

TUC's latest betrayal

TUC general secretary John Monks's 'relaunch programme' is the latest in a long line of betrayals of the working class.

No wonder it has been acclaimed by bosses busily sacking workers and Tory ministers pressing ahead with their anti-union legislation and attacks on millions of working-class families.

That the TUC's 'relaunch' comes on the tenth anniversary of the start of the miners' strike serves only to make the betrayal more obscene.

BY MIKE COOKE

Just days after the 'relaunch', a conference on public sector pay was held at the TUC headquarters, Congress House.

This was the 'major conference' that the TUC had planned some weeks ago following the government announcement of the public sector pay award (Workers Press, 12 February). It was meant to be part of a 'campaign' on public sector pay.

This conference was attended by 300 union leaders and public service groups, but most importantly, in line with the 'new approach', it was addressed by the Treasury minister Stephen Dorrell.

Unsurprisingly, Dorrell told the conference that public sector pay rises would have to be paid for by improved productivity. The 'Morning Star' reports that 'he received a cool response'.

An angry response directed at the organisers of the conference for inviting Dorrell at all

would have been more appropriate.

This shabby outcome of plans for a 'major conference' shows the sort of thing that can be expected if the 'public sector day', promised at the same time as the conference, should ever materialise from the bowels of Congress House.

In the meantime, in the words of a press statement on the 'relaunch', 'a sign of the changing work will be a conference on full employment to be held on 5 July when speakers will include European Commission President Jacques Delors, Employment Secretary David Hunt and CBI Director Howard Davies'.

No sign here of any working-class content — not even a token Labour Party leader!

Welcoming general secretary John Monks's proposals for the TUC, president Jimmy

Knapp said: 'The aim has been to clear the decks and to begin a new, more clearly focused way of working.'

'Throughout this process there has been a clear agreement on the part of the general council that radical change was needed. But the driving force behind these proposals has been John Monks.'

'In the six months since he became general secretary he has carried forward proposals as far reaching as any seen in the TUC's history.'

Statement

While the TUC's press statement says that the aim of its relaunch programme is 'to concentrate its resources on campaigning and providing services for unions, with particular emphasis on the needs of activists at workplace level', the reality is in fact the complete opposite.

The statement celebrates the fact that the 'new approach, which was agreed by the general council last week, has received wide support from outside the trade union movement.'

'Politicians sending messages of support for today's relaunch include Labour leader John Smith, Employment Secretary David Hunt, and Liberal Democrat leader Paddy Ashdown, with whom the TUC is to have more detailed discussions on common issues next week (8 March).'

'Jacques Delors, president of the European Commission, has also sent greetings.'

'Support has also come from business with messages from Sir Denys Henderson of ICI, as well as Howard Davies of the CBI, the British Chambers of Commerce, the Institute of Personnel Management, and the Industrial Society.'

The operative word here is that support has come from out-

side the trade union movement. The movement should throw out these misleaders of the working class.

They do not lead the working class, they use its strength for their own purposes and to gain themselves a privileged position in society.

In this sense there is little new in the declaration, except that it takes the betrayal to a deeper level.

Monks and co. are clearly desperate to get into the 'corridors of power'.

Operation

'The campaigning work will focus heavily on Westminster with a new lobbying operation complementing the work now being done at European level through the Brussels office which was opened last year,' says the press statement.

'The aim will be to present the TUC's case forcefully to all the mainstream political parties.'

The TUC 'programme' includes a cost-cutting exercise.

'To make this transformation possible the TUC is sweeping aside committee structures which have served it well in the past but are no longer suited to the TUC's modern needs,' says the TUC press statement.

'By putting into permanent suspension 17 policy and industry committees and operating

instead through a single executive committee [the "programme"] hopes to free up TUC staff resources to meet its new objectives more effectively.'

For 'permanent suspension' read 'abolition' and for 'to free up TUC staff resources' read 'sackings'. To maintain its position the top stratum of the bureaucracy is turning on its minions.

The 'Morning Star', mouthpiece of a section of the trade union bureaucracy, expressed its dismay at the proposals, but only in the spirit of high hopes dashed:

'The welcome TUC decision to organise a march and demonstration against fascism and racism in London's East End seemed to augur a readiness to act rather than sit back and talk.'

'After Wednesday's relaunch of the TUC, these illusions are no longer tenable.'

'They have to be swept aside, and the campaign developed from the grass roots up through the executive committees and the TUC itself, to stop the trade union movement offering itself to the Tories and Liberal Democrats as a sacrificial lamb.'

The whole tenor of the editorial was to blame Monks. But what about rest of the TUC's general council, particularly its president, and friend of the 'Morning Star', Jimmy Knapp? ■ See comment, page 3.



HANDSWORTH college lecturers have defied the High Court ruling that said they couldn't go on strike and have received written warnings. About 55 lecturers defied the injunction — saying that the legal action by an employers' national consortium was

an erosion of civil liberties and an attack on the trade union movement — and stopped work, despite being warned by the principal that they might be sacked. In the event, a governors meeting decided to warn the teachers in writing and a record

was placed on their individual files. Staff were told any future action would result in dismissal. Nationally the lecturers' union, NATFHE, called off national following the High Court's ruling.

Photo and story by Mark Salmon

unite
19
MARCH

East End under attack
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Fighting the betrayals

BY THE EDITOR

THE 'relaunch' of the TUC by John Monks and company (see page 1) reveals yet again the relationship between the trade union bureaucracy and the ruling class in a period of accelerating capitalist decay.

As the capitalist system shows itself less and less capable of meeting even the basic needs of millions and millions of people, as the ruling class's unfitness to rule becomes ever more apparent, so the TUC chooses this very moment to explicitly solidarise itself with the direct representatives of the capitalist class.

What a contrast with the stance of the workers of Ukraine and the former Soviet Union who, in the face of a desperate struggle against the attempted imposition of capitalism by the Russian regime, have made a powerful call for a new International Workers' Party and stretch out their hands in solidarity with their

brothers and sisters in Bosnia! (See last week's Workers Press.)

That the cowardly leaders of the TUC now invite the very Tory ministers who are inflicting yet more savage cuts in the social services to discuss . . . public sector pay is only the culmination for the dull-witted office boys of the TUC of a long series of historical capitulations to the needs of the ruling class.

The formation of the Labour Party at the start of the present century represented a step forward for the working class, or rather a half-step forward. But the potential in this advance was destroyed by the dominance of the reformists over the Labour movement during the epoch of imperialism, the epoch of capitalist decay.

Condemning

No doubt many 'lefts', some of them self-professed Trotskyists, will be condemning the proposals of the TUC and calling for the 'preservation of the link' between the trades unions

and the Labour Party. They do so because they are desperate to see that the trades unions remain tied to the politics of class-collaboration.

But this is the same Labour Party that is explicitly committed to the retention of most of the present anti-union laws, and — even in words — has abandoned any proposals for the re-nationalisation of the industries the Tories have privatised.

Millions of workers are disgusted with the Labour Party; its membership is dropping like a stone; its support amongst workers is waning in many of its former strongholds. In cities like Sheffield Labour councils spearhead the attack against the most vulnerable sections of the working class (see page 5).

But workers are just as disgusted with the trade union leaders who are 'flesh of one flesh' with the Labour parliamentarians and who have betrayed every single fight against the employers and the Tory government for the last ten years and more.

