

UNISON provides a welcome step forward

UNISON, the public sector union, is giving £5,000 towards the Scottish TUC's convoy of aid to the 60,000 miners and their families in the Tuzla region of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Mike Kirby, STUC general council member, said that the union's executive supported Workers Aid for Bosnia's call for the unions to send



humanitarian aid, but did not support the politics of the campaign. He explained that, on the basis of

the resolution at the STUC conference and the report of the two-man delegation to Tuzla, the national union had agreed £4,500 and the Scottish region £500 to fill three trucks.

Bob Myers, secretary of Workers Aid for Bosnia's steering committee in Britain, said: 'After over two years

of this war and all our lobbying of the trades unions, this is a very welcome step forward.

'We will do everything we can to build support for the STUC's convoy, and we will continue our political campaign — Against ethnic partition of Bosnia! United Nations out! Lift the arms embargo!'

On other pages:

Dirty attack on Bosnia, p2
BC threat to evict pit camp, p3
Peasant leaders' assassination, p4&5
S. Africa, p7&8

1,000 Sheffield lecturers mount strong picket STRIKE AGAINST SLAVE CONTRACT

NEARLY 1,000 college lecturers in Sheffield are striking against a government-inspired attempt to impose a 'slaves' charter' that would destroy their working conditions.

The action began on 17 May against the advertising of a non-union-negotiated contract — a slaves' charter — and strong picketing on all six of Sheffield College's sites meant only a handful of scabs were able to go in.

The strike has implications for all workers. The central issue is the right of a trade union to represent its mem-

bers and set up collective-bargaining procedures on working practices.

Resistance is solid. On one Sheffield College site, where 170 work, only three scabs turned up to teach. Many lecturers have joined the university and college lecturers' union NATFHE from other unions as a result of the stand.

BY TOM OWEN

Impose

The current five-day action — Tuesday and Wednesday of last week and this coming Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday — is in opposition to the management's determination to impose its non-union contract by 17 June.

Already the High Court has prevented the union from taking strike action on the issue in a decision that has far-reaching consequences for the whole trade union movement.

The national College Employers' Forum (CEF), the management body, is a quango set up after the government's poll-tax climbdown. The Tories have used the CEF as a mechanism to take further and adult education out of the control of local authorities.

The aim of the CEF, led by Roger Ward, has been to

smash NATFHE, remove the national 'Silver Book' agreement on conditions of service and to introduce personal contracts on the Times International/Wapping model.

The dispute has been made more difficult for union members because the industrial relations sub-committee of NATFHE has instructed regional officials and district lay-officials to go for local college deals.

The Sheffield College dispute is crucial because it is the largest institution in the country and because the local NATFHE branch has a record of militancy which has gained it some of the best local conditions of service in Britain.

motely academic, wish to implement the full-blooded CEF model contract.

This would allow management to instruct lecturers to teach lessons up to 37 hours per week, 47 weeks a year. It would also give management the right to claim staff as their 'intellectual property'.

