

Lenin on the ballot paper! TROTSKYISTS STAND IN S. AFRICA

A PARTY has been registered [for the coming national elections] which declares its aim as the overthrow of capitalism', reported South African television.

Our comrades of the Workers International to Rebuild the Fourth International in South Africa had just announced their intention to stand in the elections, as reported in Workers Press last week.

They hope to put up candidates in Cape Town, Port Elizabeth, and Durban. It's the first time that South Africa's black majority — including the majority of the workers who produce its wealth — have won the right to vote.

But our comrades know that real power, enabling working people to lay their hands on that wealth, and shape their own future, will not come through the ballot box.

Under the electoral rules, each registered party is required to submit a photograph of its leader. The Workers International handed in a picture of V.I. Lenin, leader of the Bolsheviks and the October Revolution!

Repression

There's more than symbolism involved here. The Workers International comrades are no lightweight coffee-bar 'communists'. They have experience in workers' struggles, in resisting repression within the African National Congress (ANC) guerrilla camps, and in operating clandestinely in the townships under right-wing terror.

These comrades don't only

BY CHARLIE POTTINS

work under the most difficult conditions. They put their lives on the line.

They are making their stand because *no one else will speak for the working class*, in this election or after.

The middle-class ANC and its Stalinist allies in the South African Communist Party have made their peace with F.W. de Klerk and imperialism, promising their backing to corrupt tribalists and stooges, and pledging their protection to big business and the mine owners.

After decades of struggle, workers and young people have nothing but broken promises and betrayal to look forward to from such leaders.

The rival Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC) sends its young members on desperate dead-end terror attacks, only to take its place after the ANC in sell-out talks with the ruling class. It dreams only of replacing white exploiters with black ones.

Truth

■ Only the Workers International will tell the truth in this election, and fight to unite working people. Only the Workers International stands for demolishing the racist state, not 'reforming' it.

■ Only the Workers International, fighting for jobs, homes, education and a better future for all working people, says openly and honestly that this means expropriating the big banks, mines and capitalist industries.

Urgent: Support the election appeal Truth doesn't come cheap

EACH of the main contestants in the coming South African elections has big money backing — from South African and foreign capitalists, elements in the racist state and great-power intelligence services.

Some of the powers who claim they oppose apartheid are trying to impose it on Bosnia!

All of them want to make sure that whoever wins these elections, capitalism does not lose. Whether by old methods or new, they want the black working class kept yoked.

The reactionary Inkatha party has its rich Tory backers and right-wing American friends, as well as funding from the state. The ANC enjoys support from well-heeled white liberals, church leaders, and some business interests, as well as what remains of the international Stalinist network.

It can raise funds with full-page adverts in the capitalist

press in Britain and the United States, as well as through appeals to the official Labour and trade union movement conducted with the backing of the bureaucracy.

The working class and the Workers International can turn only to its own, to working people and socialists — to all those who genuinely want to fight capitalism, imperialism and oppression.

Urge

Why should our money go to the politically corrupt ANC, as the union leaders, Labourites, Stalinists and revisionist hangers-on urge? Now there is a working-class alternative.

The truth does not come cheap.

Our comrades have taken on one of the richest capitalist classes in the world, which has links to Britain, Europe and the United States. These comrades

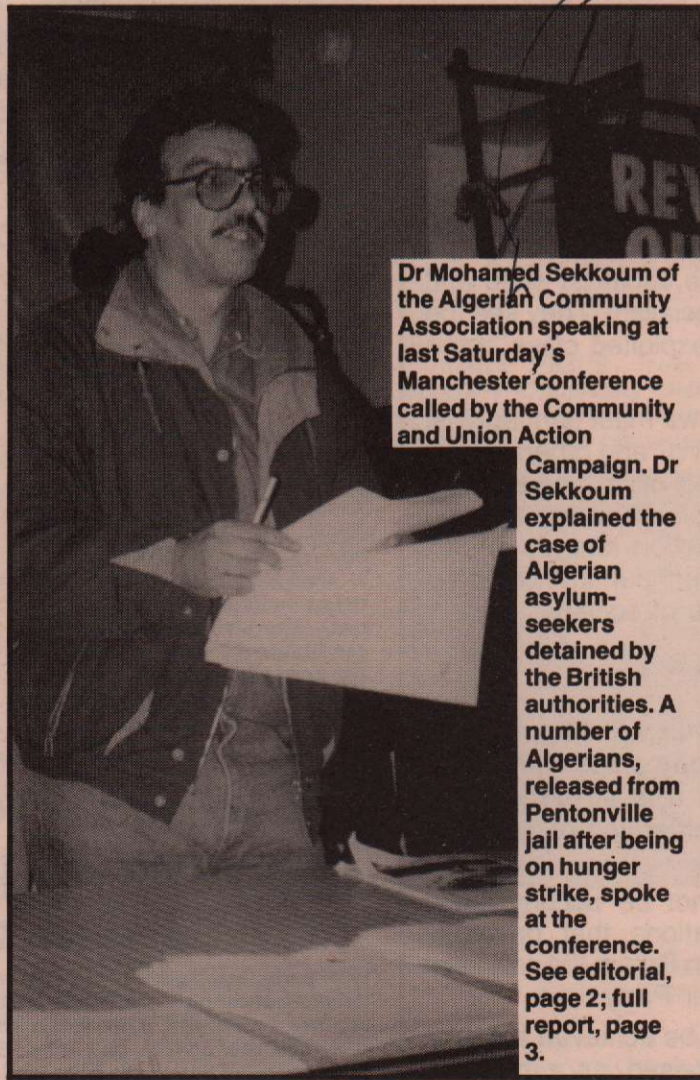
desperately need basic facilities — an office, telephones, transport — which the labour movement elsewhere takes for granted.

They have taken on a huge job. Only the Workers International is raising the red flag of socialism, unsullied, in the South African elections. Let's give them our full support.

■ The election campaign needs money — now, today. So far we have raised £1,080, for which we thank everybody who has donated. On learning that Lenin was to be on the ballot paper, two London readers sent in £500 for the election fund!

But our comrades are still in urgent need of money. Please rush your donations to:

Workers International, PO Box 735, London SW8 1YB. Make cheques payable to Workers International. Please fax us on 071-582 8834 and tell us what to expect.



Dr Mohamed Sekkoum of the Algerian Community Association speaking at last Saturday's Manchester conference called by the Community and Union Action

Campaign. Dr Sekkoum explained the case of Algerian asylum-seekers detained by the British authorities. A number of Algerians, released from Pentonville jail after being on hunger strike, spoke at the conference. See editorial, page 2; full report, page 3.

Save the Durham gala!

THE Durham miners' gala is under threat. The National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) has announced that it can no longer afford to stage the gala — which for more than a century has staged the biggest working-class gathering in the country.

Resources

Last week David Hopper, on behalf of the NUM's North-East area, said that the miners were appealing to the rest of the labour movement to find the resources to keep the event going. They would see what response the appeal met with and take a decision in four weeks' time.

The gala must be kept in being! It must be transformed into a powerful show of working-class solidarity.

If you or your organisation want to save the 'Big Meeting', please send messages to David Hopper, National Union of Mineworkers, PO Box 6, Redhill DH1 4BD.

A PLEA FROM TUZLA

WORKERS AID for Bosnia and the Workers International have received a direct and urgent request for us to send comrades to Tuzla now.

Help

The comrades in Tuzla have asked specifically for political help in rallying the working-class, socialist forces in Tuzla, in a situation where starvation and the pressure

of nationalism are now causing grave problems.

We cannot and will not refuse. Dot Gibson and Andy MacFarlane are already in Zagreb, Croatia, and Cliff Slaughter is leaving to join them; they will then proceed to Tuzla.

We are making an urgent appeal to all our readers for help to fully finance this immediate work and all the openings it will undoubtedly create.

The unity of the working class

THE 'Unite the Struggles' conference held by the Community and Union Action Campaign in Manchester last Saturday was a step forward for all those engaged in the fight to unite the working class against its enemies: the employers and the Tory government.

It re-established a simple but decisive point: that all the struggles in which the working class is engaged — whether against unemployment, welfare cuts, racism, etc. — have a common root: the crisis of capitalism.

That is why, if the struggles are really to be united, in practice and not just in words, the working class cannot simply react to the attacks made on this or that of its sections.

The capitalist class always forces various sections of workers to organise themselves in one defensive fight after another. To leave matters there, to accept the existing consciousness of the working class, is to accept a consciousness imposed on the working class by the capitalist class.

* * * * *

DO WE envisage a permanent state of affairs where the working class tries to defend itself and what is more with organisations — trades unions, the Labour Party — whose leaders have gone over openly to the other side?

This is, in fact, what many who constantly shout 'The working class united will never be defeated' actually do envisage.