Monks and co. want to trans-

form the unions into what they see as 'non-political' bodies. But there are no 'non-political' trades unions. They must either become instruments for the disciplining of the working class to the reactionary needs of capital, or they must become revolutionary instruments for the liberation of the working class. There is no middle way.

Crisis

A full and wide-ranging discussion in the working-class movement is required about the crisis in both the unions and the Labour Party. The unions have considerable political funds. But can these funds continue to be handed over to the Labour Party which makes no pretence at defending trade unionism?

We surely cannot allow Monks and his friends to use these funds to finance their partnership with 'industry' (actually with the capitalist class which owns and controls this 'industry'), the capitalist state and capitalist parties. Such a discussion must also

include the question of democracy in the labour movement. Who said the TUC could invite Treasury axe-man Stephen Dorrell to speak to them?

It was in opposition to these betrayals that a representative of the Workers International at the recent Community and Union Action conference in Manchester raised these matters. Since the conference some of its organisers have been approached for discussions about the possibility of standing candidates against Labour, starting with local elections. This proposition should certainly be considered most seriously.

The International Trade Union Solidarity Campaign was formed to fight on the question of the political independence of the unions from the capitalist state and of workers in their unions from the pro-capitalist bureaucracy.

Once again we invite any trade unionist or worker who has opinions about these issues to write to Workers Press and help develop the discussion that is now urgently needed.

Anti-union law attacks right to strike ballot

JUST balloting for strike action could now be 'illegal' under the anti-union laws. London Underground management is threatening the National Union of Rail Maritime and Transport Workers with legal action if it carries out a strike ballot against job cuts.

Management says it has not been notified by the union over strike plans, as required by the anti-union laws. If the argument is accepted by the judges, this is taking the legislation into new territory which further attacks the trade union movement.

Giro walk-out

A GIROBANK strike last Tuesday was given added determination by the news that the bank's chief executive's salary had increased by £600 a WEEK.

Staff at the bank are only asking for a flat rate of £450 a year more, rather than the 1.5 per cent offered by management.

National Communications Union members picketed two Girobank buildings in the City, in a series of one-day actions.

Police seek more 'stop and search' powers

AN AMENDMENT to the Criminal Justice Bill is being put forward by MPs supported by the Police Federation.

They want the power to stop and search ANYONE within a given area for a period of seven days. Present regulations say that police have to have 'reasonable suspicion' before they can 'stop and search'. Of course, 'reasonable suspicion' is a vague term that could apply to anyone.

In case this is felt to be too strong, a Labour member of the committee considering the bill, Mike O'Brien, has come to the rescue of the idea. He has tabled an amendment that specifies six hours instead of seven days.

The Police Federation wants the Home Secretary to crack down on violent attacks in pubs and clubs, rock concerts, etc. Tucked away in this list is demonstrations. To strengthen the hand of the source of violence on demonstrations, the police, is to increase its likelihood in future. The police, of course, would far prefer to take away the right to demonstrate altogether.

Death in the 1990s

A COMPUTER error meant that an 88-year-old widow's pension was stopped for eight months before she was found dead in squalor.

It was not clear if Ellen Hutchin died of malnutrition because her body was so extensively decomposed. Her gas and electricity had been cut off. There was no food in the house and she had just 60p in cash.

She was owed £8,000 by social services, which took over her pension in January 1990. Giros had been sent out to 16 June 1993, but Mrs Hutchin last cashed one in March 1992.

Her niece, Jean Taylor, has said that she will be making a complaint against Camden social services.



Some 'Lordships' in full regalia, including former Labour 'ex-chequer' Dennis Healey!

Lords votes to stay in Middle Ages

IF YOUR ancestors were land-grabbing barons, and you were born in the right bed, you can help rule Britain. It doesn't matter what you've got between your ears, so long as you've got the right gear between your legs.

On the eve of International Women's Day, members of Britain's House of Lords voted by 75 to 39 against a move to give the right to inherit a peerage to the oldest child, regardless of gender.

Under Norman laws, only

legitimate oldest sons can inherit.

Former Labour cabinet minister turned Liberal Democrat Lord Diamond argued it was now 'universally accepted that discrimination on grounds of sex is morally wrong as well as being unlawful'; and he warned opponents they were giving 'a ready handle to those who would denigrate this House.'

But Tory historian Lord Dacre accused him of wanting 'to sweep away all the rights and Patents that have been issued in the last seven centuries by 30 kings'. He said the bill smelled to him of 'political correctness'.

Notorious right-winger Lord Sudely, who claims descent from a 7th century Bishop of Metz (it was legal then) and a Norman earl was worried the bill would separate land from title. Labour Lord Strabolgi thought it was 'fought with difficulties'. Lord Shrewsbury said it would create problems for the College of Heralds.

'Like the House of Lords itself, we are an anachronism that works,' he claimed. Lord Hesketh said the bill would make hereditary peers a laughing stock, and hasten the day when the hereditary element of the Lords was swept away.

So the Lords voted to keep their medieval anachronism as it is, once again reminding us what a load of antiquated garbage continues its part in ruling us.

every structure of the bourgeois parliamentary democracy.

So, when sections of the Western intelligentsia spoke of the 'fascism' of Peron in Argentina, they committed the huge mistake of ignoring the fact that it was a socio-national movement based on the new labour class of the country. This promoted its industrialisation at the expense of British and American capital.

Argentinian workers — former peasants who emigrated — regarded Peronism for decades as their golden age. Today when hardline Islam is called 'fascism', it indicates a failure to grasp the socio-economic conditions that caused the eruption of this phenomenon, and consequently a failure to understand it.

As far as the inevitable explosion of nationalisms in former 'socialist' countries is concerned, it is totally wrong to consider as 'fascist' a movement or regime in these countries.

On the other hand, we do face a fascist movement and danger in France, with Le Pen, in Italy, with the MSI, and in Germany. A prolongation of this crisis could lead to the establishment of dictatorial regimes of fascist mentality, methods and absolute power.

Rebuilding the Fourth International

Pablo rules out fascist danger in East

We reprint here an article on fascism from the Greek paper 'Vima' (6 January), which seeks to play down the threat of fascist organisations emerging in the eastern European countries. It was written by Michel Raptis (Pablo), who was expelled from the Fourth International in 1953. His article is dangerously misleading in suggesting that a fascist movement is in principle impossible in the former Soviet Union or in eastern Europe. In fact, former elements in the Stalinist bureaucracies in these countries are leading movements that aim to break

up and atomise the working class, as part of the process of opening up these states to imperialist plunder. Pablo's position is a product of his long-standing apologia for the Stalinist regimes in these countries. He was last year admitted to the United Secretariat of the Fourth International's (USec) Greek section. He was admitted by the international leadership of the USec, headed by Ernest Mandel, and against the wishes of the membership of that organisation. Recent reports suggest that he is no longer a member of the USec.

fundamentalism and Russian or Serbian nationalism.

This confusion is due to the influence of the vulgar 'Marxism' prevalent under 'real existing socialism'.

Fascism appeared historically in Italy and Germany. In both cases they were advanced industrial countries in crisis. It gained a mass social base mainly among the unemployed and the rapidly impoverished petty bourgeoisie.

Powerful

This base turned initially against big capital, and then against 'socialism', represented in this period by the powerful 'socialist' and 'communist' par-

ties, which were unable to form a united front.

The disappointed and deceived masses eventually supported Hitler and Mussolini. Despite their anti-capitalist demagoguery, they were instruments of big capital in its attempts to find a solution to the crisis.

