for a party in south-east London.

'Anyone know where we're going? 'Cos I don't', our bus driver confessed, boldly taking his diverted double-decker where none had gone before, down an underpass near St Paul's.

A peak-capped person at the Aldwych suggested I head north to Piccadilly Circus, adding that 'buses on diversion couldn't pick anyone up'. Back on the Embankment, an apparently Plumstead-bound 53 sped past empty, the driver waving 'no' to my outstretched hand, before turning the wrong way anyway.

Crossed

Passing other bewildered party-goers and office-cleaners still trying to get home, while empty buses circled, clearly under orders to 'Take no passengers', I crossed the bridge to Waterloo where, like Napoleon, freezing and thoroughly pissed-off, I surrendered to the first bus that stopped, and went home.

So, home alone on New Year's Eve, while the cat went off to revel with its mates, I pulled open a can of beer and in some desperation switched on the box. Scene, Wenceslas Square, fascinating Prague

where I'd been on holiday two years ago. Would we see its castle, cathedral, fairy-tale spires and folk-legends?

As firecrackers exploded in the background, someone told us that Irish businessmen were doing well there, a barman pulled a pint of alleged Guinness, mainly froth, then over we went to a hotel bar in Dublin where the crack was so boring, they must have had an awful job finding it. This was Channel 4's 'Triple Whammy', the 'Guardian' TV Guide's choice of New Year's Eve entertainment. Come back Sandy McPherson and the 'White Heather Club'!

In fact, Scotland provided some decent entertainment over the next few days. 'Taggart' (ITV, 1 January), taciturn and tongue-in-cheek, confronted a conundrum of old morality, family life and modern reproductive technology (a case like it was recently reported in America). A doctor murdered relatives for his respectability, a crowd of suited young men, throwbacks to Ealing comedy, ran riot for theirs.

'Tartan Shorts' (BBC2, 3 January), three short, inventive Scottish films, included Peter Capaldi's gem 'Franz Kafka — It's a Wonderful Life' (old Prague again, or maybe Auld Reekie). Crumpling up one sheet of paper after another, distracted by sinister visitors and attractive young neighbours, the writer struggled to

finish his first sentence about Gregor waking up to find he'd turned into... what? (Talking of Gregor, when's Rab C. Nesbit back?)

'Favourite Son' (1 January, LWT), a paranoid American conspiracy-thriller, didn't thrill



Tim Guinee as Johnny in Lynda LaPlante's 'Comics'

me half so much as Harold Lloyd's silent classic, 'Safety Last' (Channel 4), had earlier that day. My palms and soles go painfully tense and dry remembering the skyscraper climb! But the CIA-plot theme set me up right to enjoy Tom Hanks's comedy 'The Man With One Red

Shoe' (LWT) the following evening; 'wimp' music-teacher wins girl while giving government spies and thugs their comeuppance.

'A Dark-Adapted Eye', written by Barbara Vine (Ruth Rendell) and shown in two parts (BBC1, 2-3 January), was well-produced, well-cast and acted — by Celia Imrie, Sophie Ward and Helen Bonham-Carter — and of course, a strong, gripping tale. Secret nastiness and violence lurked beneath the English country idyll — an aunt was to hang — and children were told not to mention a servant-girl's death at teatime, and to go and wash those nails, dear. Basic values, and Rendell at her best.

Errors

Another two-parter, Lynda LaPlante's 'Comics' (Channel 4, 4-5 January), was a tragi-comedy of errors in today's London. The cops hadn't a clue, the killer was a professional but mixed-up comedian; Johnny (Tim Guinee), lean, mean and leather-jacketed, like his hero Jimmy Dean, was programmed on self-destruct anyway.

The three friends' light-heartedness after someone tried to ram them off the road — 'he could have killed us' — was too much; but the violence was believable, the characters convincingly real. I particularly liked Danny Webb as Johnny's manager. More! More!

Programme guide



Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan electrifies on Channel 4, 15 Jan.

Saturday 15 January KINGDOMS IN CONFLICT: 'Wild River No More'. This new series, which examines how human behaviour is affecting the natural world, begins with a visit to the Colorado, where industry, agriculture, interstate politics and native Americans all claim it for their own (8pm, Channel 4). 'Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan and Party'. Electrifying live concert given by one of the masters of the art of *qawwali*, the mystical and devotional music of the Sufis (11.35pm, Channel 4).