Such people, typified above all by the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), simply move from one struggle to another, mindlessly chanting this same slogan on every occasion, and hoping to pick up a few recruits on the way. When one struggle ends it is quickly forgotten and they move on to 'next business'.

They have no conception of the working class actually being able to organise itself to defeat the capitalist class, to destroy the capitalist state and in so doing lay the basis for socialism. They see the working class as simply an exploited class, not a revolutionary class.

However difficult the road, we must fight against the sort of view held by the SWP and others. If this ruling class manages to hang on to power it will destroy us all, destroy the planet even. Its own parasitism, decadence, corruption and perversion — seen in Britain and throughout the world — threatens to engulf the whole of society.

* * * * *

WE DO NOT believe that this will happen. We are convinced that the working class will reconstruct itself internationally. It is already doing so, above all through the initiatives of Workers Aid for Bosnia.

But clearly this task cannot be accomplished under the existing organisations that presently dominate the working class: in Britain the reformist trades unions and the Labour Party.

Nor will this reconstruction be achieved automatically. This is why we have raised, as a matter of urgent discussion, the need for a working-class party that can unite the working class by starting from the source of all the struggles in which it is engaged and from the real needs that it faces.

Above all, this means its need to turn what remains a series of defensive struggles into a united, offensive struggle by the whole of the working class against the capitalist class. A steering committee was elected at last Saturday's Manchester conference; it was asked to consider the organisation of a further conference later in the year which could discuss this matter in greater detail.

We very much hope that the steering committee takes this proposal on board, for we are dealing with an issue that gets more urgent every day.

Letter

Today's reality in ex-Yugoslavia

PANOS (Letters, 5 February) believes that to describe the overthrow of Stalinism in Yugoslavia in 1989-91 as a revolution is to hold a position 'opposed to that of Trotsky'. He forgets that Trotsky was murdered in 1940, and consequently had no position on Communist Yugoslavia, which was born in the revolution of 1941-45.

Unlike the Russian revolution this was not a socialist revolution. It enacted a partial settlement of the national question, and created conditions for the rapid industrialisation and

social modernisation of Yugoslavia.

The Serbian Stalinists have overturned the Partisans' settlement of the national question, and largely destroyed the economy and society of Bosnia. It is in this sense that I wrote of a 'Milosevic counter-revolution' (The 'International' No. 13, August 1993).

If Panos really believes the overthrow of Yugoslav Stalinism was a 'counter-revolution', will he please explain when this 'counter-revolution' began?

After all, the Yugoslav Communists abandoned the collectivisation of agriculture in 1953 in favour of re-privatisation. The market was steadily rein-

troduced to Yugoslavia from the 1950s onwards. In the late 1980s it was the Yugoslav Communist government which was pushing for free-market reforms.

One could thus argue that the last 40 years of Yugoslav history amount to one long 'counter-revolution', a retreat from the 'pure deformed workers' state' which existed under Stalin's brotherly protection in 1945-48.

But such an approach does not really deserve to be taken seriously. Panos should understand that today Trotsky's writings can complement, but not replace, an analysis of reality.

The Bolshevik invasion of Georgia in 1921 was the lesser evil — it sacrificed Georgian

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SEND THEM TO: WORKERS PRESS,
PO BOX 735, LONDON SW8 1YB
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self-determination to defend the Russian workers' revolution. Today no such paradox exists — self-determination for the republics of the former Yugoslavia and former Soviet Union is not conflicting with any workers' revolution.

With Zhirinovskiy calling for the restoration of Russia's rule over its former empire, and defending the Russian 'deformed workers' state' from 'capitalist aggression', and with the Entente powers backing Milosevic's aggression against Bosnia, I suspect Trotsky today would be defending both Bosnia and the Ukraine, bourgeois or otherwise.

Attila Hoare
Cambridge

Bangladesh garment workers launch struggle

BY A CORRESPONDENT
IN DHAKA

BANGLADESH's National Garment Workers' Federation has launched a nation-wide 'Festival-bonus realising struggle', after workers at Flint Garments in the capital, Dhaka, won a six-day strike for pay and bonus arrears.

Under the law, all workers and employees were supposed to receive a bonus, equivalent to one month's pay each Eid (the Muslim New Year festival). But 100,000 garment workers have not been receiving this.

The garment workers' federation says the government, its labour inspection department, and law enforcement agencies have turned a blind eye to this violation of workers' rights, because they are all either sympathetic to, or manipulated by, the employers.

The 250 workers at export-oriented Flint Garments, 230 of them women, went on strike after strong-arm men hired by management had, on 27 December, attacked workers demanding outstanding pay and overtime bonuses. Ten workers were injured in the attack. One of them, 19-year-old Khadija Khatun, was admitted to Dhaka Medical College hospital.

Complaint

Workers went to local Motijheel police station in a crowd, and filed a complaint. Under pressure, the police went to the factory and arrested two of the management's thugs.

On 28 December, the workers began a sit-in strike and picket, demanding outstanding pay, and protesting at the employers' use of violence. They sent written complaints to the labour ministry and other authorities, and the following day

they picketed the government's labour office.

Flint management went to the police, but workers filed a counter-complaint, and no action was taken. Meanwhile, tripartite talks — between the employer, workers and the government — had been set up, but were getting nowhere. On 30 December, workers marched through the city and held a factory-gate rally.

On 2 January, responding to a call from management, police came to the factory, attempting to bring out clothing that the company wanted to ship on time. Women laid down in the road and blocked the gates. After two hours, the police went away empty-handed.

Later the same day, the employers backed down, and agreed to pay outstanding salaries and overtime pay, and to compensate workers injured by the firm's strong-arm men. The agreement was signed by man-

agement and government representatives, and by Amirul Haque, of the National Garment Workers' Federation, and Lily and Shahida Begum for the workers.

The National Garment Workers' Federation launched last Saturday a national campaign to secure the workers' rightful festival bonus. The campaign has begun with a charter of workers' demands, which has been sent to factory owners, the employers' body, the labour ministry, and the labour inspection department.

The Federation intends to turn to other unions, youth and students, women's groups, civil rights organisations, journalists and teachers.

■ The Federation is appealing for support and donations to step up the workers' struggle. Information from: Amirul Haque Amin, general secretary, National Garment Workers' Federation, GPO Box 148, Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Russian miners strike over back pay

BY SIMON PIRANI

RUSSIAN miners are staging an underground strike in protest at broken government promises.

The strike was started by tunnelling teams developing new mine workings at the Zapolyarnaya, Severnaya and Ayach-Yaga collieries, and the new Vorkuta No. 33 mine.

On 9 February, 164 men started an underground sit-down protest. 'The strikers demand the remittance of back pay which has been withheld, guarantees of being paid on time in future and a financial audit of the Rusugol

[Russian coal] company', reported ITAR-TASS.

They also wanted 'fulfilment of the protocol signed by [former economics minister] Yegor Gaidar on 27 November last year in Vorkuta, on measures for resolving the problems of miners and all northerners, including those of financing the tunnelling and shaft-building work necessary to maintain and develop the Pechora coalfield.'

On the same day, 22 miners at Prokopievsk, southern Siberia, started a hunger strike, to press for the payment of wages owed. They said they would continue their protest until 12 February, when a miners' conference would start in the town.

Rallies were called in Komсомolsk-na-Amure on 9 February. Ship, aircraft and building workers were to attend.

'Repeated appeals to the government and president have failed to change anything', reported ITAR-TASS.

Closed

'Defence enterprises are not paid for the products manufactured under state order. Many civilian enterprises are closed.'

There are also disputes by media workers and teachers, who say soaring fuel prices are causing the closure of schools and colleges.

■ Independent miners' union

leaders in eastern Ukraine are setting up self-defence units, said a news agency report from Kiev. Miners' leaders in Makeyevka and Khartsysk in Donetsk, Pavlograd and Pervomaysk had been beaten up at the instigation of management, said the union. Another report said that independent miners' union activists in Pervomaysk had joined the extreme-right Ukrainian People's Self Defence organisation.

■ Miners are leaving Krasnodon and Sverdlovsk in Ukraine to work in Russia. They are willing to work for lower wages, reported Trud newspaper. But Russian miners' unions have banned managers from employing them.

Workers Press £3,000 Monthly Fighting Fund

In so far: £1,163.27

OUR party, the Workers International to Rebuild the Fourth International, is standing in the South African elections, as reported in last Monday's 'Guardian' AND on the front page of THIS PAPER. WORKERS PRESS is a VITAL part of our South African comrades' fight for the principle of independent working-class international solidarity and permanent revolution against the African National Congress and South African Communist Party, which seek to subordinate workers to the bourgeoisie and petty-bourgeois forces. So when you give to the South Africa fund make it an EXTRA contribution and sacrifice — and not in place of any money you can give to the Workers Press.