Fascism as a mass movement and regime does not occur in Third World countries, or countries like those of the former eastern bloc. It occurs in advanced capitalist countries if they fall into crisis.

Fascism is a special form of dictatorship that combines anti-capitalist demagoguery with the abolition of parliament, parties, trades unions, in short

MUCH has been written in the international press about the revival of 'fascism', particularly after [Russian fascist] Zhirinovskiy's electoral success. But the term 'fascism' has a specific historical origin and meaning.

Not every regime or dictatorship which uses 'fascist' methods can be described as such. A concrete socio-political analysis is needed. This is of theoretical and practical importance.

For example, in the past, a movement and regime of great importance for the whole of Latin America — Peronism — was characterised as 'fascist'.

Today there is a danger of describing as 'fascist' movements as dissimilar as Islamic

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Follow the Star

THE tragedy of Bosnia and its people — Serb, Muslim and Croat — has been that too many outside powers have meddled in their affairs to suit their own agendas' (angers of meddling', 'Morning Star' Comment, 22 February).

It is this Russian involvement which is the new factor in the situation. It creates the possibility of finding a way out' ('New factor gives hope', 'Morning Star' Comment, 24 February). So 'meddling' (OK, it wasn't 'too many outside powers', but one too few.

Up to now, outside involvement has taken a predominantly anti-racist character. . . . But there is not a single easily identifiable villain of the piece in this drama. Serbs, Croats, and Muslims all share responsibility for the crisis', the Star added.

So if Serb forces stop shelling Sarajevo and Tuzla, and Croat forces stop bombarding Mostar, Bosnians — or, as BBC television news did the 'Morning Star' call them, 'Muslims' — should withdraw their guns from around Belgrade and Zagreb? Sounds fair enough, except . . . they haven't any.

Immediately (*sic*) following the mass killing in Sarajevo market — in which a UN inquiry was unable to apportion blame, though without any evidence the media found the Serbs guilty — the international community intervened. UN troops were sent to separate the combatants' (Double standards', 'Morning Star' Comment 2 March, advocating UN troops for occupied Palestine, whose problems began with a League of Nations British mandate (Soviet-backed UN partition!). I never understood the 'mystery' about the Sarajevo market-place killing. There'd been enough previous bombardments. But then, I'd wrongly assumed the obvious culprits were the forces besieging the city. And the UN assured us ages ago that the siege of Sarajevo had not lifted.

Perhaps Serb guns trained on Sarajevo only fired blanks, Bosnians set fire to their own national library, and children faked having their legs blown off for the camera? Sarajevo people complaining they're still under siege should be grateful: they've lost weight, saved energy, and been kept apart from relatives (sorry combatants) so they don't kill each other.

The 'Morning Star' blames the Star on 'Germany's longstanding policy in the region, going back to before the First World War' (24 February). Maybe its non-interventionism will not last. It is planning a special anniversary issue for 10-Day.

Unmentionable

WHAT does 'Socialist Worker' say about him?' asked a comrade who heard I was writing about former Socialist Workers Party (SWP) full-time organiser Roger Rosewell, now employed by the 'Daily Mail' and linked with former Westminster council leader Lady Porter (see last week's Workers Press).

Writing to the 'London Review of Books' on 27 January, 'Socialist Worker' editor Chris Harman referred in passing to 'defectors like former "News of the World" editor Wendy Henry, "Daily Mail" leader writer Roger Rosewell, "Sun" columnist Garry Bushell and the "Daily Express's" Peter Hitchens'. (Quite a school of journalism!)

But 'Socialist Worker' itself, reporting the row in Westminster, hasn't mentioned Rosewell. Unlike the other alumni, he didn't just pass through the SWP ranks, he was a leading member. Can't they give him a reference?

Charlie Pottins

Build for 19 March and Sweep the fascist

EVERY worker should help to mobilise for the demonstration against fascism and racism on 19 March, called by the Trades Union Congress.

Following the election of the fascist British National Party councillor Derek Beackon in the Millwall ward on the Isle of Dogs in Tower Hamlets, east London, last September, Transport and General Workers' Union general secretary Bill Morris called for a demonstration against racism.

Tower Hamlets trades council was invited to meet the TUC, where they made a series of proposals, including a march through east London. Only weeks before the election, the trades council had told the TUC about the gang of thugs who had kicked and beaten Quddus Ali in Tower Hamlets. Ali remained in a coma for months after.

Only now, on the eve of the May elections, when several Labour-controlled wards are likely to be challenged by the fascists, has the TUC decided to respond.

The TUC resisted all demands for the march to go to the Isle of Dogs, and is instead marching to Hackney. It even began by calling

'The working class must organise internationally to defeat fascism'

for a cross-party march. The trades council said that this would not meet with the approval of those in the local community who had been victims both of Tory legislation and a racist and corrupt Liberal council.

Weeks before the march, TUC general secretary John Monks — with support from TUC president and National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers general secretary Jimmy Knapp — invited Tory Employment Secretary David Hunt and the financial secretary to the Treasury, Stephen Dorrell, to be 'guests' at TUC meetings and conferences, in what was billed in the press as a 'relaunch' of the TUC.

The 'Guardian' (2 March) quoted Monks as saying: 'We are changing boldly and decisively.' Hardly has

PHIL EDWARDS, the secretary of Tower Hamlets trades council, comments on the national march against racism and fascism to be held in that borough next Saturday

the announcement of public service pay cuts left the lips of these scoundrels, than Monks is shaking hands with the Tories.

This is the same John Monks whose name appears with thanks for 'advice and encouragement' in a booklet produced in 1978 by Tower Hamlets trades council's forerunner, the Bethnal Green and Stepney trades council. 'Blood on the streets' detailed increasing racial violence in Tower Hamlets, and the Bengali community's growing resistance to it. This was the period when the National Front was organising in local elections.

'No justice, no peace'

IN A period of deepening international economic crisis, in which local Labour-controlled councils assist in attacks on the working class, fascism is rearing its ugly head again. Months before the May elections, Mukhtar Ahmed, a 19-year-old Bengali student at Tower Hamlets college, was viciously beaten and kicked by a gang of racist thugs. Like Quddus Ali, he lies in a coma on a life-support machine fighting for his life.

It's hardly surprising that the slogan being raised at the benefit to raise money for him and his family is 'No justice, no peace'. Young Bengalis are seriously asking how they can defend themselves and fight back against these racist scum.

What justice can they expect from the courts and the police? In the first week of March, in neighbouring Newham a 21-year-old and a 23-year-old were given 'sentences' of 200 and 150 hours' 'community service' for beating two members of the Newham Monitoring Project around the head with monkey wrenches in another brutal attack.

The two victims had minutes before visited an Asian family who had themselves suffered a racist attack.

A 300-strong vigil last year, out-

side the London hospital, where Quddus Ali lay in a coma, was attacked by mounted police and riot police with dogs. Nine young Bengalis were arrested on riot charges. 'No justice, no peace.'

Now, long after the police attack on the anti-racist demonstrators against the BNP's 'bookshop' in Welling, south-east London, the press are helping in the round-up of protesters so they can mete out more 'justice'.

Remember that the TUC and the Anti-Racist Alliance (ARA) leader Marc Wadsworth told workers not to go on the Welling march if they wanted to avoid trouble. What help can young anti-racists expect from those who side with the state and grumble about the decline of law and order?

There are now 140,000 reported racist incidents a year. Attacks in east London have more than trebled this year. Over the past weeks, organised bands of racists have been seen in Tower Hamlets. There have been several attacks. In one incident, a grown man attacked two 15-year-old school children with a Stanley knife and a broken bottle.