Sunday 16 January 'Moving Pictures'. New series begins with an exclusive lightning tour by Quentin Tarantino around the set of his new movie 'Pulp Fiction', plus a look at 'Bhaji on the Beach', which is being hailed as a breakthrough in British films (8.10pm, BBC2).

Thursday 20 January GREAT RAILWAY JOURNEYS: 'Cape Town to the Lost City'. South African Railways used to be the nerve centre of the apartheid state, but the jobs for life have gone and the rail network is crumbling (9pm, BBC2).

Selected films

SWEET CHARITY (1969). Bob Fosse's directorial debut about a prostitute-with-a-heart-of-gold (Shirley MaLaine). Great score by Dorothy Fields and Cy Coleman (Saturday, 3pm, BBC2). **ATTACK! (1956).** Robert Aldrich's powerful and uncompromising World War II drama. US infantry captain's cowardice sacrifices the lives of his men (Tuesday, 10pm, Channel 4). **THE PROWLER (1951).** Van Heflin as unscrupulous

cop with murder on his mind. Directed by Joseph Losey (Thursday, 12am, BBC2). JJ



Injured Jack Palance in the arms of Buddy Ebsen, in 'Attack!', Channel 4, 18 Jan.

The negative treatment

Workers Press has documented the readmission of Michel Pablo (Michalis Raptis) to the so-called United Secretariat of the Fourth International by its leader Ernest Mandel — in opposition to USec's own section, OKDE, in Greece (see Workers Press, 18 December 1993). Pablo is a Greek chauvinist, and here we publish an article written by him for the Greek paper 'Ta Nea' (7 December).

EUROPE will soon find itself on the horns of a dilemma, between either the 'social-democratic' policy of postponing its crisis, or the rise of authoritarian or perhaps even overtly fascist regimes.

Corruption, unemployment, poverty, narcotics and the growth of nationalism are already giving rise to such evils as the gains made by the ultra-right and fascists in France, Italy, Germany and England.

The 'social-democratic' treatment of the crisis will involve: radically reversing the

Maastricht treaty, which seeks to impose a German-French directorate; supporting the major export firms that are capable of withstanding foreign competition; turning toward the internal, partially entrenched, European market; and co-ordinating the growth of [the European Union's] member states' economies by at least 3 per cent.

This will be achieved by stimulating internal demand through a powerful, properly funded, state investment agency. Keynesian [demand-management] policies and a New



Support PASOK (led by Papandreou, above), says Pablo

Deal are needed by the 'social-democratic' European leaderships, otherwise the time is coming for the far-right and the blackshirts.

This is why, in Greece, negative positions on PASOK's most radical, social-democratic policy benefit the 'saviours' on the far right. [PASOK, the Pan-Hellenic Socialist Movement, is the party of the prime

minister, Andreas Papandreou.] All those who reject critical support [for PASOK] and a united front for a minimum programme of measures for incomes, taxation, welfare, education, decentralisation and national issues, and who regard green, red or black as being equal, contribute to cultivating negativism, which aids the ultra-right.

Stalinists slander Bosnian people

Despite its severe crisis, what is left of Stalinism continues to turn its guns on the Workers International to Rebuild the Fourth International, and in particular our defence of the Bosnian people. NIKOS LOUKIDIS, a member of the Greek section of the Workers International, reports on a recent example.

THE WORKERS International to Rebuild the Fourth International, because of its internationalist struggle in Greece to defend the Bosnian people against the partition of Bosnia, has become the target of the magazine 'ALLA', published by a former member of the Communist Party of Greece.

In the July issue of this magazine, just a few days after the launch of the campaign to send aid supplies to Tuzla, the editors published an article under the title: 'Is There Room for Peace in the Balkans?'

In it we read, amongst other things, the following: 'Today, instead of Saddam, we have another 'butcher', Milosevic.

'Once more, the leaderships of the 'democratic' west are being pressurised by the intelligentsia, the mass media that they themselves control, and 'public opinion', which they shape, to salvage their honour. Milosevic, Serbia and its people must be crushed.

'But there is something new in the case of Yugoslavia.