We are falling behind after last week's good start to the month. On the special contributions front I can report our FIRST donation from Poland. The £10 donated was a real effort; let's try and match that level of sacrifice. So here I am on my knees again saying please, please, pretty please, send us some money. Get out and rebuild the workers' movement with our paper. Help us to help you. Mike Cooke
Cheques, etc., to Workers Press, PO Box 735, London SW8 1YB.

CORRECTION

CHARLIE POTTINS writes: In my 'Inside Left' column last week, referring to a remark in 'Socialist Organiser' that Labour MP George Gallo-way 'stood within smelling distance of the Iraqi dictator', I intended to compare it with the Tory tabloid 'Daily Star' (e.g. its front-page lead: 'Where's Your Nose Been Gallo-

way? . . . stuck up Saddam's junta, that's where').

Unfortunately, my mention of the "Star" was misinterpreted, and appeared in print, as the "Morning Star", which for once was innocent! Apologies to readers who may have wondered what point I was making. I promise to be more careful to avoid confusion in future.

Coming soon

SATURDAY 26 FEBRUARY: Nottingham United against Racism and Fascism demonstration. Meet at Forest Recreation Ground (Mansfield Road entrance), 10.30am for 11am departure. March to Market Square for 12 noon rally. Music incl. Kelly's Heroes & Helen McDonald plus speakers.

SATURDAY 26 FEBRUARY: 'Council for Academic Standards and Academic Freedom' meeting, 1pm-3pm, Mary Fisher Room,

Quaker International Centre, 1-3 Byng Place, London WC1. Nearest tubes are at Euston and Goadge Street.

TUESDAY 8 MARCH: 'The Challenge of Creationism'. Start of South Place Ethical Society course by Mike Howgate MSc., 6.30pm-8.30pm (and each Tuesday following in March). At the Conway Hall in Red Lion Square, London WC1. Admission is £1 and the nearest tube is Holborn.

Bristol Marxist Forum conference

Towards revolution: Socialist politics now

Saturday-Sunday 5-6 March

The Bristol Settlement, Ducie Road, Barton Hill, Bristol 5

Saturday — 1.30pm-5.30pm; Sunday — 10am-2pm

Details from: J. Clark, 23 Monmouth Road, Bristol BS7 8LF. (0272 423435)

Community and Union Action Campaign

Unite the struggles!

'To unite people it is necessary to solve the problem of working-class leadership.'

Last Saturday's conference in Manchester called by the Community and Union Action Campaign was a big success. It was attended by around 100 delegates and visitors, of whom about 30 people spoke. A steering committee, which included some new people, was formed to develop CUAC's work. **MIKE COOKE reports**

WEST INDIAN Community Centre manager **BERRY EDWARDS** welcomed the Community and Union Action Campaign conference to the centre in Manchester, and described the centre's struggle against racism from the late 1950s.

LIZ LEICESTER, delegate from the local government workers' Camden UNISON and secretary of CUAC, opened the meeting as chair with a review of developments in the working-class movement, in Britain and internationally, since CUAC's founding conference in February 1993.

DAVE TEMPLE from North East National Union of Mineworkers drew some lessons for the working class from last year's struggle to defend miners' jobs. He talked of the way that mining and other communities were under threat.

'We need to develop working-class organisations that will keep together and preserve all our communities', he said.

'I think we can do that. We need to develop a real unemployed movement independent of the trade union bureaucracy that fights for the unemployed and brings them together with people still in work.'

Temple said there was a need for a political solution. 'To unite people it is necessary to solve the problem of leadership of the working class.'

'We need a new party. If Bryan Gould can't stand it in the Labour Party, what about the rest of us.'

CAITLIN WRIGHT of Parkside Women's Pit Camp said she didn't want to discuss a 'new party'. She said that she thought there should have been strike action at the time of the electricity privatisations and that workers should set their own agenda and not be pushed into action at the wrong time.

Revell and George striker **RON SENCHAK** described the way that his own union, the print workers' GPMU, was an obstacle in the building of solidarity



Ron Senchak

because of its determination to keep within the anti-union laws. 'Disputes will be long and hard unless we break these laws,' he said. 'We should break them all!'

He called for support for a picket of Salford Crown Court, where strikers were to be put on trial.

PATRICIA JUNO of the Campaign against the Child Support Act said that the CSA showed that 'the government is quite happy to let children starve'. She defended women's

rights to benefit, independent of any money coming from former partners. She described the way that women do unpaid work on top of any wages they might earn.

Leicester National Union of Teachers member **POLLY HENDERSON** reported on the campaign against the government's tests. She appealed to parents to withdraw their children and promoted the information pack giving details of how to do this.

Manchester City College student **PETER GARRATT** described how students in his college were joining with lecturers to fight the privatisation of higher education.

Transport and General Workers' Union executive member **PETER GIBSON** pointed to the international nature of the



Dave Temple

fight against public transport privatisation, which means lower pay for workers and dangerous longer driving hours.

Gibson said that links were being made with transport workers from Paris, Warsaw, Canada, Malawi, South Africa, Madrid, Rome, Japan and India.

CELIA RALPH, a UNISON member working in a residential home for the severely disabled, described how lies by the management and councillors had resulted in many residents being intimidated into going to private nursing homes and many staff being redeployed. However, 20 staff were sticking together and nine residents remained in the home.

Striker **TREVOR JARVIS**, a printworker at Arrowsmith in Bristol, spoke of the 'most vicious, premeditated deceit' of management in their attack on workers' wages and conditions.

Eight **ALGERIAN ASYLUM-SEEKERS** came to the front of the conference with campaigner **MOHAMED SEKKOUM** to tell of their struggle for political asylum and about conditions in Algeria. Three of the eight, who had just been released from Pentonville jail, spoke (see 'From one hell to another', this page).

RAOUF FATAH spoke of his campaign in defence of Kurdish political asylum-seekers from Iran in Turkey. There they are the target of Iranian death squads and threats of deportation back to Iran where they face death.

Fatah referred to the story on his campaign in Workers Press (29 January) and the support his campaign got from Tower Hamlets trade council.

From one hell to another

'ASYLUM-seekers fleeing from one hell, land in another when they come to Britain', **MOHAMED SEKKOUM** told last Saturday's Community and Union Action Campaign conference in Manchester.

He spoke with eight Algerian asylum-seekers who had just been released the day before from Pentonville jail standing behind him.

They were released only after they had spent 12 days on hunger strike with asylum-seekers from Zaire and after people from the Algerian community had mounted a picket outside the prison.

The Algerians were concerned that the Zaireans had not been released.

He said that in trying to unite the workers' movement we have to recognise a problem: Stalinism. 'The Stalinists are worse than the capitalists and fascists,' he maintained.

SHELLA HENRY spoke of her relentless campaign to find out the truth about her son's death after he was treated for a nervous breakdown. Her fight to gain access to the coroner's report had resulted in her being put on three years' probation.

CLARA BUCKLEY, another mother fighting to know the truth about the death of her son, in Broadmoor jail, extended her solidarity to the Algerian asylum-seekers.

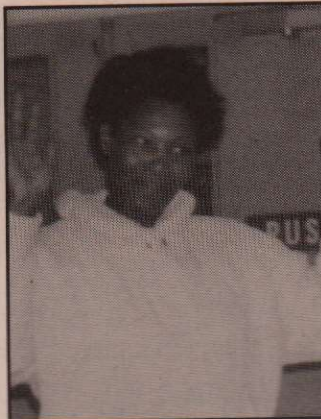
'We're here today to unite in the fight against this rotten, stinking system,' Buckley said. She described how the capitalist system was destroying hospitals, mines and working-class people. She warned that unless we were fearless in our fight for unity 'we are going to mourn the loss of our young generation.'

GEORGE FULLER, from the London region of the building workers' union UCATT and part of Building Industry Link-up, described how in his campaign building workers were coming together with the homeless to fight for the building of houses and infrastructure rather than empty offices.

CLIFF SLAUGHTER, speaking on behalf of the Workers International to Rebuild the Fourth International, said that the Workers Aid for Bosnia campaign in sending convoys and organising political support had provided more leadership than the TUC, and that the Labour Party was so bad that it wasn't worth complaining about.

Slaughter said there should be a conference later in the year to discuss the need for the formation of a party that could unite the struggles of the working class.

Tower Hamlets trades council secretary **PHIL EDWARDS** reported on a week of fascist attacks in the east London



Sheila Henry

borough and the preparations for the TUC's anti-fascist demonstration on 19 March.

SEKKOUM appealed to the conference for help in telling how asylum-seekers were being kept in detention centres and jail with their human rights denied. Most solicitors do not take up these cases because they don't get paid. He also said that the government's Asylum Act was 'harmful to asylum-seekers'.