There needs to be widespread and co-ordinated action — involving trades unions and the community.

Stand united

SINCE September, Tower Hamlets trades council has called two public meetings in the Whitechapel area and a further one on the Isle of Dogs itself.

The emphasis in this campaign has always been to discuss how to resolve the specific problems of the working-class community on the Isle of Dogs, in terms of housing, employment, transport, etc., whilst stressing that the working class must stand united against the attacks it faces on living conditions.

There are others in the movement who simply say 'Vote Labour'. They turn their backs on those sections of the working class who clearly feel that they have

been left isolated by Labour and the trade union movement.

When the TUC met the trades council and local community groups at the end of last year, it was clear that these groups feel that the TUC has let them down. Meeting a delegation of trades unionists on the Isle of Dogs, the TUC was told that the local community needed to be reminded of the strength of the trade union movement and that a march to the island would demonstrate this. Instead, the TUC rejected this and so did ARA and the Anti-Nazi League.

The TUC has worked closely with the ARA to set up the march. There has been wide publicity in the trade union movement. But apart from calling for the Asian and black community to organise themselves, which is already happening anyway, ARA only demands a 'Racial Harassment Bill'.

In its March/April bulletin, ARA complains that the government fails to defend black people. And this to a government that used the 1993 Asylum Act to jail a plane-load of Jamaicans over Christmas and recently detained ten Algerians, sending one back to his death, in breach of the Geneva convention.

And the capitalist state will use the fascist gangs to smash up the organised working class when it can no longer tolerate resistance or concede any further reforms.

Political vacuum

THE parliamentary parties that ARA addresses in its demands are fragmenting. As these parties' poli-

Greek go

BY DIMITRIS HILARIS

AT THE very moment that NATO sent the ultimatum to the Serbian army to withdraw from Sarajevo, the Greek government decided to close down its consulate in Skopje, the capital of the Republic of Macedonia.

It also decided to block the movement of oil and other goods to Macedonia through the Greek port of Salonica; 70 per cent of Macedonia's imports come along this route.

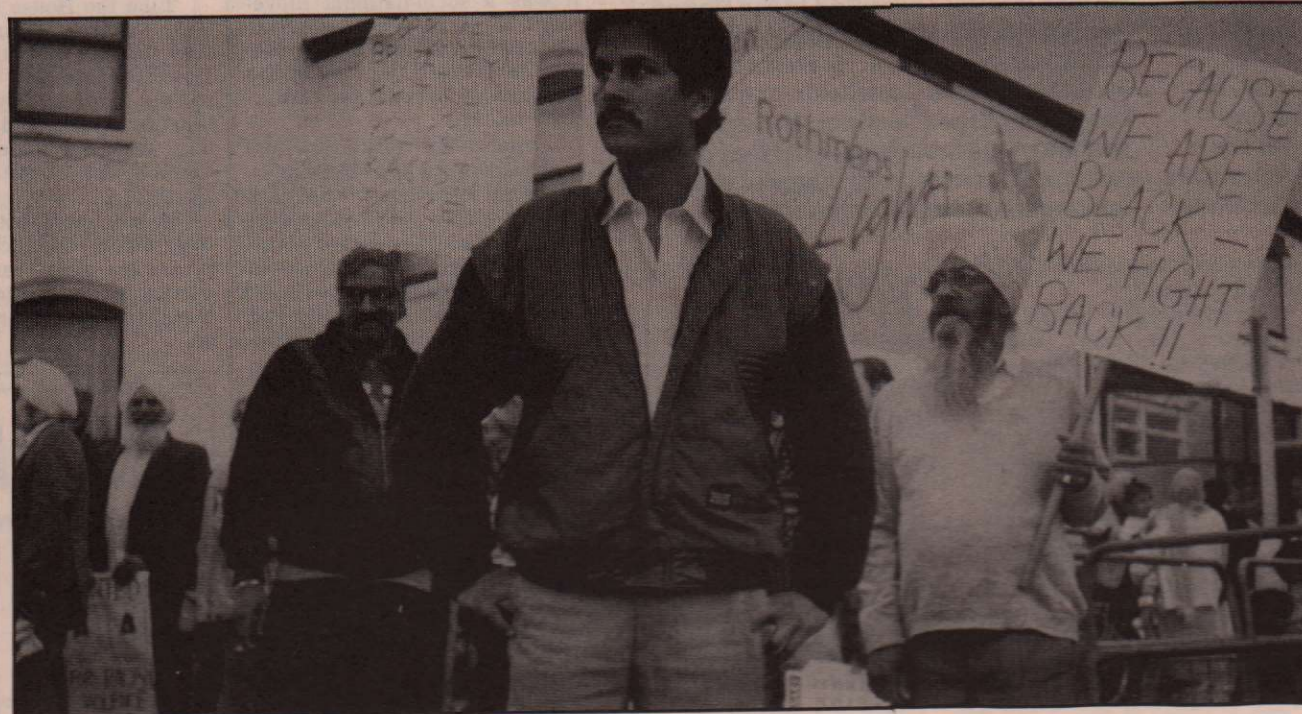
NATO is preparing further military intervention in Bosnia, which can only bring blood and destruction. The contention that it is done to protect the Bosnian peoples is simply a joke.

The Greek government — the social-democratic PASOK party — has chosen the same time to provoke an even bigger crisis in the area, increasing the potential for the war to expand to the south of the former Yugoslavia.

Its decision has condemned the people of the Republic of Macedonia to live without oil and other basic necessities. This helps nationalists in that country, and in Greece, it helps to hoodwink the people.

Greece's government has taken its decision because land and profits are up for grabs on all sides and it wants an even bigger share.

Greek capitalism is the strongest in the Balkan area. Greek firms operate throughout the Bal-



Widespread and co-ordinated action against racist attacks is needed, involving unions and the community

Anti-racist protest Fascists off the streets

ies become less and less distinguishable from each other they will coalesce and jointly confront the working class. A political vacuum has been left on the Isle of Dogs. It is being filled by the fascists — at the moment. This cannot be allowed to continue.

James Hunt and Ted Johns of the Island Labour Party have both defected to join the local East London People's Alliance. This is not a left split, however. Hunt is a right-winger. He has denied concocting false canvas returns — leaked to the local papers — during last September's election to make it appear that the BNP was gaining ground.

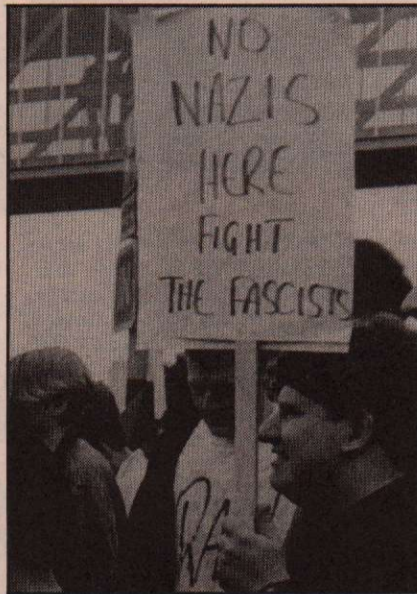
Hunt has accused his campaign agent, Steve Molyneux, Labour's last London organiser, David Wilkinson, and local member John Biggs of conspiracy in leaking the returns. Biggs and Wilkinson have denied the charge and Molyneux has declined to comment. Scare tactic or not, Hunt lost the seat.