'Beyond the now 'natural' stance of the intelligentsia we also have sections of the 'active movement' joining their voices to the anti-Serbian fury which has blanketed Europe and America.

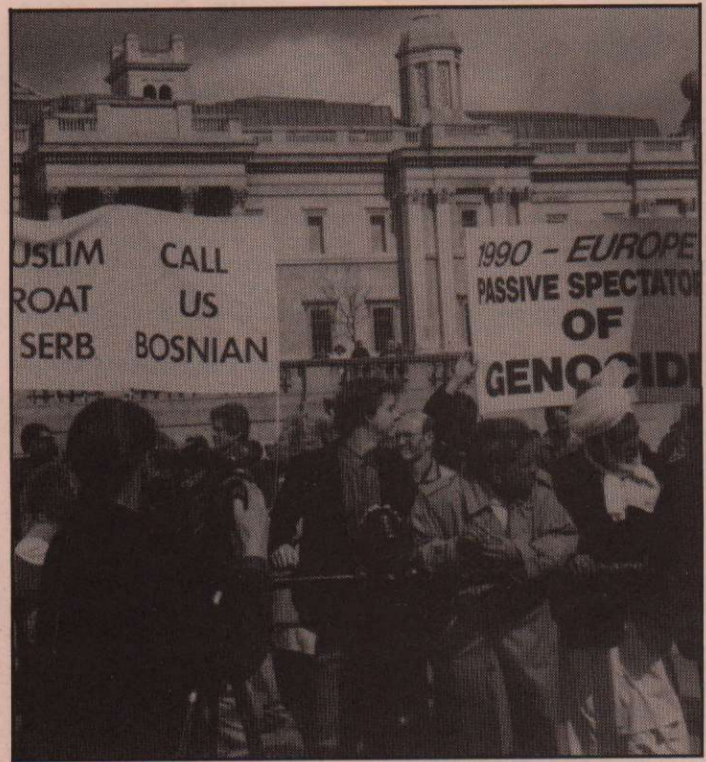
'Enemy'

'Currents in the Trotskyite movement have identified the 'enemy' in the person of Serbian nationalism and have discovered 'progress' among the Muslims of Bosnia...

'Under no circumstance is Greece the same as Europe with respect to this particular issue. There is no mass anti-Serbian feeling.

'On the contrary, the problem is seen to be on precisely the other side, i.e. uncritical support for Serbian nationalism and the emergence of right-wing anti-imperialism based on the conviction that the great powers 'failed to get us

on the Macedonian issue'. 'But here too there have appeared a small number of currents on the anti-Serbian front, trends that may not have reached the point of approving an imperialist intervention against Serbia, but who are propagating an analysis of the conflicts in the region which, irrespective of intentions, leads



The Stalinists ignore the clear message from Bosnia

along dangerous paths. 'Several months ago a brochure was published by the Workers International, the main slogan of which was 'Solidarity with the Bosnian People'.

Bosnian?

'In fact any even minimally informed person cannot but ask the question: to what segment of the Bosnian people does this particular text refer? The Serb, Croatian or Muslim part? 'For everybody knows that

about 40 per cent of the inhabitants of Bosnia-Herzegovina are Muslims, 38 per cent Serbs and 18 per cent Croatsians.

'Everybody also knows that each ethnic group has taken up arms against the others.

'From the outset of the dissolution of Yugoslavia we have been hearing views supporting self-determination for Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Macedonia and Kosovo.

Confusion

'We refer to these cases of confusion, not to correct any particular views in the direction they have already selected, but to stress their initial mistake: in

lia, Libya and also Yugoslavia are more than enough examples by means of which to determine the role of the imperialist forces.

'The only thing needed to recall, by reversing the saying of the late 1970s, is that "besides loneliness, there is also imperialism".

This ideological offensive against the Workers International to Rebuild the Fourth International, with various weasel words and a false anti-imperialism of the Stalinist type, is nothing but a smokescreen.

It is intended to hide the atrocities which have been brought to light by the collapse of Stalinism in the former Yugoslavia.

It is intended to cover up for the crimes being committed by the Stalinist bureaucracy of Milosevic in alliance with the fascists against the people of Bosnia.

For years the Stalinist bureaucracy in Belgrade has been nothing more than a tool of imperialism against the working class of all ethnic groups in former Yugoslavia.