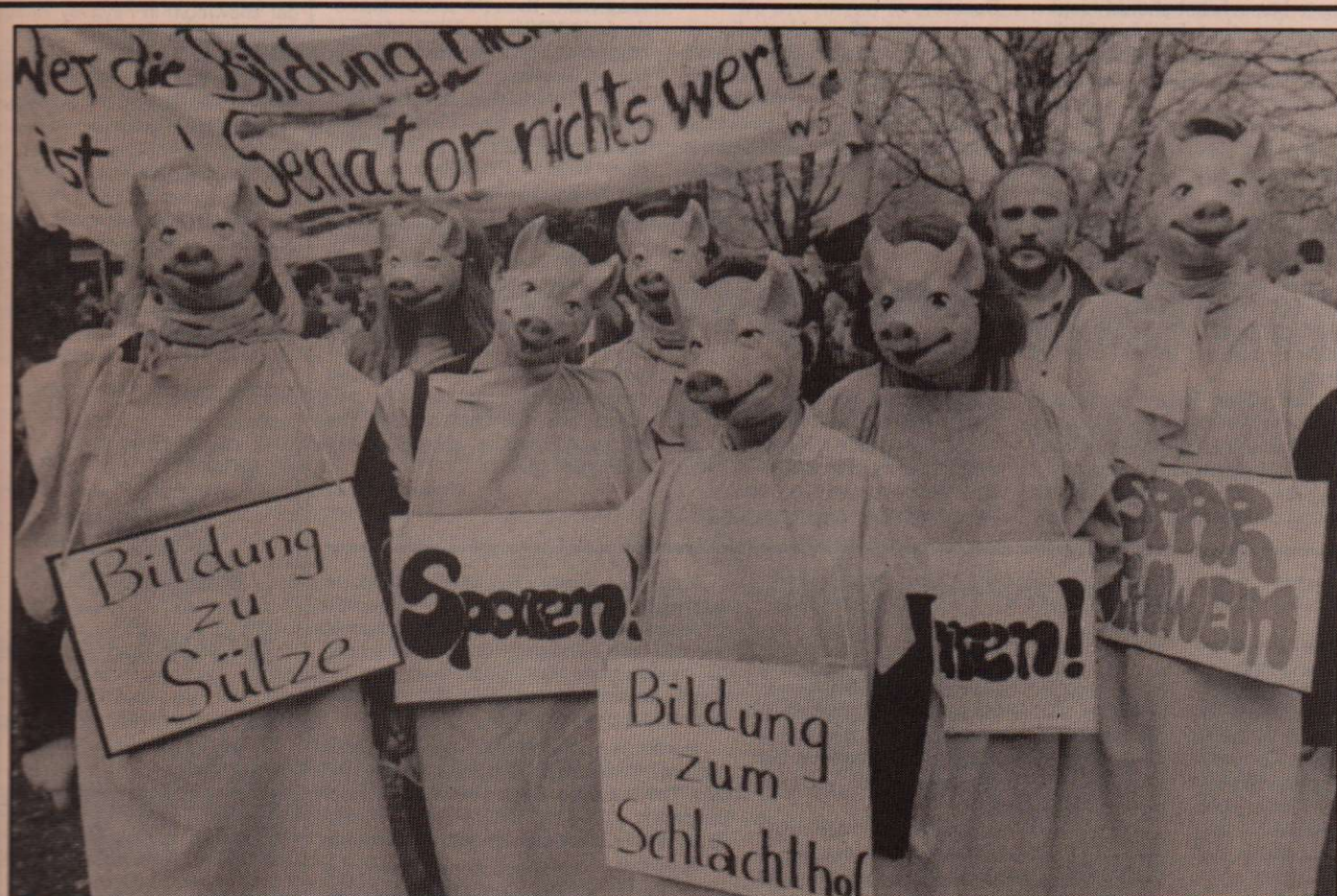
This means that, under the model 'slave' contract, copyright for anything written that promotes a lecturer's career belongs to the college. The use of a lecturer's own teaching material at another college would also be breach of copyright.

Sheffield NATFHE members know that this is nothing less than a union-busting exercise and have voted overwhelmingly both in postal ballots and at branch meetings to reject the management's new contracts.

There cannot be any doubt that the attack in Sheffield on fundamental trade union rights has been orchestrated by the Tory government.

Learning

Sheffield College management, made up largely of former accountants and personnel managers in industry with no experience of managing learning processes, never mind teaching or anything re-



Piggy savers... German school students, teachers and parents demonstrated in Hamburg earlier this month against the slaughter of education through spending cuts

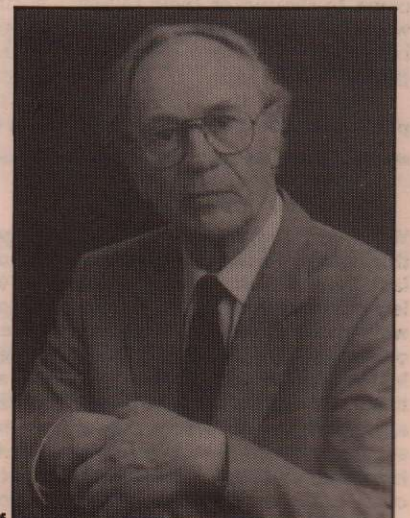
Workers International to Rebuild the Fourth International