Three Liberals face expulsion or pandering to racism following the recommendation of the Anthony Lester QC inquiry into the local Liberals. They are threatening to form an 'independent' party if this happens. The inquiry recommendations have not only been

ignored but one of the accused has been made the local party's political adviser!

Jonathon Mathews, one of the three, has been adopted for the Millwall ward in May's elections. He was responsible for a leaflet in September that called for 'local homes for local people'. He has said that he saw nothing discriminatory in this.

Mathews says concern about the



BNP is exaggerated. But the BNP could win another two seats in May, according to the 'Observer'. This would put them in control of the five-seat Isle of Dogs 'neighbourhood council' set up by Liberal-Democrat-controlled Tower Hamlets. The neighbourhood council has a budget of £23 million.

Tom Winnifrith, another of the three, stated on TV that the London region Liberal Democrats and the national party were aware 'long before the scandal' of the leaflets' contents, but they had made no protest. The TUC is sidling up to this party in its 'bold' popular front.

The working class's response must be different. Workers Aid for Bosnia campaign is bringing a contingent of Bosnians to this march in the week before its convoy reaches the Croatian border with Bosnia. This is because Workers Aid recognises that the working class must organise internationally to defeat fascism.

The working class needs to help every struggle of workers against the state and in defiance of the trade union and social-democratic bureaucracies, not just in defence but in preparation for offensive struggles. We have to begin that struggle now.

Govt blockades Macedonia

kans and they have a special importance there.

The oil trade throughout the area is controlled by Greek capitalists, and Greek banks control an important part of economic life. The Greek drachma is the hard currency of the Balkans.

When the crisis started, Greek capitalism tried to defend its dominant position and to start a new rush for profits in two main ways.

First, it tried to put political pressure on the Macedonia republic to force it to change its name. Secondly, it supported Serbia, which has long been Greece's foremost ally in the area. Greece and Serbia have a common religion in orthodox Christianity.

All Greek governments — whether the Tory 'New Democracy' or the ruling PASOK party — have supported the criminal nationalists, Serbia's President Milosevic and Bosnian-Serb leader Karadzic, both economically and politically within the European Union and NATO.

Partition

Within Greece they try to create the impression that the Serb people are the only victims of the war, while forgetting the Serb aim of a 'Greater Serbia', the activities of the fascist chetniks, and Karadzic's use of ethnic cleansing to try to achieve the partition of Bosnia.

They continue to retail the racist argument that Bosnians are Muslims and therefore have a lower

culture, and that Bosnians are the 'agents' of Turkey — a traditional enemy of Greece.

The Bosnians are blamed for all the damage, even the shells that struck the market in Sarajevo. The Greek media claimed this was the action of Muslims.

The Greek government fosters this nationalism at home. For two years it has used all the resources of bourgeois society — schools, the Church, the media, etc. — to instil a nationalist feeling in the population. It has held marches of nationalist hatred and rhetoric against neighbouring peoples under the watchword of 'The name of Macedonia, a symbol for 4000 years'. The most recent of these marches was organised by the Church.

Moreover, in recent years every internationalist voice raised against the politics of the government has faced the threat of legal action. This climate has encouraged fascist groups to act.

However, the Greek people have not been nationalistic, although many of them have followed this kind of politics out of confusion and a fear that Greece is threatened.

Certainly there is no organised and powerful reaction against it from the working class. The main reason for this is that its leadership identifies with the nationalist options presented by the government. Last year, for example, the GSEE (the Greek TUC) hosted a visit to Athens by Karadzic. Most sections of the 'left' turn a friendly face to Serbia.

This is the result of the long domination of the Stalinist tradition over the Greek left. Many left-wing organisations and generations of militants have been influenced by the Stalinist theory of 'stages', 'national independence', and 'national defence'.

As a result they are unable to confront Greek nationalism or defend the right of Bosnia and Macedonia to self-determination and they believe Serb nationalism is an anti-imperialist force.

Even so-called Trotskyists like Michel Pablo (Michael Raptis) and Savas Michael in many ways support Serbia.

Duty

The only social force which can end the war is the working class. There are many historical examples of the working class throwing off militarism and national hatred and turning against the warmongers and bosses. This is what the Russian and German workers did in World War I.

Workers' unity is not just laudable aim but a duty. It can only be achieved by the international solidarity of workers and the isolation of the nationalists. The Workers Aid campaign's convoy to Bosnia is an example of how this solidarity can be organised in action.

Here in Greece, very close to the crisis, the necessity of building an internationalist and anti-war movement has a special meaning. And we are going to do it.

A tram to nowhere

IF YOU want to open up a conversation with anyone in Sheffield nowadays, just mention the traffic. Every morning and every evening the city experiences American-style 'gridlock'.

This is not just the result of the deregulation of public transport, nor of the chronic state of disrepair of some of our highways. The immediate reason is that we are experiencing yet another of the city council's grandiose schemes, the Supertram.

Rather like the 19th-century Russian gentry, the Sheffield Labourites live in a world of 'grandiose dreams and petty deeds', which now threaten to make, like their petty aristocratic counterparts, 'superfluous men' and women. As with previous grand schemes for the World Student Games and the Sheffield Tertiary Education Reorganisation Plan, the Supertram is proving to be a nightmare.

The tram, a kind of municipal TGV (the French high-speed train), is to run from Attercliffe — now known as the Meadowhill shopping complex — through the post-industrial wasteland of the Lower Don Valley to the city centre, then out through West Hillsborough and the Netherthorpe and the University areas to Hillsborough near another hypermarket.

The main problem with this ambitious project is that this Victorian city, with its crumbling infrastructure, cannot carry such an advanced transport system, so that the central arteries of an overtaxed urban network have become a continuous construction camp.

The city has been transformed into a snakes-and-ladders game of diversions and traffic jams, giving the city — which boasted 'the cleanest air in Europe' — one of the worst records of air pollution in Britain. It is believed that the tram's prototype has already cut a car in half and has demolished a double-decker bus.

The fares are forecast at £3 a trip, and the stops are so far apart that passengers will have to catch buses to reach their eventual destinations. Meanwhile hundreds of small shops and businesses face ruin simply because people cannot get near them.

* * * * *

BUT in the prosaic world of 'petty deeds' the Labour group is busy 'defending our people' by dismantling public amenities.

The libraries have a 'rolling programme' of opening hours, the schools are being 'rationalised' through closures, and the local-authority-funded sector of adult education will most likely cease to exist in September, with the loss of hundreds of part-time jobs.

One of the political ironies is that central-government funding of the schools' building programme and the 'adult precept' has not been cut in the last four years. The Labourites are claiming that they have to finish their commitment to adult education to prioritise the needs of children. But this pious playing off of one against the other will no longer wash.

In education, one of the fears that drives the local education authority (LEA) is that it will cease to exist because the number of schools opting out of its control under local management of schools (LMS) — whereby schools control

their own budgets — is now critical. If only one more secondary school opts for LMS, then the LEA will have to wind up.

The straw that may well break the camel's back is the once-prestigious King Edward VII school, a listed early-19th-century building in former poet laureate John Betjeman's favourite suburb, Broomhill. This is in such a state of disrepair that recent safety reports claim that it is unfit for use. It is quite on the cards that the largely middle-class parents will opt out to save the school, and the government will only have to point to its buildings repair allocation to discredit the city council.

The present round of cuts are Treasury-driven and the traditional 'left' is helpless. The deficits are a result of the era when 'creative accounting' and 'political realism', instead of class struggle, sent city politicians scurrying to the international financial institutions for massive loans, whose repayment is now in full stream.