Crisis

It was a crisis of imperialism that opened the way for the nationalism of Milosevic and the break-up of Yugoslavia.

The Greek capitalist class, which has been closely associated in the recent past with Serb nationalism, spreads its reactionary propaganda against the other ethnic groups in the former Yugoslavia in order to disguise its own greed in the Balkans.

The publishers of the magazine 'ALLA' have capitulated to the nationalist propaganda of the Greek ruling class and have failed to break with Stalinism.

This is why, when we ask for expressions of solidarity with the Bosnian people, they ask cynically: 'Which particular part of the Bosnian people are you referring to?'

We call upon every worker and every progressive intellectual to denounce the stance of this magazine.

It provides a cover for the barbarism being committed in Bosnia by Milosevic and his fascist allies with the cover-up provided by the United Nations, an open tool of imperialism.

New police powers

THE POLICE and the judges are to get unprecedented and draconian powers under the new Criminal Justice and Public Order Bill, which had its second reading in the Commons last week.

The Law Society, the Bar Council and the Criminal Bar Association say that the terms of this Bill go far beyond anything expected.

If it becomes law, they warn, it will lead to further miscarriages of justice.

In a joint report these bodies say the Bill amounts to a fundamental weakening of requirements that guilt must be proved beyond reasonable doubt.

Clause 27 of the Bill allows the prosecution and the judge to 'draw inferences' from a defendant's failure to answer police questions. This is the much discussed ending of the defendant's

'right to silence'. The Tory government has pressed ahead with this clause even though last year's Royal Commission on Criminal Justice recommended the retention of the right to silence.

But Clause 28 says that when a defendant declines to give evidence the magistrate or the judge has an obligation — not, the legal bodies stress, merely a power — to call him to the witness box.

If the defendant still refuses to give evidence the court may interpret this as evidence of guilt.

The Home Office had failed to mention the terms of this clause when it issued background briefing notes at the time of the Bill's publication.

Robert Seabrook QC, Bar Council chair, says: 'This section has taken us by surprise.

'I have the gravest concerns about the introduction of what seems to me to be a theatrical inquisition.

'It will create a drama which will destroy the impartiality of the judge'.

Seabrook denounced this clause as an insidious undermining of the burden of proof.

'It's one thing to tell a jury that a defendant's failure to give evidence means there is no support for a proposition being made on his behalf.

'It is quite another to suggest that you actually bolster the prosecution case by not giving evidence yourself'.

Other lawyers are equally alarmed by Clause 30 of the Bill.

This obliges anybody found by the police in the vicinity of a crime to explain his or her presence there. Roger Ede, secretary of the

criminal section of the Law Society, says:

'You could be convicted because a policeman saw you standing near a broken window and you failed to say what you had been doing.

'It waters down the standard of proof for convictions from 'beyond reasonable doubt' to what was previously the much lower standard which the police had to meet before making an arrest: 'reasonable suspicion'.

'You will be presumed guilty because of the circumstances in which you were arrested'.

Clauses 27-30 of the Bill are modelled closely on the Northern Ireland Criminal Evidence Order.

This was introduced by the government without legislation in 1988. They argued that extreme measures were needed to combat terrorism.

Bronwen Handyside reports

Two nations



ONE OF MAJOR'S BASTARDS

IN THIS happy period while John Major struggles to explain to us exactly what he meant by 'back to basics', and ministers are dropping around us like flies, the best news is the ignominious departure of Tory MP Alan Duncan.

The son of an RAF officer, a public schoolboy, and president of the Oxford union, he has never taken any trouble to conceal his naked ambition, greed and vulgarity. One of his more memorable pronouncements was: 'I've been a Conservative since my balls dropped.' He also said that he was worried that the welfare state was creating a 'thuggish underclass'.

After leaving Oxford he got a job with an oil trading company owned by a Mr Marc Rich. Mr Rich resides permanently in Switzerland, which has no extradition treaty with the United States. If he ever leaves the country, the US authorities would have him arrested and deported to face charges of tax evasion, fraud and racketeering.

Though Rich can't enter Britain without running the risk of being arrested, the government has given him a licence to trade in privatised electricity. Duncan maintains that the charges against his friend are not as serious as they sound.

When he left Rich's company, Duncan became a free-lance oil trader and adviser on oil to the Pakistani government, and is reputed to have made a lot of money during the Gulf war.