Memorial Meeting
Tom Kemp
1921-1993

Conway Hall
Red Lion Square
London WC1

Friday 3 June
7.30pm

We invite all Tom Kemp's comrades, family and colleagues to join in commemorating the life of an outstanding Marxist, a dedicated teacher and a fearless fighter for the working class and the rebuilding of the Fourth International.



AS WE have reported in previous issues of *Workers Press*, an unprincipled attack on *Workers Aid for Bosnia* has been launched by the some of the remnants of Stalinism in the trade union movement. These people, organised mainly around the 'Morning Star', have spread the groundless charge that *Workers Aid* has been carrying arms to Bosnia. (That they should find the very idea abhorrent says much about the politics of such people.)

Others, while not repeating this particular line, are now joining in the attack on *Workers Aid*. Thus the paper 'Socialist Outlook' in its last issue carried an article condemning the Workers Revolutionary Party for its 'grotesque opportunism' in connection with its work in *Workers Aid*. (Bill Peters, 'WRP in new Bosnia fiasco', 'Socialist Outlook', 14 May.) 'Socialist Outlook' is the journal of the British supporters of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International (USec).

What are the attacks on the WRP?

1. That of the last convoy of 33 lorries organised by *Workers Aid for Bosnia* in a convoy to Tuzla, 28 'refused' to deliver their aid to the miners' union or any other union, with only five actually delivering aid to the miners' union in Tuzla. According to Peters the rest were sent to other destinations, including 'the private market'.

2. That this latest episode is only the continuation of what Peters characterises as the 'gross opportunism' in the activities of *Workers Aid*. Such opportunism, he says, was reflected in the fact that we included in our convoys people who were hostile to the politics of the campaign.

3. That last October we 'hijacked' the campaign by insisting that it be centred on the 'impossible' fight to open the northern route to Tuzla. Peters claims that the call for the northern route was at 'best cranky' and at worst 'a call for UN intervention'.

* * * * *

Let us look at these claims in turn.

1. We have never denied that a majority of the lorries on the last convoy did not deliver their aid to the miners' union in Tuzla. Some lorries on the convoy had never aimed to take their aid to the Tuzla miners.

Sixteen of the trucks on this convoy were organised by the miners' union of Slovenia. Contrary to the slander implied in Peters's article, they delivered their aid not to the 'private market' but to individual workers' families in the Tuzla region. They were

Workers Press

A dirty attack on Bosnia

criticised for this by representatives of the Tuzla miners, and in our opinion this was a correct criticism. For only the people on the ground could have a real knowledge of the local situation: about who had the greatest need for aid, and so on.

Instead of getting some cheap pleasure from this incident, Peters would have better spent his time by asking: what did this particular problem reveal about the state of the working class?

* * * * *

It was in its own way a measure of the loss of international consciousness in the working-class movement, and in particular the divisions between and within the working class of eastern and western Europe as a result of the misrule of the Stalinist bureaucracy throughout eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.

We discussed these problems with the miners and other workers of Tuzla and we parted on the best of terms. It is obvious that they, and no doubt many workers throughout eastern Europe, have strong illusions in the state of the working-class movement in the capitalist countries.

Indeed many did not realise that workers were subjected to harsh anti-union laws, that they faced heavy unemployment, that unions such as the National Union of Mineworkers in Britain had lost many of its members as a result of the government-organised destruction of the coal industry.

They were disappointed that more aid did not reach them because they thought that *Workers Aid* represented the whole of the British working-class movement. It was necessary to explain to them the role that the majority of the leaders of the working class had actually played in relation to Bosnia.