If the liberal middle class are disaffected by the Labour Party's policies, then the response of the working class is one of increasing bitterness. This expresses itself at a number of levels. Sheffield city council is the largest employer of labour and the largest landlord in South Yorkshire.

In the last ten years it has driven up rents and shed thousands of jobs. Last year it negotiated a pay cut of 3.5 per cent with the main unions, thanks to a sweetheart deal with ex-Stalinist officials.

This year the council is required to make a further budget cut of £30 million and has sent out statutory redundancy notices. What particularly embitters its workers, some of them ex-Stalinist industrial workers, is that their jobs are being 'franchised out' to the Junior Chamber of Commerce and sundry bodies.

The meaning of 'partnership' is a more refined and ruthless form of asset stripping. It is not just plant and property that the Labourites are dispensing with, but the cultural acumen and labour-power of the class they are supposed to represent. Sheffield represents a nasty materialisation of the Labour frontbench Brown-Cook-Prescott document, 'Promoting a Partnership between Public and Private Finance'.

* * * * *

WHICH brings us back back by a circuitous route to the 'magic tram', which is precisely a product of such a deal. I hear from building workers engaged in the rebuilding of selected Sheffield sewers that the next grandiose dream is a 'flying' bus, which will zip around the city centre on a monorail. The estimated cost is more than £15 billion.

Meanwhile the unthinkable is possible — a Liberal-Democrat majority in the council chamber. Labour has already lost key working-class wards, such as Brightside and Walkley, and fears to lose many others.

These wards are historically embedded in the national and international traditions of the working class, centres of the World War I shop-stewards' movement and, earlier, of the violent birth of the trade union movement. Sheffield is selling off its silver.

Tom Owen

In memory of the Paris Commune

The Paris Commune, set up by the workers of Paris on 18 March 1871, represented a turning-point in the history of the international working class. For the Commune marked that first moment when the working class held state power.

Marx, together with Engels in the leadership of the First International (the International Working Men's

Association), was at the heart of the whole experience of the Commune, and Lenin was later to study its lessons intensely as part of the preparation for the October Revolution.

Here GEOFF PILLING pays homage to the heroes of the Paris Commune, thousands of whom were murdered by the French bourgeoisie.

THE decision of the conference of Ukrainian and Russian miners and strikers — held in Poltava, Ukraine, early last month — to call for the celebration of the Paris Commune on 18 March shows that those heroic events in Paris 123 years ago lives on in the memory of the working class, not least the working class of the former USSR.

Why should this be so? Because the Commune of Paris constituted a turning-point, not simply for the French working class but for world history. For it marked the first time that the working class held power, becoming, if only for a short period of 72 days, the ruling class.

It demonstrated in practice what Marx and Engels had anticipated in theory: that the working class, having seized power, could not simply lay hold of the existing machinery

to be assured of final victory.

The Commune sprang up spontaneously. Like many revolutions it was born of war, in this case the unsuccessful war of France against Germany and the privations suffered as a result of the siege of the French capital by the German army.

Roots

Its deeper roots lay in the manifest degradation of the ruling elite, the breakdown of the old machinery of state, chiefly of the army, the cowardice of the bourgeoisie, its inability to administer the nation, the drastic deterioration of the conditions of life of the working class, and the ruination of the lower middle classes.

It was these conditions that came together and led to a revolution that for the first

time to break with Marx and desert the First International.

In this sense the Commune was doomed to defeat, as Marx sensed from an early stage. The entire bourgeoisie of France joined forces against it. Germany's chancellor, Otto von Bismarck, released a hundred thousand French prisoners of war to help crush revolutionary Paris which, despite support from workers in other towns, including Marseilles and Lyon, was left

abolition of the standing army and political police, the separation of Church and state, the introduction of a democratic suffrage, the accountability and removability of officials and the equalisation of their wages with those of the workers.

During the period when the workers held power, night work in bakeries was ended and the system of fines against workers was abolished. All factories abandoned by their owners were turned over to associations of workers and production in them resumed. The Commune, aiming to win the more exploited sections of the lower middle class, cancelled rent arrears, placed a moratorium on commercial bills and quashed interest on them — what Marx called 'master strokes'.

The bourgeoisie, sensing that such measures threatened the beginning of its demise, unleashed a wholesale and brutal slaughter of the Communards.

ious, and while he criticised its indecision, his attitude was the very opposite of a fatalist. He worked might and main to intervene at every stage of the Commune. It was on Marx's motion at the general council of the First International three days after the start of the revolution that a delegation was sent to attend workers' meetings in Paris to explain the essence of the revolution and express sympathy with its aims.

The general council sent one of its leading members, Auguste Serrailier, to Paris and it was his letters that provided Marx with valuable information which helped him to analyse the unfolding events and prepare for the final denouement.

Marx also led the fight to defend the Communards from the horrendous persecution that followed defeat. Despite ill health he worked tirelessly to secure safe passage to England for as many Communards as

eral council of the International acted concurrently as a committee to aid the Commune's refugees.

Writing to Engels from Geneva in October 1878, Walerj Wróblewski, a Polish revolutionary and hero of the Commune, recalled with gratitude the consideration that Marx and Engels had shown him in that trying period: 'During my exile in London your home, and that of Marx offered a sole and truly fraternal refuge where so much friendship and kindness was shown to me on your part.'

Transform

Marx felt that his single most important task was to analyse the lessons of the Commune, which would help transform the spontaneous sympathy amongst workers towards the Commune into a conscious desire to continue its cause through to the end.

Like Chartism in England some 30 years earlier, the Commune came 'too soon'. France was as yet a poorly developed capitalist country, with the majority of the population artisans, shopkeepers and peasants. The epoch of imperialism had not yet arrived, although the events of 1871 represented an anticipation of that epoch.

At the same time there was no effective workers' party, with the result that the working class was unprepared. Neither the Blanquists, who commanded the greatest influence in the Commune, nor the anarchist followers of Proudhon were capable of giving revolutionary leadership to the Commune.

Many of the most determined and loyal members of the Commune often found the right road, but this road was discovered in opposition to the

'What flexibility, what historical initiative, what a capacity for sacrifice in these Parisians! . . . However that may be, the present rising in Paris — even if it be crushed by the wolves, swine, the vile curs of the old society — is the most glorious deed of our Party since the June insurrection in Paris.'

Karl Marx

of state, but would first have to abolish this bureaucratic machine and the police and army on which it rested.

A long theoretical and political battle inside the international working class, waged by Marx and Engels against the enemies of Marxism, had prepared theoretically for the Commune.

This battle was to reach its high point in the fight against the anarchism of Bakunin inside the First International, which had been founded in 1864, and of which Marx became the *de facto* head.

Obliged

This is the meaning of Engels's statement that the Commune was 'undoubtedly the child of the [First] International intellectually, although the International did not lift a finger to produce it'.