One of the asylum-seekers told of how he'd escaped from Algeria without a passport and of his ordeal with immigration officials.

He appealed to the conference for help since he was sure that he would be tortured if the immigration authorities got their wish and he was sent back.

Edwards described the trades council's fight with the TUC to have a working-class demonstration against the fascists on 19 March. 'We told them we don't want any Tories or Liberals on the platform at the rally,' he said.

When **MARTIN RALPH** of CUAC took over the chair he



Liz Leicester and Clara Buckley

denounced the degeneration of capitalism symbolised by the killing of 'dispensibles' in Colombia and the trade of 'body parts' in Moscow.

Anti-Child Support Act campaigner **IAN LOWSBY** called on people at the conference to 'stop bleating and do something'. He called for people to write letters to MPs, Tories, bishops, etc.

This received a hostile response from some at the conference and Lowsby left soon after. **DAVE CHAPPLE**, a postal worker from Bridgewater, later criticised this 'politically correct' response and said we needed to be patient and enter into a dialogue with 'ordinary people' like Lowsby.

The case against the CSA was in danger of being won, but on the Tories own ground and not in the interests of the working class, Chapple said.

A housing worker for Southwark, **JIM SMITH**, spoke of how the parts of the Asylum Act designed to restrict access to housing for asylum-seekers were being extended to everyone.

Smith related the way that the government had taken away the responsibility for public housing from councils and given them to the unaccountable government-appointed Housing Corporation, which doles out money to housing associations.

Hertfordshire UNISON shop steward **BEN CALLAN** described his battle against privatisation of cleaning services.

Callan described the way union officials and Labour councillors had blocked his campaign. He warned against accepting compulsory competitive tendering with in-house tenders.

'You may not lose today, but in three years time you'll lose for definite,' he said.

The privatisation drive was

Another of the Algerians described conditions in his country. 'It's worse than Bosnia,' he said. He had seen his sister being raped by the authorities. 'I would prefer to be shot than to see my sister raped,' he said.

He also described the way that prison officers had deliberately insulted him by bringing him pork when they knew that he was not allowed to eat it as a Muslim.

Finally an Algerian who was a former prison officer thanked Workers Press for its story about the Algerians' plight in last week's paper.

He described the barriers that immigration officials put up to granting asylum.

First they wanted a pass-

moving on to office workers and teachers, he said. 'The only way you can fight is by breaking the law.'

MICHELLE BURRELL, of the King's Cross Homelessness Project, emphasised the implications of the extension of the Asylum Act restrictions of housing rights.

Burrell called for a vigorous campaign against VAT on fuel with non-payment, invasions of electricity showrooms, etc.

'Heat, light and warmth are human rights,' she declared.

MARK JONES, of the Welsh Socialist Party, Cymru Goch, said the VAT non-payment movement should be built now.

Jones maintained that electricity should be the focus since it was the service that everyone used, unlike gas and coal.

He challenged English socialists to break with 'Britain'. 'Britishness is the cement of reaction,' he said.

He thought that his party should not be part of CUAC but that they should be 'equal partners'.

TONY PRICE, from the Hackney Community Defence Campaign, reported on how as a result of their campaign 40



Michelle Burrell

police officers were being investigated for corruption and their activities against people in Hackney.

Price thought that the issues raised by the conference were interconnected and that a solidarity fighting fund should be set up on which those in struggle could draw. This he thought

would help to cohere the structure of the campaign.

Building worker and Construction Safety Campaign secretary **TONY O'BRIEN** was confident that 'people will fight against reaction'.

'And racism is reaction,' he said.

O'Brien warned that the health and safety review by the

government was not aimed at 'cutting red-tape', it was an attack on the lives of workers.

He said there was to be a lobby of parliament on International Workers Day (28 April).

'We must remember the dead,' he said, 'but further than that we must fight for the living.'

Editorial board member of CUAC's paper, 'Unite!', **BRONWEN HANDYSIDE**, told of how it had been 'well received'.

'It's the paper of a whole movement of struggle that's been developing over the past decades,' she said.

Handyside reported the response of one of the Middlebrook Mushrooms strikers that unlike 'left' papers, such as 'Socialist Worker' and 'Militant', it didn't preach.

The striker normally only glanced at the other papers but she could not put 'Unite!' down when she'd received it.

Handyside appealed for contributions to the paper, particularly on the questions of how to unite the working class and how to fight the rotten labour leaders.

Tony Price

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Please send me information about the WRP

Name date

Address

Trade union (if any) Age (if under 21)

Send to: PO Box 735, London SW8 1YB

Inside left Jackanories

THE Tories are waging a vicious campaign of smears against Labour,' said Labour local government spokesperson Jack Straw (Tribune, 4 February), citing a tale from the 'Birmingham Post' (proprietor Sir Norman Fowler, Tory party chairman), in December, which claimed Birmingham city council had banned Father Christmas.

The Tories have their own worries. Sir Norman Fowler spent six hours in Hammersmith police station last week, discussing stockings, suspenders and bags.

But Labour has a problem, in Jack Straw. Last year, leaping in behind the Tory media attack on Lambeth, he boasted Labour had got rid of 'Trotskyist' councillors because 'in Lambeth and Liverpool, Trotskyism and corruption went hand in hand.'

Expelled left-wing councillors, not charged with any 'corruption', consulted their lawyers. The Labour Party paid for Straw's defence. Now he is on about Hackney, and the head teacher who turned down ballet tickets.

The now famous "Romeo and Juliet" letter was written some months ago. I am convinced that Tory strategists sat on it until last week, and then set a trap — not for the hapless head but for Hackney Local Education Authority which, they hoped, would ensnare itself in the head's eccentric views. All credit to Labour's leaders in Hackney that they resisted this invitation.

We've heard that until the Tory Evening Standard phoned Hackney council, the media didn't know which school was involved. Someone from the council told them they were to lay siege with their microphones and cameras. (Hackney, London's poorest borough, has appointed a £53,000 a year tourism officer, but I thought this was for fights like Stoke Newington police station, famous for exotic plants.)

Any credit in this affair belongs to the working-class parents who, whatever their views on the ballet, effectively told the council and the Tory media to piss off, standing by head teacher whom they felt had done well by their kids.

Write off?

'IRISH struggle continues', said 'Weekly Worker' for 27 January. The British government has not defeated the IRA in the Six Counties, but the republican movement has not won either.'

Communist Party national organiser Anne Murphy says: 'If the revolutionary situation in the Six Counties of Northern Ireland is resolved negatively through a negotiated settlement with the British ruling class, a new situation will come into being for the working class of Northern Ireland. In common with the British working class, they would be faced with the "United Kingdom" state.'

'Under those conditions the job of all communists living within the borders of the "United Kingdom" would be to unite in one party for the purpose of overthrowing that state. We would need a Communist Party of the United Kingdom.'

'Weekly Worker' objected when we criticised nationalist IRA methods which didn't distinguish between the imperialist state and ordinary working people. Now they blame the outcome — negotiations with imperialism — on 'the change in the world balance of forces' (as though Stalinism was such an ally!). In Ireland, Palestine and South Africa, they write off the struggle, concluding that imperialism has won. A Communist Party of the United Kingdom — What next?!

Charlie Pottins

Rebuilding the Fourth International

This is the second and final part of a report from the second congress of the Workers International to Rebuild the Fourth International that met on 14-16 November and the first meeting, on 22-23 January, of the executive committee that was elected by the congress.

The first part appeared on 5 February.

'ARE WE still working as if we are a Trotskyist propaganda circle which from time to time "intervenes"?' asked Cliff Slaughter in his report to the second congress of the Workers International to Rebuild the Fourth International.

'Can the Fourth International in the course of its reconstruction organise into a Marxist leadership the vanguard of workers who come forward against the existing reformist and Stalinist leaderships?'

'Will this be done with the tactic of a transitional form of political organisation, such as the International Trade Union Solidarity Campaign, to organise around us the forces for this fight?'

'We have already said that the revolutionary nucleus in any country must be politically formed, continuously, by the work of a Marxist leadership at the international level. Its members are members of an international party (not just an internationalist one).'

'In summary, besides the indispensable broadening out of our work and our membership, the winning of new forces, a strict selection and testing of revolutionary leadership is essential.'

In the course of the Workers International's work on the initiative for the Workers Aid campaign's convoy to Bosnia, we (together with new forces who came together with us in this work) clashed with the so-called United Secretariat of the Fourth International (Usec), led by Ernest Mandel.

The Usec is a centrist organisation, organised in Britain as the International Socialist Group, publishing the fortnightly 'Socialist Outlook', and in France as the Ligue Communiste Revolutionnaire, publishing 'Rouge'.

The Workers International second congress report by Cliff Slaughter concluded:

'It is part of the new stage reached in the fight to resolve the crisis of working-class revolutionary leadership that wherever workers come forward now to reconstruct the working-class movement, they find it necessary to fight against and overcome these groups

of self-proclaimed left activists.