The task is to rebuild this consciousness and this is one of the main purposes of *Workers Aid*, as we made clear from the start when we proposed last June that such a body be set up. Unlike others, we never saw it just as an organiser of humanitarian aid convoys.

2. Of course 'non-political' elements —

mainly young unemployed people — were attracted by the *Workers Aid* initiative. From the start leading members of USec wanted to keep such people out.

They wanted a campaign made up of 'political'. In so doing they merely express the narrow-mindedness of the labour aristocracy and its contempt for the rest of the working class, especially for young workers and the unemployed who have been shamefully abandoned by the trade union and labour bureaucracy.

Once having joined *Workers Aid* — because it had 'struck gold' as USec leader Alan Thorne put it — they wanted to subordinate it to the 'official' movement, that is to the trade union and labour bureaucracy.

We can add for Peters's benefit that many of the so-called 'non-political' members on the convoys *Workers Aid* has organised have begun to take a real interest in politics.

They have become an integral part of a growing group of people who have formed a powerful team determined to continue and broaden the fight for the right of Bosnian self-determination and against fascist barbarism.

* * * * *

This is why Peters can call 'silly' our contention that a convoy of 1,000 lorries could and should be organised from Britain. In fact, this was and is entirely possible.

What stands in the way is not any lack of feeling amongst working people for the struggle of the Bosnian people against fascist ethnic cleansing but the refusal of the trade union and labour bureaucracy to take up the defence of Bosnia.

Had the TUC lifted a single finger and called upon workers to take their stand on the side of the Bosnian people in their fight against fascism, material aid as well as moral and political support for Bosnia would have been unlimited.

Most of the official leaders (apart from those who are openly pro-Serbian) in the guise of 'even handedness' and the call for a 'negotiated peace' in effect take the side of the Serbian fascist regime against Bosnia. It is this labour bureaucracy that has

sabotaged a united working-class campaign in defence of Bosnia.

Peters directs none of his fire in this direction: his spleen is reserved exclusively for *Workers Aid* and the WRP, both of which in Britain have led the fight for the working class to take up its international responsibilities towards its brothers and sisters in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

3. From the moment that USec joined *Workers Aid* we had disagreements with them, one example being the opening of the northern route. These differences had nothing essentially to do with logistical matters (naturally such things as whether the route was passable had to be taken into account).

Our principal difference with them came from our characterisation of the United Nations and its role. For it is the United Nations that has prevented, quite deliberately, the opening of the northern route, the shortest, safest and most accessible route into Bosnia.

* * * * *

The people of Bosnia want this route opened because they don't want to be merely the recipients of aid. They want to open up permanent trade and other relations with the rest of Europe and the world as part of the need to build their economy.

At best USec wanted only a propaganda campaign against the UN, whereas we set out to organise a fight that would in practice expose its role, and that fight still centres on the demand for the opening of the northern route.

Some USec members, such as Catherine Samaray of their French section (the LCR), were opposed even to any condemnation of the role of the UN. That is why the LCR has in effect refused to carry out any fight on behalf of Bosnia in the French labour movement.

Our position remains the same: Yes, the last convoy did take the route to Bosnia via Split in the south. But we explained that this decision was taken not only because of the change in the military situation in the former Yugoslavia, but because we felt it urgent to reach the workers of Tuzla — almost certainly to be among the next targets of the Chetniks — to discuss with them how the fight against fascism could be developed and how they saw the campaign for the opening of the northern route.

■ Further aspects of USec's attack on *Workers Aid* will be taken up next week.

Letters

Why does 'Socialist Worker' shirk Bosnia?

AS READERS of *Workers Press* are well aware, a concentration of this paper's coverage for the past year has been on the struggle to defend Bosnians against the 'ethnic cleansing' policy of the extreme-right in the old Yugoslavia.

The *Workers Aid for Bosnia* campaign was born of a conviction that it was vital for the European working class to come to the aid of their fellow workers, and that internationalist links had to be forged throughout Europe.