His latest scam for adding to his already considerable wealth has been — to a certain extent — his undoing. He 'lent' his elderly neighbour £140,000 to buy his house from Westminster council in 1990, then took over the property as soon as the right-to-buy rules allowed. The house is now worth £300,000.

The 'Daily Mirror' caught up with Duncan on a luxury skiing holiday in Switzerland, where he told them: 'Unlike Tim Yeo and Cecil Parkinson, I haven't fathered anyone's child. At least if I'd been f..... someone, I'd have been enjoying myself.

'As it is, all I did was sign a property deal with my neighbour. It's all a load of b.....'. Though the refined Mr Duncan has resigned his post as parliamentary private secretary — traditionally the first step to becoming a minister — Duncan remains an MP. When the scandal has blown over, as he told the 'Mirror': 'I'm still young enough to start again on the ladder to the top.'

THE OTHER SIDE

WHILE Alan Duncan enjoys himself in his £200 a night hotel, others have not done so well out of Tory policies.

Pamela Lovell, a pensioner aged 66, was forced to leave her council house after being threatened with eviction by Croydon council. She has been sleeping rough for two months on a park bench. 'It's been cold,' said Pamela, 'but I take cod liver oil to keep me healthy and I haven't come to any harm. I keep clean by washing as soon as the Queen's Gardens public toilets open at 5.30 am'.

She had given up work at the age of 50 to look after her elderly mother for 16 years, but when she died, Croydon council put the rent up from £9 to £64.67 a week.

'We have never had any debts. When I got the letter telling me I would have to leave the house I was so upset I went and threw the keys away, picked up my father's pocket watch and my warm coat, left a note on the hall table and walked out.'

Last year was also the first year of Care in the Community legislation — part of a government plan to encourage families to care for elderly people at home.

HOME ALONE

IS ANYONE wondering where the epidemic of 'Home Alone' children came from over Christmas, and whether we are indeed facing the breakdown of the family and need to get back to the basics?

A survey conducted in Reading and Richmond upon Thames may shed some light on the subject.

According to Fiona Smith of the University of Reading, nearly a million children under ten are regularly left home alone after school or in the holidays.

'Estimates that up to 20 per cent of five- to ten-year-olds are regularly left alone are quite realistic. Some are even younger than five.'

Accidents were common. 'Children try to make toast and finish by burning it and trying to get it out of the toaster with a knife,' Ms Smith told a conference of geographers.

Five million school-age children have mothers who work — the vast majority of them in poorly-paid part-time jobs. Very few families can afford private childcare, and Britain has one of the lowest provisions of publicly funded care in Europe.

RICH BY NAME

MR DUNCAN's friend, Mr Rich, was encouraged to live up to his name by the Tory government's kind bestowal on him of a licence to trade in privatised electricity — but it is not only Mr Rich who is profiting out of the privatised utilities companies.

Executives in water and electricity and British Gas saw their average earnings rise by more than 10 per cent last year.

But while directors' salaries continued to soar, lowlier employees did not fare so well. There were massive job cuts in the privatised industries, and pay was tightly pegged.

The fastest growth in top people's pay is taking place in the water companies, where salary increases for the highest-paid directors rose by an average of 16.4 per cent. Alan Smith, the highest-paid director at Anglian Water got a pay rise of 52 per cent.

So if you have trouble paying your water bills this year, try borrowing the money from him.

ROYAL FUNDAMENT WARMED

THE queen is determined that 1994 will not mean another 'anus horribilis' for her. After 50 years of riding in the impressive-looking but horribly draughty state coach, she has had under-seat heating installed.

If you have any material for this column, please send it to me at Workers Press, PO Box 735, London SW8 1YB.

Ghost of Zapata leads the army of the poor



Zapatista National Liberation Army guerrillas in the southern province of Chiapas

THE ghost of Emiliano Zapata, whose peasant army took Mexico City 80 years ago, has returned to defy the Mexican government's troops, tanks and aircraft, and challenge US imperialism's domination of the Western hemisphere.

Government helicopters spent four days last week bombing areas in the southern province of Chiapas, along the Guatemalan border, where peasant rebels styling themselves the Zapatista National Liberation Army had entered towns and proclaimed an uprising. Troops with armoured vehicles were moving in.