'That is part of the legacy of Stalinism and its damage to class-consciousness: the Stalinist bureaucracy is in a state of disintegration, but the revision of Marxism by those in the Fourth International who long ago capitulated to Stalinist pressure plays its part in disorientating workers, through these centrist groups.'

'The political and theoretical fight against them is an essential part of the reconstruction of the Fourth International and at the same time a necessity for the working-class movement as a whole in its own struggle for reconstruction.'

At the Workers Aid meeting called in Manchester on 30 October 1993 to report back on the first convoy, there was a decisive two-to-one majority endorsing the main report and proposals of Workers International executive member Dot Gibson, which were to concentrate the

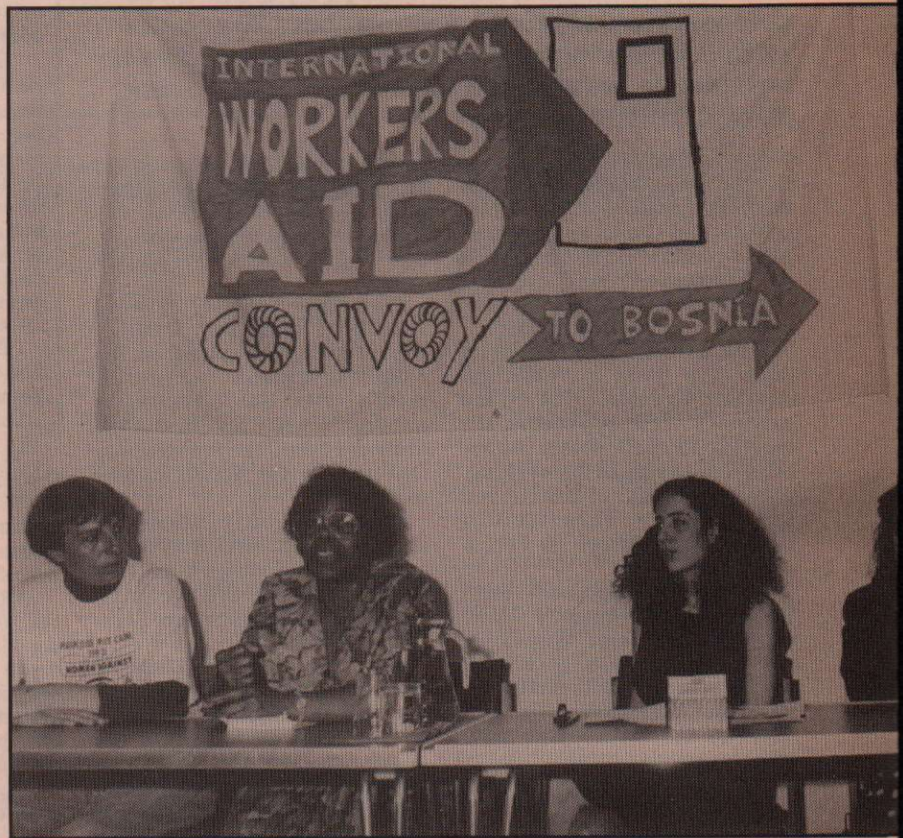
'The revolutionary nucleus in any country must be politically formed, continuously, by the work of a Marxist leadership at the international level.'

campaign throughout the workers' movement on the opening, in a fight against the United Nations, of the northern route to the town of Tuzla.

The Bosnians at the meeting voted for this proposal to open this vital lifeline to Tuzla, which is the principal obstacle to the carve-up of Bosnia.

Supporters of Usec voted against this position, guided by French journalist Catherine Samary and other centrist 'leaders'. These leaders used Steve Myers and his opposition report to launch a treacherous and diversionary attack on the Workers International as allegedly 'hijacking' Workers Aid.

Response recon



Campaigning at a meeting last summer for Workers Aid's first convoy, which he

Radoslav Pavlovic — our Serbian comrade who first proposed the convoy initiative — has written on this question of the northern route:

'The "northern route" was not an invention of the British or Hungarian Trotskyists.'

'Its opening is the obvious aim that flows from the serious political, military and geographical analysis made by the Bosnians themselves. And among them the representatives of Tuzla in Zagreb, who know what they are talking about.'

'Unfortunately the leaders of

Usec think that, with their university degrees and recognition as famous journalists in the Western press, they are far superior to the Bosnians who have acquired their experiences at the dearest price' (Workers Press, 12 February).

On the day following the 30 October convoy report-back meeting in Manchester, at a gathering billed as 'international' — it was so 'international' that no Bosnians were invited! — the Usec leaders rejected a resolution to fight for the decisions of the previous day. Instead they voted to set up a rival 'International Workers Aid'.

The Usec denounced the fight for the northern route as an 'obsession', and instead voted for a general platform against racism and for 'solidarity with all Balkan peoples' and for the opening of Tuzla airport. All these unexceptionable things could have been voted for before there existed any such thing as Workers Aid or a convoy to Bosnia.

Above all the Usec leaders ran away from the political lessons established by the convoy: that the UN had been clearly exposed as the main agent of the Great Powers' (Vance-Owen) plan to partition Bosnia and reward the 'ethnic cleansing' and reactionary nationalism of the Serbian regime, now looking for agreement with the Croatian nationalist government.

For the Usec leaders the important thing — worth a split in the campaign for international proletarian solidarity with the workers of Bosnia — was to prevent the awful prospect of the policy of the Workers International clearly having the leadership of the international solidarity campaign, resulting in the building of the Workers International.

Here is an example of the worst kind of how these professional centrists are simultaneously opportunist and sectarian.

In the period since the Manchester meeting and our Workers International second congress, the necessity of an independent working-class line and intervention in



Workers Aid was given great support by the Timex strikers in Dundee on 9 August 1993

Photo: Anthony Myers

Responsibilities of Construction

for international solidarity. But there is more.

In every country where the Workers Aid convoy has been fought for, new forces and new possibilities for the building of revolutionary parties, sections of the Fourth International, have been brought forward.

In eastern and in western Europe, these forces can now be organised to fight for our Workers International second congress's proposals for a conference to unite European miners around the Tuzla issue, and for a trade union conference in the Balkans.

The organisation of new forces around these aims is a practical expression of the important discussions begun in 1993 on the need for new parties of the working class, and of the nature of these parties (Workers Press, 22 May 1993).

The Workers Aid convoy has surely demonstrated that political initiatives, based soundly on the revolutionary perspectives which have been established in a long struggle for Trotskyism, will find in the new international situation the

ing world situation demands a new and continuous study of world economy and the class struggle internationally, a greater concentration on theoretical work.

2. The offensive against Marxism ('capitalism won the cold war', 'communism has failed', 'Marxism is dead', etc.), and against science and culture as a whole, is now accelerated after the collapse of the Stalinist bureaucracy. But the opportunity as well as the necessity of answering this offensive are greater than ever before. The second congress and the January executive meeting of the Workers International decided to prepare an international conference for October on the theme: 'The Future of Marxism'.

3. The Workers International will organise an intensive programme of basic Marxist education for all members, with special concentration on the new members and supporters won in the Workers Aid campaigns.

As already emphasised, the expansion of our movement, as well as the great changes in the situation

'It is clearer now than ever that it is only the independent strength of the working class — in ex-Yugoslavia as well as in the rest of Europe, east and west — that can beat back the forces of fascism in the Balkans.'

forces for such revolutionary parties.

The deepening of capitalism's crisis in its epoch of decline, and Stalinism's collapse, force the working class into great struggles, of which we have seen only the beginning, from the one-year British miners' 1984-85 strike to the war in Bosnia.

The international apparatus of the Stalinist bureaucracy and the 'Communist' Parties cannot monopolise the politics of the most class-conscious workers as it had done for generations, always successfully sabotaging the work of the Marxists of the Fourth International.

The convoy has proved this, and, more important, has proved that it is possible to *rebuild* the movement after the Stalinist destruction.

The response to Workers Aid should shock us into the recognition of how far we lag behind the new opportunities of organising thousands of youth and workers in every country into revolutionary parties of the Fourth International.

This means that besides and along with the work for the next convoy we must work on these deeper implications revealed by Workers Aid's first convoy.

That is to say, in each country it is necessary to work out the next steps in the rebuilding of the parties of the Fourth International.

1. The new and rapidly develop-

make necessary a special emphasis on the selection and Marxist training and education of leadership.

Only in this way will the Fourth International be armed to meet its responsibilities to the working class.

4. The sections of the Workers International in each country must fight to *take the initiative* in provoking the widest possible discussion of the burning question of what kind of party the working class needs now.