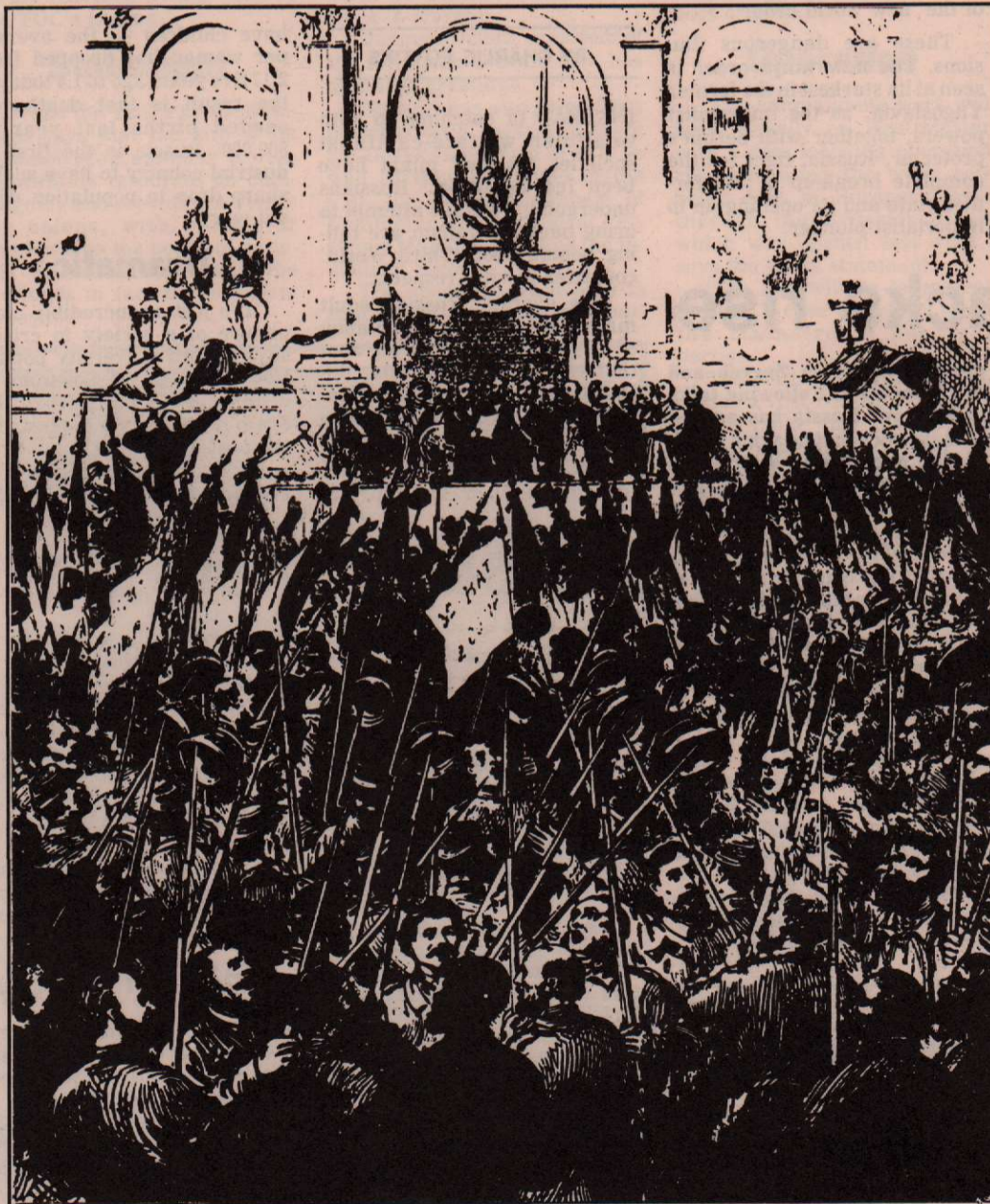
The Commune showed in practice that the working class was obliged to create its own machinery of state adapted to its own needs. And last, but not least, the Commune, this time in a negative way, demonstrated that the power of the working class cannot exist even within the limits of a capital city but must embrace the whole country to have any chance of being strengthened and must sweep over a whole number of capitalist countries

time in history placed state power in the hands of the working class and sections of the lower middle class.

The Paris Commune marked the first proletarian state in world history. But the working class, a class exploited by capital, cannot dominate politically unless it breaks the chains that tie it to capital: that is why the Commune had a profound social content, that is why it set out to destroy the very foundations of the existing social order.

Precisely because revolutions are not 'planned' the movement that erupted in Paris was extremely amorphous. It was joined by many patriots who wanted to re-open the war with Germany; it won the sympathy of many small shopkeepers who were facing ruin unless there was a postponement of the payment of rents and state debts; finally it won support from bourgeois republican elements who feared the return of the monarchy.

But only the workers remained loyal to the Commune to its very end. The bourgeois elements decamped when they sensed the Commune's revolutionary working-class content; the lower middle class quit when they sensed it was nearing defeat. And the Commune's defeat that drove many frightened petty-bourgeois and reformist trade union leaders



The 1871 Paris Commune was a turning-point for world history — it was the first time the working class held state power

effectively isolated.

But despite its bloody defeat the Commune pointed the way ahead. Already in September 1870, as Paris lay under siege by Bismarck's forces, there appeared on the walls of the city a poster known as the first 'red poster' (*Affich rouge*) setting forth a programme and declaring that it was the task of the working class to defend the republic.

The programme — much of it later to be implemented by the Commune — included the

The Paris municipal council paid for the burial of 17,000 executed people and as many as 30,000 Parisians were shot down; a further 45,000 were arrested, many later to be executed. Around 10,000 were sentenced by military tribunals to hard labour, imprisonment in fortresses, or exile to New Caledonia. In all, Paris lost 100,000 of its best people, including some of the finest workers in the city's many trades.

While Marx sensed that the Commune could not be victor-

possible. He and Engels — who by this time had moved from Manchester to London — were in the forefront of the fight to supply escaped Communards with housing and with the necessary money to provide clothes and household utensils. Marx's family took a leading part in this work.

Marx, the outstanding theoretical leader of the whole movement, saw it as part of his internationalist duty to give his undivided attention to these matters. For a period the gen-

petty-bourgeois doctrines which as yet still influenced them. Without a revolutionary party, the working class was unable to retain the power it had won and to carry out a thorough-going transformation.

DEFEATED though it was the Commune lives on — as our brothers and sisters in Ukraine and Russia have recently reminded us.

After 123 years our protagonist is Marx's protagonist: 'working, thinking, bleeding Paris . . . radiant in the enthusiasm of its historic initiative', in contrast to the hypocrisy and brutal savagery of the bourgeois world, personified by the executioners of the Communards, those 'bloodhounds of "order"' who had lost all sense of humanity.'

Long live the Communards, who dared to 'storm heaven'!

Long live the international working class!

No illusions in Bosnia 'accords'

THE Croatian-Bosnian ceasefire and the talks on a federation between their governments' representatives is the result of the determined resistance of the Bosnian people to ethnic partition, and the victories won by the Bosnia-Herzegovina army against Croatian forces.

Despite the fact that all the great powers remain determined to crush Bosnia, they are by no means united on how this is to be done.

The Vance-Owen-Stoltenberg plans for partition would have required 50,000 troops to police, and have been severely modified by the US — which is sponsoring the current ceasefire and talks — itself unwilling to commit any forces to the region.

The US is anxious to build up a counter-balance to Serbia, now openly backed by Russia under the UN flag. Meanwhile Germany works through its traditional ally, Croatia, to secure its own interests in the former Yugoslavia.

Promises of financial assistance by the US have drawn together the Croatian and Bosnian presidents, Franjo Tudjman and Alija Izetbegovic, for the moment at any rate.

Anxious

Many Bosnians have little confidence in the ceasefire but see it as giving a temporary breathing space, allowing them to concentrate their forces against the Serbian aggressors. They are particularly anxious that the 'ordinary people' of Serbia are now drawn in.