The rebels had stocks of dynamite and detonators, and had mined some bridges.

BY CARLOS FRANCIS

tion measures being implemented, by continuing the subordination of the indebted Mexican economy to United States big business.

While some factories are growing along the northern border, with US capital attracted by cheap labour, the south is more neglected than ever.

In Chiapas, where ruins testify to the pre-Spanish-conquest Mayan civilisation, many of the people are native Indians, who say the authorities do nothing for them.

Mexico's ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party, which rode to power on the backs of the peasant revolution early this century, and contained union strength in the 1930s, has not only attacked workers' rights and past land reforms, but abandoned its bourgeois-nationalist claims too.

Positive

In a manner reminiscent of Tory educational reaction in Britain, schools were told last year to change the history lessons, presenting the US neighbours to the north in a more positive light, and rebels like Zapata and Pancho Villa less

heroically. It is ironically appropriate that on New Year's Day, when the free trade agreement with the US came into force, Zapata should ride back into town!

President Carlos Salinas has tried to dismiss the rebels as isolated and foreign-inspired, but the government's harsh response reveal the rebels' support.

Actions have taken place in Puebla and Michoacan, far from Chiapas, and an Urban Front has proclaimed it will wage the struggle in Mexico City, the world's most populous urban centre.

Massacre

Rebel spokesman 'Comandante Marcos' said the Zapatistas had begun after the government's 1968 massacre of students before the Mexico City Olympics, and they had been training in the jungle for ten years.

Opposition politician Cuauhtemoc Cardenas, whose father Lazaro Cardenas nationalised Mexico's oil industry in the 1930s and carried out social reforms, has distanced himself from the guerrillas, while voicing understanding for their 'desperation'.

The government last week appeared to reject an offer by 'Red Bishop' Samuel Ruiz to mediate. In the town of Simojovel, Father Joel Padron warned:

'Change is needed in Mexico. If there is no dialogue, there will be revolution.'

China learns from Hitler

BY GEOFF BARR

CHINA'S Stalinist rulers are taking a cue from Hitler's plans for a 'master race', with their policy of 'eugenics' — that is, selective breeding.

Chen Minzhang, China's health minister, has said that a law must be passed to 'put a stop to the prevalence of abnormal births' ('South China Morning Post', 22 December 1993).

His 'Draft Law on Eugenics and Health Protection' would ban people with certain illnesses — including hepatitis, venereal disease and psychiatric problems — from marrying. Pregnant women suffering from these problems would be 'advised' to have an abortion. (Hitler's equivalent was the 'Law for the Prevention of Hereditarily Sick Offspring'.)

'Volunteer'

The health minister said that couples suffering from these problems should 'volunteer' for sterilisation.

Chen said that China has a rate of 12 to 20 handicapped babies per 1,000 births. That is between 300,000 and 460,000 babies.

The government thinks that

China's over 10 million disabled people could have been prevented by better birth control.

The government is unsure about the actual killing of babies. 'The draft does not state whether China will adopt euthanasia to eliminate congenitally abnormal children, saying that the international community has not come to a conclusion on that issue,' said the 'Morning Post'.

Under pressure, the Chinese government has verbally retreated. It claimed the law would only have an advisory capacity, and did not mean compulsory sterilisations and abortions.

Advice

There was, however, no explanation why giving advice requires new laws.

A more sinister report was that the law has already been applied in Gansu province in north-west China. There the 'mentally retarded' have been forcibly sterilised for the past four years. Provincial officials have a goal of sterilising 260,000 people.

The application of this new law could mean, for example, that people living near China's nuclear test site in the Lop Nor desert face a new disaster. Since they appear to have a

higher than average rate of abnormal births they could also soon be compulsorily sterilised.

Resistance to these policies of the Chinese government is dealt with brutally, as the 'South China Morning Post' noted:

'A report . . . of hospital officials being sentenced to death for helping women escape compulsory sterilisation was presented as an anti-corruption success.

'But it also demonstrated the depth of resentment against the one child policy and its enforcement.'