To take the initiative here means to be taking political initiatives on great questions, like Workers Aid, and bringing into the discussion of the workers' movement the force thus brought forward, and not simply organising debate and discussion or passing resolutions.

5. For all this work, the Workers International needs a greater centralisation, politically and organisationally.

The most important aspect of this centralisation is that the change brought about by the convoy work make it possible now for a significant number of our existing members, workers in the trades unions and others, to come forward as leaders in the international work.

This was already the case in the first convoy, and in the immediate future it will be manifested in the work of the International Trade Union Solidarity Campaign for international workers' solidarity.



ded for Bosnia from Britain in September last year (left); and Workers Press supporters calling for the defence of Bosnia

ex-Yugoslavia has become even clearer.

The Serbian and Croatian governments came to an agreement in January. This was in the immediate aftermath of Clinton's meetings with Yeltsin, marking US imperialism's moves to strengthen itself against its European rivals.

Milosevic and Tudjman are vital to the restoration of 'order' in the Balkans and Near East as a main priority, and the first victims are to be the Bosnian people.

Thus even more pressure comes on Bosnian President Izetbegovic. Having held out to his people the prospect of salvation by Western intervention, he is on the verge of having to sign away the integrity of Bosnia.

The only alternative — the only one which can be perceived by bourgeois nationalism, since it can-

'[The northern route's] opening is the obvious aim that flows from the serious political, military and geographical analysis made by the Bosnians themselves.'

not envisage the revolutionary working-class solution — is to continue a bloody war without the material means of victory.

These were the considerations when the Workers International executive met in January and discussed the next steps in preparing Workers Aid's all-European convoy now being built for March.

It is clearer now than ever that it is only the independent strength of the working class — in ex-Yugoslavia as well as in the rest of Europe, east and west — that can beat back the forces of fascism in the Balkans.

For the working class and for us, all the USec talk about our 'hijacking' Workers Aid is water off a

duck's back. The essential content of the Workers Aid campaign is that only by the working class winning power can the war be stopped and the Bosnian people saved.

Workers Aid can and does fight alongside many others who work to aid the Bosnian people's struggle, while at the same time holding firmly to this programme and perspective. Workers Aid is proving in practice that it is the working class that must lead the struggle against 'ethnic cleansing', reactionary nationalism and fascism.

What is necessary then is a politically independent fight by the workers of Bosnia, and of Serbia and Croatia and all ex-Yugoslavia, together with the building up of solidarity from the working-class movement in Europe.

It is the ABC of Marxism that that political independence, that international unity in struggle, that fight for working-class power, demand *above all* the building of revolutionary parties of the Fourth International. And it is precisely this 'ABC of Marxism', this starting-point that it is the working-class revolution that is at stake, that the USec denies, and exists in order to deny.

It is along this line that the Workers International proposes to the miners of Tuzla, and to miners' organisations in all countries, to convene a conference of miners from all Europe: in the first place to unite in the fight for working-class solidarity with the struggle of the Bosnian people, and secondly to unite miners of all countries in the fight against closures and privatisation.

We published in Workers Press (18 September) a letter from Bosnian miners, which we will attempt to circulate to all miners. In addition, the work of the International Trade Union Solidarity Campaign now begins for an international conference of trades unionists from the Balkans and other countries, on the fight for a working-class, socialist solution to the problems of the Balkans.

This fight in the trades unions cannot be just a general propaganda campaign of the type proposed by the centrists, against racism or for 'peace' in the ex-Yugoslavia. It is a political fight, for alternative and revolutionary leadership against the existing trade union bureaucracy, subservient as it is to capitalism and in particular to US capitalism.

Certainly it is necessary to concentrate Workers Aid's work even more on the unions because the bureaucracy's opposition to our work for solidarity with the workers of Bosnia will now intensify in line with US policy.

In this kind of work we also lay the basis for a real international of trades unions, opposed to the 'yellow' International Confederation of Free Trade Unions with its HQ in Brussels.

The campaign for the next convoy to Tuzla must broaden the scope of Workers Aid for Bosnia, organising trades unions and trades unionists into a Europe-wide and, more and more, an international network



Workers Aid convoy trucks in Nottingham last year during the build-up to the first convoy

Photo: Rex Dur

John Fordun

John Maclean again

FROM time to time, Workers Press returns to the question of the Scottish Marxist, John Maclean. Rightly so. He made his mark on history with his revolutionary opposition to World War I, and with his courageous 'speech from the dock' in the High Court in Edinburgh in May 1918.

Accused of sedition and facing a five-year prison sentence, Maclean addressed the working class over the heads of the court. He denounced the barbarism of the capitalist war, exposed the brutality of the British state, and defended the Russian October revolution.

Recently the John Maclean Society in Glasgow organised a conference to commemorate the 70th anniversary of Maclean's death (aged 44) in 1923.

Talks by Maclean biographer Jim Young on the anti-imperialist tradition in Scotland, and by political economist Hillel Ticktin on Marxist education were followed by a debate on whether or not the call for a Scottish parliament should be part of the armoury of socialists north of the border. The exciting feature was that Maclean's name was being used to encourage contemporary socialist discussion, not political ancestor-worship.

* * * * *

AFTER the October revolution John Maclean was appointed, along with Lenin and Trotsky, an honorary president of the Petrograd soviet. The Bolshevik government made him its consul in Glasgow. Yet if you read recent textbooks on 20th-century British history, you will scarcely find him mentioned.

Specialist labour historians in England — with a few honourable exceptions — don't do much better.

Chroniclers of Scotland's contemporary past have been more careful. Michael Lynch, in his 'Scotland: a new history' (Pimlico paperback, 1992), for example, pays considerable attention to the Clydeside Marxist. He is also franker than most, in admitting that, to him, Maclean 'remains an enigma'.

Explication of the enigma must begin in Scotland, but it should not end here. Maclean is significant internationally, and particularly for an understanding of the historical problems of the British working class.

* * * * *

I FOUND myself reflecting afresh on this when a friend gave me an account of the recent 'Opening the Books' conference held in Manchester, involving researchers into the history of the now deceased Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB).

The numbers present, and the seriousness of some scholars, impressed him. But the general approach, he commented, was of the 'where did the party go wrong?' variety.

Wrong-turning theories of history are seductive but nearly always misleading. They allow us to convince ourselves that history would have followed the course we want to think it should have taken, if only something had not 'gone wrong', or some individual (or group) had not made mistakes.

If only, in the 1840s, the English Chartists had followed their 'physical force' leaders instead of those who favoured moral persuasion, might they not have come together with the emergent communists and strangled industrial capitalism in its cradle? If only Trotsky had outmanoeuvred Stalin in the struggle for the succession to Lenin...? History is littered with such 'if onlys'.

Television

Genie: a victim isolated

Review by Phil Edwards

IN THE year 1800, a naked boy without speech emerged from a forest in southern France to become the centre of scientific interest. Francois Truffaut made a film called 'The Wild Child' which followed the experiences of this boy.

Victor, as the boy came to be known, was taken in by a local biology teacher and was the subject of the scientist's experiment to discover if someone so isolated in childhood and living in a cave could still be 'civilised'.

HORIZON: 'Genie' (31 January, BBC2) traced the experiences of another child brought up in isolation, and raised some important questions about human rights and the attitude of the scientific world to experimentation on humans.

Genie, as she was called, was seen with her virtually blind mother in 1970 when both wandered by mistake into a social services building. She was later taken into protective care following a raid on her home in the Los Angeles suburb of Arcadia.

Genie had spent ten years confined to a single room with a cot and a seat with a hole in it for access to the toilet to which she was daily strapped.

Shot

Her father had thought her mentally retarded. He later shot himself and Genie was subjected to experimentation by a whole range of figures from the scientific world.

The team put in charge of research was also responsible for her care. She undoubtedly made progress in the course of this experience and was learning to speak and to adopt the rudiments of sign language.

She was taken by members

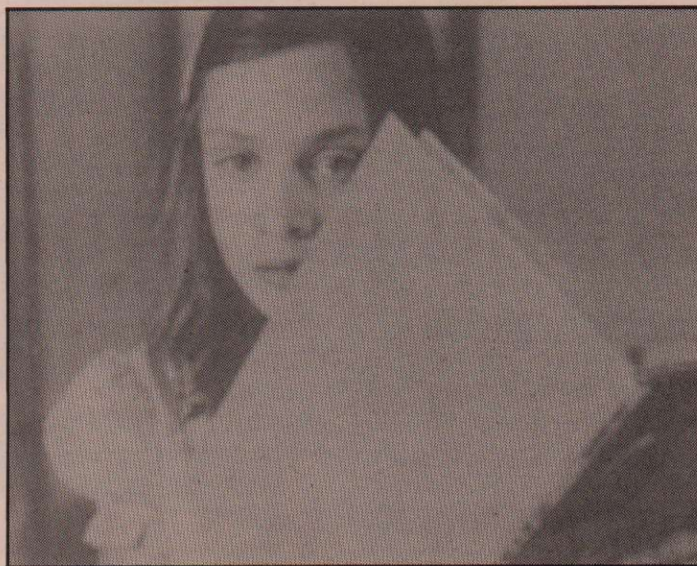
of the team to see 'The Wild Child' and this film became the basis of a discussion held with numerous consultants throughout the US. The questions uppermost in their minds was whether or not an older girl could be taught language and whether her mental retardation was inborn or the result of the social isolation.