This campaign has taken place at a time when the cesspit

of fascism has resurfaced, be it Derek Beackon winning a council election in the Isle of Dogs, Turks having their homes razed to the ground in Germany, the first fascists since World War II taking part in government in Italy, or Zhirinovskiy in Russia making threatening statements about ethnic minorities all over the world.

Workers Press has been calling for the widest debate in the working class on all these issues. Bearing this in mind, can anybody tell me why the Socialist Workers Party, for the year that I have been reading their paper, has not once mentioned the *Workers Aid for Bosnia* campaign?

One of the worst crimes of a socialist is to prevent debate, especially over such a burning issue as the crisis in Bosnia, where we are witnessing the most bloody conflict on the European continent since World

War II.

The issue I am raising is not whether *Workers Aid for Bosnia* is right or wrong in its campaign, but why a paper purporting to be socialist should treat a campaign that has inspired a new generation of militants all over Europe as though it does not exist.

In the 14 May issue of 'Socialist Worker' there are only two mentions of Bosnia. They both appear in the letters page and are replies to criticism of their paper's policy on Bosnia. One letter is headed 'Facts on Bosnia', a strange heading for a letter. I would associate such a heading with editorial policy rather than a letter from a reader.

The other letter is headed 'Don't make it worse'. From my comfy seat in front of the television over the last few months, I find it hard to envisage that the horror of Bosnia could be worse.

Both letters are apologies for the 'Socialist Worker' stance or rather lack of one. Even the letters page in their paper has yet to mention *Workers Aid for Bosnia*.

I repeat, the widest discussion is required on the Bosnian issue, among all socialists in the working class. I am writing another letter, to 'Socialist Worker', it will be interesting to see whether it will be published.

Trevor Souter
Gateshead

Unrepentant 'nit-picker'

I MAKE no apology for what Attila Hoare calls my 'nit-picking' ('Letters', 14 May). Nits, if neglected, grow into lice, and lice carry dangerous diseases. I agree with Marx's answer to a

reproach similar to Hoare's: 'To leave error uncorrected is to encourage intellectual immorality.'

What US President Wilson may have thought about Macedonia in 1919 is irrelevant to that region's situation since 1922. Isaiah Bowman, who was Wilson's adviser on geographical questions at the Paris Peace Conference, wrote in his 'The New World: Problems in Political Geography', published in 1928:

'... Greek Macedonia passed out of the realm of dispute with its almost complete Hellenisation through the settlement of Greek refugees from Asia Minor... Macedonia is covered with new towns, new farms, and farmhouses clustered in villages, and the character of the population is completely changed' (p.401).

Brian Pearce
Barnet

WE WELCOME LETTERS

Another letter
on page 7

SEND THEM TO: WORKERS PRESS,
PO BOX 735, LONDON SW8 1YB
— OR PHONE 071-582 8882

WORKERS PRESS £3,000 MONTHLY FUND

In so far: £2,850.55

WOW! We might make the £3,000 target this month. It would be the first time since last June. But since January alone we've lagged behind by £4,901.55. One reason we're near this month's target is the generous donations: one of £1,000 as reported last week, and two of £500. We thank all those who can give these sums. We also are grateful to our many supporters who are less cash endowed who do their bit to help. But, as usual, I say we must branch out. This will build the movement and gather more resources to do it.

It's my weekly task to encourage people to find ways of increasing the income of *Workers Press*. Progress there has been, but sometimes at 'a snail's pace'.

develop and reconstruct the working-class movement because of lack of resources. This is mainly of people, but people can be made more 'available' if there is money to release them, at least in part, from the ordinary world of work, so they can become professional, or at least semi-professional, revolutionaries. This will have knock-on effects in organising the working-class movement and more resources will then become available.

Consequently I greet Peter Gibson's decision to take responsibility for increasing the paper's sales and income.

'The political developments now taking place in Britain, and in the working class

more people,' says Peter.