Workers Aid in Paris

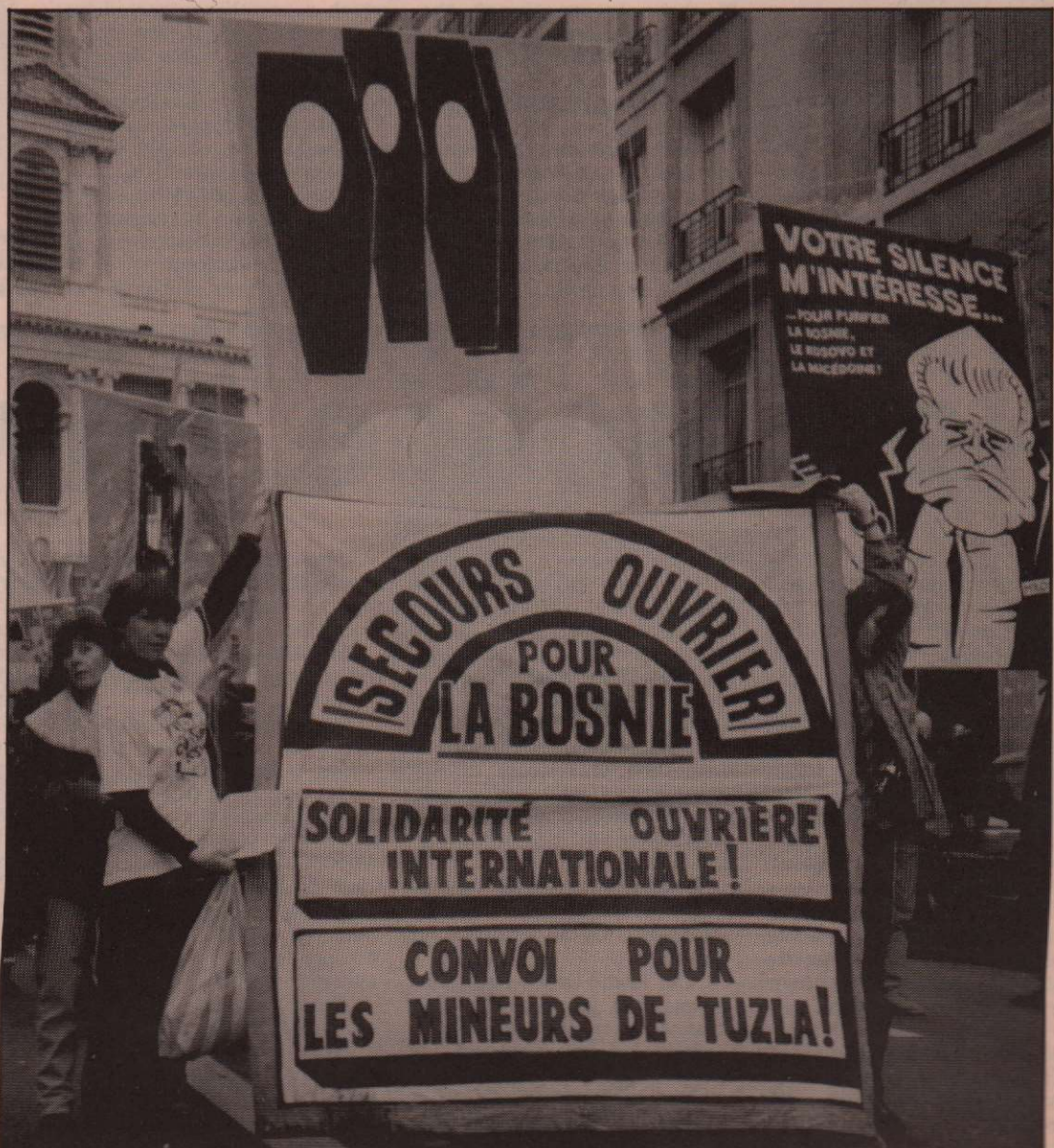
Raising the banner of Secours Ouvrier pour la Bosnie — Workers Aid for Bosnia — French comrades here are demonstrating in Paris just before Christmas.

Assembling by the Academie Nationale under large banners painted by artists, some 5,000 people, including Bosnian refugees and students, marched to the National Assembly square.

Demonstrators condemned Western governments' complicity in genocide.

Secours Ouvrier activists took part in the preparation of the protest, making sure that their unions were represented. And they made sure that their leaflet was in everybody's hands.

(See also 'Inside Left' comment, p.4.)



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