In talking about 'The Wild Child', the question raised was:

cial education tutor who looked after Genie until 1988. It was also the view of Genie's mother, who claimed that she herself had been the victim of the father's abuse.

In the middle of all this was Genie, isolated from her mother by the scientists and shuttled from one hospital to another.

She had probably been beaten as a child every time she



Genie, brought up in isolation, was subjected to experimentation

'What makes us human? What makes us different from the beasts?'

The dilemma is that in answering that question in a mechanical way, and by carrying out this type of experimentation on another human being, the subject herself is in danger of being treated as something less than human.

That was the view of the spe-

made a sound. Having been encouraged to vocalise, she was again beaten in one of these homes, this time for vomiting.

This trauma sent her back into her shell. At the age of 36 she remains in an adult home having regressed almost to her former state.

WE HAVE been bombarded recently with a number of

mediocre and downright abysmal historical and archaeological documentaries using the latest computer wizardry to recreate the past and how people lived.

'The Great Pyramid — Gateway To The Stars' (6 February, BBC2), was, perhaps, one of the more interesting of these.

Sent

Last year a tiny robot was sent into the largest pyramid of the pharaoh Cheops, built in Giza in the Nile valley, to rediscover the Queen's Chamber, which was thought to have been abandoned.

The robot was sent down the four tiny shafts leading to the chambers to investigate the circulation of air in the pyramid. It came to a halt in front of a stone panel with two copper handles.

It is thought this panel could be raised from above to allow light into the shafts. Superseding the various heliocentric theories of Egyptologists, it is surmised that this was lifted when the constellation of Orion and the star Sirius shone directly down them, so impregnating the dead king who would in turn be reborn in the act of giving his seed to Orion (Osiris) the partner of Sirius (Isis).

But the most astounding claim is that the actual alignment of the three pyramids, built in the Fourth Dynasty over the period of a century, and of others a large distance away form the exact replica of the Orion constellation.

Such a theory, if ever proved correct, would lend some grand purpose to the otherwise enigmatic phenomena of the great pyramids.

Programme guide



The Baka people face pressures of surviving the modern world, Saturday, Channel 4

Saturday 19 February 'Baka: People of the Rain Forest'. First of two hour-long documentaries by Phil Agland about a tribe in East Cameroon facing all the pressures of surviving intact in the modern world (8pm, Channel 4).

Sunday 20 February THE MONEY POLICE: 'The Inland Revenue'. Beginning of a three-part series which investigates the workings of the financial world (5.15pm, Channel 4). 'The Picasso Files'. Explores for the first time the secret-service documents on the artist after he joined the French Communist Party in 1944 (9.50pm, BBC2). MOVING PICTURES. Jonathan Demme talks about his new film 'Philadelphia' — the first major Hollywood production to deal with the subject of AIDS (10.35pm, BBC2).

Tuesday 22 February NETWORK FIRST: 'Death of a Nation'. A report from the tiny Portuguese colony of East Timor, terrorised by the might of Indonesia since it was invaded in 1975. Staggering new evidence of a continued reign of terror and the complicity and duplicity of Western governments (10.40pm, ITV).

Wednesday 23 February EAST: 'Islands Apart'. Report from Trinidad, where unrest between the African and Indian communities has developed since Indians became the largest ethnic group on the island (7.30pm, BBC2).

Orson Welles and Joseph Cotton. Welles was removed as director and it was handed over to Norman Foster (Saturday, 3.10pm, BBC2). LONGTIME COMPANION (1990). Emotional account of how the spread of AIDS affected a group of New York gay men in the early 1980s (Sunday, 11.25pm, BBC2). THEM! (1954). Climactic sci-fi thriller, directed by Gordon Douglas, about radiation-created giant ants taking over Manhattan sewers (Friday, 12.05am, Channel 4).

JJ

APOLOGIES for the errors made with the pictures last week. The wrong picture was used for 'The Lynchburg Story', and the caption for 'The Dark Side of Black' gave the wrong channel.

Selected films

JOURNEY INTO FEAR (1942). World War II spy drama with

When Labour harassed Picasso

ARTIST Pablo Picasso was searched at Dover customs, and his journey delayed, when he came to Britain in 1950 to attend the Sheffield Peace Conference.

Labour prime minister Clement Attlee, as concerned as his US cold-war allies about a 'Communist' plot, ordered MI5 and Special Branch to 'keep a close eye on all those attending the conference'.

Shadowed

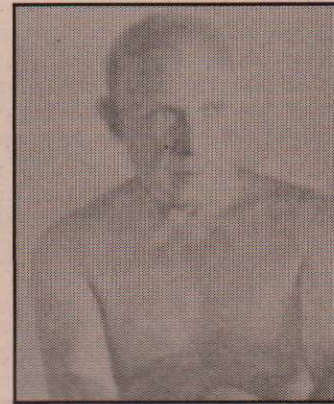
Picasso was shadowed. Soviet composer Dmitri Shostakovich, Chilean poet Pablo Neruda, and black American singer Paul Robeson were refused entry to the country at this time. In protest at the government's attitude, Picasso refused to visit an Arts Council exhibition of his work in Lon-

don, and never returned to Britain.

Picasso had left Spain after the civil war. His famous painting 'Guernica' reflected his horror at the fascist bombing of the Basque market town. The story is told of a German officer seeing the 'decadent' painting in France, and demanding 'Did you do this?' 'No, you did,' replied Picasso calmly.

Although he had joined the Stalinist Communist Party in France in 1944, and supported 'progressive' causes, Picasso's work was not exhibited in the Soviet Union, presumably because it didn't meet the standards of 'socialist realism' favoured by Stalin.

Soon after the dictator's death he agreed to provide a portrait, depicting Stalin as a young man. The Stalinists didn't



Picasso: didn't return to Britain

like it, and denounced Picasso as an enemy.

The way governments treated Picasso is the subject of a television programme this weekend, 'The Picasso Files'

(Sunday 20 February, 9.50pm, BBC2).

It shows how the FBI intercepted telegrams Picasso sent, as a Spanish Republican exile, to the Joint Anti-fascist Refugee Committee.

Upset

The FBI's J. Edgar Hoover was upset by the artist's friendship with Charlie Chaplin, and had a 1947 birthday telegram to the actor intercepted. Picasso was refused a US entry visa.

■ Britain's Labour government shared military plans with 'neutral' Sweden in 1951, a Swedish commission has reported. The Swedish military secretly expanded airbases and two naval harbours for NATO use in the event of war with the Soviet Union, the report says.

TB

SLOVENIAN MINERS RALLY TO BOSNIA

NEGOTIATIONS for the Workers Aid Christmas convoy trucks to go along the northern route to Tuzla have for the moment broken down.

The director of the Tuzla Logistic Centre, Edo Asceric, told Workers Press: 'The killing of 68 people in Sarajevo, and threats by Western governments that they will bomb the Serbs, meant that there was no possibility of a good outcome of the discussions.'

It is now hoped that some trucks on the Logistic Centre's 'Convoy of Love' will go to Tuzla on the southern (Split) route on 23 February.

'The problem is that only trucks under 20 tonnes can travel on that route', said Asceric. 'This is a big blow, because the people are starving in Tuzla, and many children are ill.'

'We will not give up our fight to open the northern route', said Asceric, 'but we have no choice at the moment other than to send trucks the other way if we want to make contact with our people in Tuzla, and bring aid into the region.'

Faruk Ibrahimovic of Radio Tuzla also spoke of the necessity to take aid into Tuzla.

'The news coming out of the town is very bad. It is difficult to keep up the fight with so much hunger and death', he said.

Support from the Slovenian miners had earlier given a big boost to the all-European Workers Aid for Bosnia convoy.

With the build-up of the campaign comes the real possibility of uniting workers in east and west Europe to build internationalism in a convoy which takes workers' solidarity to the people of Tuzla.

Resolution

Franc Druk, president of the Slovenian Power Workers Union, had already read the resolution from the Workers Aid for Bosnia's January Stuttgart meeting before discussions with the convoy team delegation on 2 February.

He announced immediately that the miners would be joining the convoy and calling for support from other Slovenian unions.

'The appeal of this convoy is that it is to build workers' internationalism', he said, 'and that is why I will be raising it at a meeting of power workers' unions in Rome on 22 February.'