'You and I know *Workers Press* is the most outstanding weekly workers' paper in Britain and is the international voice of the *Workers International*. We must not keep this to ourselves! More people must see *Workers Press* each week. So let's make that happen.'

Those who value *Workers Press* must give all backing to Peter in his task. He is asking us to go through all our contacts and sell and deliver *Workers Press* to them. Failing that, please encourage all contacts to take out standing orders/direct debits for £5 or more a month (extra money going to the monthly fund) so the paper can be posted to them. Details for this will

Peter also wants a list of organisations that might take *Workers Press* or advertise for money so he can contact them. Name, address and contact phone or fax would be useful here. We must look out for events coming up and ask if the organisation would pay for an ad.

Send any information you have to Peter Gibson, Circulation, *Workers Press*, PO Box 735, London SW8 1YB. Our normal telephone (071-582 8882) or fax (071-582 8834) is a quicker way of getting in touch.

Hopefully, I will have soon to report a more rapid rise in circulation and that workers' organisations are showing support by paying to advertise their events and materials in our pages.

Mike Cooke

Send money payable to 'Workers

Coming soon

Construction Safety Campaign
Diary

TUESDAY 14 JUNE St Pancras coroner's court, Camley Street, London NW1 (tel. 071-387 4884) 9.30am. Inquest into death of John McLaughlin (45), killed when roof collapsed in January. Christopher Nelson (48) was severely injured. They were working on extension car showroom in Finchley Road.

WEDNESDAY 15 JUNE St Pancras coroner's court, Camley Street, London NW1 (tel. 071-387 4884), 9.30am. Inquest into death of Tony Fishenden (27), killed in August 1992 while carrying a scaffold pole near a railway line; a passing train caused electric current to arc to the pole. Family's solicitor requested that a director for safety be put in the do but coroner refused. Judicial review has returned case to coroner. D turned down manslaughter investigation. Inquest may be interrupted by challenges from family solicitor.



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BC threatens pit camp eviction

LANCASHIRE Women Against Pit Closures have staged a 16-month-long physical and political struggle to prevent the closure of Parkside colliery as part of the broader fight to save Britain's coal industry.

Our fight has been based at Parkside pit camp on what British Coal says is its land. We have been successful so far in physically preventing British Coal from capping and thus finally closing the pit.

On Friday 28 April we received a letter from a Mr Nixon — the umpteenth manager of the colliery since all the men there were sacked in June last year.

The letter said that British Coal was revoking its 'permission' for us to occupy its land. It warned that we should move by 12 midnight the following Monday or legal proceedings would be started to have us removed.

We decided not to comply with the letter's 'request'. We maintain, and always have done, that the land, like this pit, belongs to us and everyone else and not to the government or British Coal.

On Tuesday 3 May, we were served with notice that British Coal intended to apply for an eviction order against us. The application was to be heard on 6

BY SHELLY BLAKEMORE
WOMEN AGAINST PIT CLOSURES

May. The letter was dated 27 April, the day before the original letter from Nixon. The application was made against: persons unknown; Women Against Pit Closures; and Sylvia Pye.

The hearing was held in Warrington registry in a closed court before a judge in chambers. Our application for an open and public hearing was refused.

Claimed

Solicitors acting for Sylvia attempted to remove her name and that of WAPC from the order. British Coal claimed that Sylvia was the only member of WAPC they knew. While the judge accepted this argument, it is difficult to believe.

The judge also accepted British Coal's claim that we had obstructed care and maintenance of the colliery. But we are



Rally to save Parkside colliery last year: the fight goes on

trying to keep the pit open and we have no interest in stopping care and maintenance. British Coal has sacked all the men who could do care and maintenance in an attempt to undermine our support.

British Coal obtained its eviction order and was given permission to sue for costs against Sylvia.

The attempt at victimisation will not undermine the solidarity of the camp. As well as our continued occupation, we have launched a fund for legal expenses. The intended isolation of WAPC and Sylvia will not work.