A year ago Tudjman agreed on an alliance with Serbia's President Slobodan Milosevic

By DOT GIBSON in Croatia and KEITH SCOTCHER in London

against Bosnia. But Croatian forces suffered defeat after defeat by the newly-formed and organised Bosnian army, which fights with justice on its side.

These defeats — plus growing working-class resistance to anti-union laws, privatisation and the war in Croatia — have persuaded Tudjman to switch alliances, for the time being at any rate.

In Bosnia, the Izetbegovic government, virtually a prisoner of the UN in Sarajevo, looks to US imperialism for help, instead of the international working class. Some elements in the government present the war as being fought against the 'old eastern Europe' for a 'new eastern Europe' that would be part of the 'new world order'.

These are dangerous illusions. The new world order is seen at its starkest in the former Yugoslavia, as the imperialist powers, together with Serbia's protector, Russia, fight for the complete break-up of the former state and its opening up to imperialist plunder.

Tuzla attacks rise

THE price for the Croatian-Bosnian ceasefire may be the abandonment of the working-class-dominated northern region of Tuzla to the Serbian aggressor.

Tuzla has come under increased bombardment since the UN's Sarajevo deal freed Serbian forces to concentrate their attack in the north.

It is possible that a Serbian push to the south will be made to try and cut off the only remaining roads along which supplies reach Tuzla.

UN commander General Rose now sits down with the Bosnian Serb leader, the fascist Radovan Karadzic, to discuss terms for opening Tuzla airport, which was closed in May 1992 after Serbian artillery damaged its two runways.

It is reported that Serbia has agreed that two air-corridors be

opened, one from Zagreb and one from Split. Following talks in Moscow, Russia has agreed to make sure that no arms reach Tuzla, although it is still not clear whether the Bosnian government has accepted this proposal.

It is all the more urgent that the working class be rallied to the defence of the Tuzla region. There is a widespread understanding in Tuzla that the intervention by the UN and NATO has given Serbia a free hand to commence operations against the city.

The imperialists have changed tack, but their conspiracy continues against Bosnia and working-class resistance to imperialist plans to carve up the country for exploitation.

Defence of the Tuzla region is now the key question for workers internationally.



Russian UN soldiers in Bosnia:

Russia: a matter of life and death

BY CHARLIE POTTINS

INSTEAD of catching up with wealthier welfare-capitalist societies, as they might have been led to expect, Russians undergoing Yeltsin's attempt to bring back capitalism are falling behind poor 'Third World' countries in vital respects.

The average Russian adult male now has a life expectancy of only 60 — that's shorter than that of men in Indonesia, the Philippines, or parts of Africa. Infant mortality rates have been rising for some years.

With many Russian couples too worried about the future to

have children — the average per woman has dropped from 2.17 five years ago to 1.4 today — the result is that deaths exceeded births last year by 800,000. Russia is the first industrial country to have such a sharp drop in population without war.

Dramatic

'It's just an incredibly clear picture of a society in crisis,' says Oxford university population expert David Coleman. 'A decline in life expectancy this dramatic has never happened in the post-war world.'

It shows the malaise of society, the lack of public health

awareness and the fatigue associated with people who have had to fight a pitched battle their whole lives just to survive.'

Last year the death rate soared to 14.6 for every 1,000 people, an increase of 20 per cent over 1992. The birth rate last year was only 9.2 per 1,000, a 15 per cent fall.

Among factors lowering average male life expectancy are widespread alcohol abuse, and environmental pollution. The suicide rate has also risen in the last two years, accounting for almost one-third of unnatural deaths. Infant mortality rates are kept high by the number of abortions, which leave many women unable to bear children;

shortages in antibiotics; and lack of basic supplies in Russia's hospitals.

The old Stalinist regime statistics were deliberately doctored to conceal the harsh realities of life and death in the Soviet Union and present a rosy picture.

Bad

But experts say this does not explain the fall in male life expectancy — 'bad even by the standards of the Third World' according to Yevgeny I. Mikhailov of the State Committee on Statistics, who says on poor agrarian countries have such death rates.

Russian miners strike under closures threat

BY SIMON PIRANI

HUNDREDS of thousands of Russian miners took strike action on Tuesday 1 March, demanding the payment of wages owed and assurances about the future of the industry.

Militant

The strike was solid in the Pechora coalfield in northern Siberia, which includes the militant Vorkuta mines, and Sakhalin Island in the Far East. It was supported both by the Independent Trade Union of the Coal Industry (the former 'official' union with a new name) and the Independent Miners Union.

Most of the Kuzbass coalfield in western Siberia did not join the strike. Individual workplace collectives supported it, but the Kuzbass co-ordinating council

of workers' collectives condemned the action as 'premature'.

Fear of pit closures hangs over all the mining areas, and the strikers demanded payment of a 500 billion rouble (£250 million) debt to the coal industry, and a 12,000 billion rouble investment plan.

The miners' strike was just one of a series of workers' actions over the last two weeks.

The ITAR-TASS news agency reported that oil and gas workers, meeting in Nizhnevartovsk, threatened to strike over non-payment of wages; timber workers demonstrated at government offices in Moscow; workers at a nuclear submarine plant threatened a stoppage over non-payment of wages; and non-emergency ambulance staff in Moscow were on strike.

In Evenk, Siberia, ten women

workers at oil- and gas-producing enterprises began a hunger strike on 1 March, protesting that they have not been paid wages since last June. They have been reduced to feeding their children on mixed animal fodder, they told journalists.

Ukraine and Russia have crisis talks last week after Russia cut gas supplies to Ukraine by 70 per cent. Ukraine owes 15,000 billion rouble gas bill

Tea and sympathy with 'Tricky Dicky'

DISGRACED former US President Richard Nixon took tea with sacked Russian vice-president Alexander Rutskoi in Moscow last week, wishing him and his 'boys' good luck. Nixon also planned to meet President Yeltsin and fascist leader Vladimir Zhirinovskiy.

Rutskoi was jailed after last

October's attempt to topple Yeltsin, but has been freed in an attempt to accommodate 'hard-line' Stalinists and nationalists.

'Tricky Dicky' Nixon's career led from anti-communist witch-hunting in the 1950s, through trying to bomb Vietnam into the Stone Age, and ended when the Watergate scandal

nearly landed him in jail. He said his Moscow visit had been cleared with President Clinton.

Fascist leader Zhirinovskiy who has called for Russia to Germany to carve up Poland and Serbia and Croatia to divide Bosnia between them, was thrown out of the ex-Yugoslav republic of Slovenia last week.

German workers in pay walk-out

GERMAN workers last week walked out in a new round of strikes in their efforts to force a realistic pay offer from the employers.

The largest public service union, öTV, said that the strikes would target the northern state of Lower Saxony, where the engineering employers and the IG Metall union

have recently agreed a pay deal that avoided strike action.

Paltry

Following the engineering pay deal — which awarded workers a paltry 2 per cent pay deal for the last seven months of 1994 — employers in the public sector have renewed

their call for a wage freeze.

Two factories struck in Poland as a protest movement began against the government's budget proposals. Refusing to organise a united front, the trade union Solidarnosc called for workers to stop work for a few hours at a time on different days and in different places.

Maciej Jankowski, leader of the union's Warsaw branch said: 'Our purpose is not spectacular victory, but start talks with the government — talks that really solve the problems and don't look for immediate solutions.' The budget has been imposed on the government by the International Monetary Fund.

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