Druk thanked Salko Kavgić for giving him the news about the all-European workers con-

From DOT GIBSON
in Zagreb

voy to Tuzla. Kavgić, who works at Velenje pit, was co-chair at the Stuttgart meeting held by Workers Aid for Bosnia on 15-16 January.

Kavgić is also president of a humanitarian aid organisation run by miners.

'We have 500 tonnes of aid ready to move', he said, 'and if the trade unions in western Europe can help by supplying the trucks, together we can take this aid to the miners of Tuzla.'

History

Druk spoke of the Slovenian miners' history of struggle against the old bureaucratic regime in the former Yugoslavia.

'Workers in the West should understand that we have been fighting against bureaucracy for a long time', he said, 'and that we have not lost our socialist ideals.'

'I was a young man when I took part in the 1972 strike at the Velenje pit. That strike was part of the fight against the old regime.'

'At the moment we have what they call "social ownership" of the pits and power industry — with the coming of the so-called "market economy" they are talking of "state ownership".'

'We don't know what the difference is — but we do know that the unions and the workers are on one side and all the rest are on the other side.'

'We do not want to go into the "market" as cheap labour — we want the same conditions and wages.'

'Nor are we prepared to give up our health and safety rights'.

He added that Russian and Ukrainian miners were fighting along the same lines.

The Slovenian miners' union is now preparing to join with the Hungarian, Slovakian, Polish and Czech miners to build the

convoy. Druk said that it was shameful that the British miners had been left to fight alone, and that the pits were closing and with them the communities. He said he would be working for the rebuilding of workers' solidarity, east and west.

Druk also spoke warmly of the Tuzla miners. 'We must rebuild our connections and make sure that we end the isolation of sections of workers.'

He said 'The Bosnians are the victims of politicians.'

'We have a big job to do, because we see no other way than to make use of all the contacts we have made — build on these contacts, deepen our relationships, and work on the real

situation in Bosnia and the whole of the ex-Yugoslavia. That is the possibility for unity to be rebuilt based on workers' solidarity.'

The all-European workers' convoy is scheduled to leave Zupanja in Croatia on 26 March — destination Tuzla.

Collaboration

Collaboration between the Zagreb-based logistic centres of 19 towns in the Brcko and Tuzla regions of Bosnia-Herzegovina was discussed with Edo Asceric, director of the Tuzla Logistic Centre at a meeting on 2-3 February.

He is still hoping to hear that

the convoy, including workers and trucks which set out before Christmas, will eventually get permission from all authorities to travel along the northern route from Zupanje-Orasje to Tuzla.

Workers Aid drivers are standing by to join their trucks pending successful negotiations. Asceric said: 'I am determined that Workers Aid for Bosnia will be in the leadership of that convoy.'

'Everybody knows that Workers Aid has led the campaign for the opening of the northern route.'

For this convoy to get to Tuzla along this main direct route, which the UN has refused

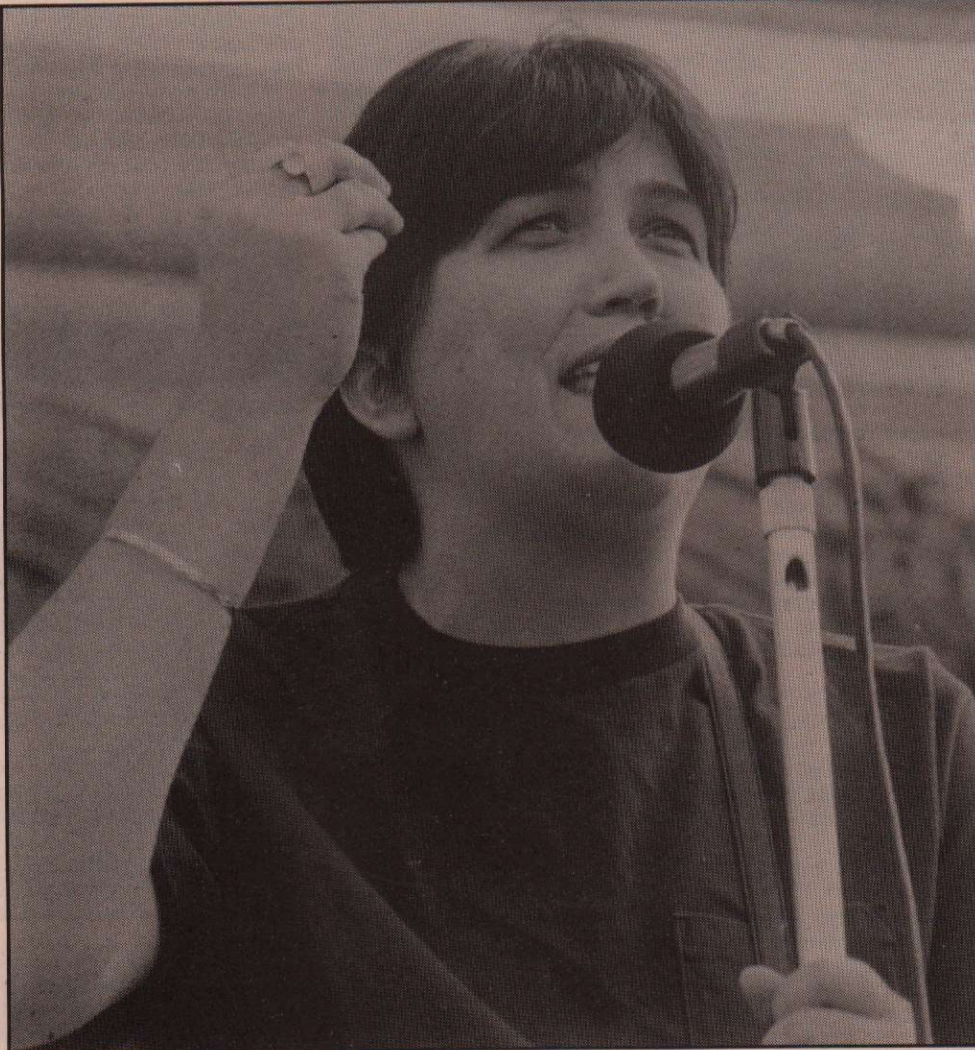
to open, will be a great start for the campaign for the all-European workers' convoy.

There have been three recent demonstrations in Franj demanding freedom for the whole of Bosnia-Herzegovina

Poster

A poster calling for the demonstrations said: 'For a just and durable peace in Europe you must say no to a new "Munich" imposed by the UN and NATO'. Another slogan said: 'History must not be written by public execution or passive-collaboration'. A third: 'Today Milosevic Tomorrow Le Pen'.

Trafalgar Square rally on Bosnia



Indjiana Harper last year at the Workers Aid Trafalgar Square rally

Photo: Alan Clark

THREE HUNDRED people attended rally called by the Alliance to Defend Bosnia-Herzegovina last Saturday.

Indjiana Harper told the meeting at Trafalgar Square: 'We want Bosnia we know it.'

'We don't want Western intervention in our country to impose their solution'

'What has been proposed at meetings in Geneva, London and Paris is not Bosnia.'

'People have been calling on the West to intervene. They have already intervened. The arms embargo is intervention.'

'We shall never forget or forgive the Western countries for allowing this to happen. We shall defend what we have if we give up we cannot live. Bosnia will never disappear, long live Bosnia.'

Other speakers included Michael Foot, who said Lord Owen and the British government were trying to impose ethnic cleansing and partition on the Bosnians. He likened their position to the pro-Franco position of the British government during the Spanish Civil War in the 1930s.

Leeds university theology professor Adrian Hastings welcomed the UN action in Sarajevo as 'overdue'. He called for action to end shelling of all Bosnian towns.

The Bishop of Barking also called military intervention as 'a way of pressing Godly outrage', thereby earning his nickname the 'bombing bishop'.

Also speaking was Vanessa Ridd, in her capacity as a UNICEF fundraiser. In the course of a long and confused speech, she said that work to help children was above politics.

Many of the audience were Bosnian and aid workers who had been involved in sending convoys.

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Indonesia: union leaders freed

INDONESIAN authorities have released most of the leaders of the independent union SBSI, arrested after a wave of strikes over minimum wages, during which workers fought police and stormed offices at a shoe factory in Java.

The leaders were arrested on the eve of a general strike, on 11 February, in which 750,000 took part. Altogether 185 strikes had taken place in recent weeks. Manpower Minister Abdul Latief condemned 'agitation',

but announced that 23 employers around Jakarta, the capital, would be prosecuted for failing to pay the minimum wage.

The Indonesian government has increased the legal minimum wage (often ignored by employers if they can get away with it), and tried a face-lift on the state-recognised All-Indonesia Labour Union, in an effort to meet US trade preferences and counter the growth of the SBSI union.

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