Since British Coal obtained its order we have been visited by Andrew Wilson, Merseyside under-sheriff. He suggested we

vacated the site quickly. We said 'no' — politely. We have also had several visits from local police saying the same thing. They have been given the same answer.

We will do whatever it takes to prevent capping of the pit. We are not about to pack up and leave. We will continue to resist and if that means facing arrest or worse then so be it.

If in the near future the state is successful in removing the camp, this will not mean that we will stop defending this pit.

The fight goes on.
■ Please send financial support/messages to WAPC, Parkside Pit Camp, Winnack Road, Newton-le-Willows, Merseyside. Tel. 0925 291799.

Opposition growing to TUC misuse of money

WITH the publication of the March unemployment figures on 18 May, the TUC has launched a 'Full Employment Campaign'. As part of the campaign there is to be a conference at Congress House on 5 July.

Now you might think that the TUC is taking up a struggle together with and on behalf of the working class.

So it may come as a surprise, unless you've read Workers Press (12 March), to learn that the speakers at the campaign conference will be: David Hunt MP, Conservative minister for [un]employment; Howard Davies, director-general of the employers' union, the CBI; and John Prescott, shadow minister for employment.

Because of growing opposition to this gross misuse of trades unionists' money, the Congress House heavyweights called down to London those organising the TUC centres for the unemployed, who have agreed to attend the conference.

Product

The whole campaign is the product of the 'Full Employment Task Force', a brainchild of Des Wilson who until recently was chairman of the Liberal Democrats and now works part-time for the TUC — for £50,000 per year — organising campaigns! (See 'Inside Left', page 5.)

Outrage at these activities

has produced a string of resolutions from trades councils in the North East, North West and London, all condemning the invitation to the CBI and the government to speak to trade union delegates about unemployment.

Calls for pickets and demonstrations outside and inside Congress House that day are flying thick and fast. There is already going to be some vocal opposition at the 5 July panto.

We are forced to ask: Is the organisation of such a conference very different from the dinner presided over by John Smith the evening before he died? Then, 450 people paid £500 each to sit with him at the Park Lane Hotel and eat asparagus mousse, herbed lamb and lemon

biscuit dessert. Of those present 180 were representatives of major industrial and financial enterprises in Britain.

Smith toured the tables, telling everyone 'There will be more of these dinners' (alas not with him, however!), and that 'this was the best turnout of business people at any function he had attended'.

These activities by the TUC and the Labour Party underline the need for those who believe that working women and men must take control of their own destiny and establish a socialist organisation of society to push ahead with the discussion already started in Workers Press for the building of a new party.

Bosnians on the march

IT'S a pity that Geoff Thurley (Workers Press letters, 14 May) could not make it to the May Day march and rally in London. Had he been there, he would know that we certainly did not abandon our banner.

The Workers International banner was carried proudly and prominently by our comrades, and those who marched with us carried our slogans.

Of the handful of trade union banners present, several were brought by WRP comrades, notwithstanding that the march organisers had only seen fit to advertise in Stalinist papers like the 'New Worker'.

The march which assembled at Kennington was Stalinist-dominated, and if the Bosnians suspected those leading it were hostile to them, they suspected right.

Denied the chance to speak from the platform on this in-

CHARLIE POTTINS comments on a letter by Geoff Thurley last week

ternational day, Workers Aid for Bosnia held an impromptu meeting in the park with the Bosnians who had come.

If Geoff had been there, he might understand the problem of explaining complex political issues — like marching with forces you disagree with — to a crowd of people with varied political outlooks, many of whom don't understand your language, let alone know who you are politically.

Better still, Geoff should try to put himself in the Bosnians' shoes. Imagine you've been forced out of your country by a regime which calls itself 'socialist', and heard horrifying reports — or nothing — from the loved ones

you left behind. You find yourself in a country whose government denies the right of your people to defend themselves, and whose media denies your national existence. (Like the BBC radio presenter the other morning repeatedly referring to 'the Muslims' and not calling them 'Bosnians' once.)

Mightn't you feel just a little teeny-bit nationalist, a bit inclined to wave your Bosnian flag just to let people know you were there?

Lenin insisted on the need to distinguish between the nationalism of an oppressed people and that of the oppressors. When a people is threatened with annihilation, to which the British government is an

accomplice, our duty to make that distinction is clear.

The time to start worrying would be if we were marching behind the Union Jack (which the Communist Party used to wave on peace marches!).

Of course, we don't ourselves adopt any kind of nationalism.

Just as we've marched before with people carrying Palestinian or Irish flags, we marched with Bosnians, a few of whom carried their national flag. And we worked to gain their confidence, while bringing them and their struggle into a labour-movement rally — where we held our own meeting, and had our own Workers International stall.

There's no need to worry about us losing our identity Geoff. But you could try identifying yourself with our struggle.

Smith's death shows up sham

BY PETER JEFFRIES

LABOUR leaders eagerly welcomed the week-long political truce caused by the sudden death last week of Labour leader John Smith.

In fact, the response of most politicians to Smith's death suddenly knocked away the confrontational facade that in 'normal' times conceals the cosy class-collaborationist relations between the two main parties.

Suddenly, with their sham battles put on the back-burner for a short while as a 'mark of respect', and with a 'spirit of reconciliation' stalking the land, we were seeing and hearing the true relationship of the Labour leaders with the Tory leaders and the ruling class.

The Tories hastily began rewriting their European election manifesto to delete the many nasty references to John Smith.

Thus in the Conservative campaign guide, published on 2 May, we find 'Mr Smith has failed to live up to his promise . . . [an] ineffectual and visionless leader'.

By 12 May, speaking in the Commons, Prime Minister John Major said of Smith's death: 'We have lost a formidable Member of very rare ability'. After a minute's silence the Tories suspended their Scottish conference in Inverness for the rest of the day.

In glowing terms, John Major paid tribute to the dead man, who he said had been 'an opponent, not an enemy', and someone with whom he often shared a late-night tot of whisky after their daily battles were done.

Major used Smith's death to make an open plea for his enemies in his own party to adopt a

less abrasive and hostile tone towards him.

He begged his backbenchers to end the 'artificial frenzy of the past 18 months', and added: 'If politicians fight — in party and across party — like ferrets in a sack on every issue, is it surprising that the public turns away?'

Not without reason, Simon Jenkins asked in 'The Times' (14 May): 'The glimpse we were given . . . made me wonder which is the real politics. Is it the theatrical exchanges across the dispatch box, or is it that late-night whisky in Mr Major's room? . . . I am tempted to conclude that a game is being played.'

Conclusions

Workers will not be slow to draw conclusions from this — as well as from the letter signed by R.A. Bischof, chairman of the appropriately named Boss Group, with which 'The Times' led its letters page last Saturday.

Under the headline 'Lost leader whom the nation mourns', this spokesman of the capitalist class declared that 'there has been a growing number of industrialists, like myself, who knew John Smith personally and who began to believe that the new Labour Party might also do better on the economy and the industrial revitalisation of Britain's manufacturing industry.'

'If the Labour Party should give up this middle ground, not only would they betray John Smith; they would not deserve to be in government ever again.'

There is not the remotest danger of the new leader of the Labour Party, whoever she or he may be, doing any such thing.

Vietnam vet to head NHS trust

ROBERT G. CRAWFORD, a retired colonel of the US army, who served in Vietnam and was senior nuclear weapons adviser to NATO, and who has no experience in health matters and has said that he was not interested in hospital jobs, is now chief executive (at £55,000 per annum) of Scarborough and North East Yorkshire Health Trust.

Colonel Crawford was appointed by the chairman of the trust, a Tom Pindar, the owner of a local print company

and a well-known Conservative Party supporter. Crawford says his experience at NATO gives him the right background to manage a health service rather than nuclear weapons.

Before the last general election the trust promised an expansion of health care. Since then 77 jobs have been lost, the new coronary unit and new psychiatric unit have been postponed, and a rehabilitation centre for fracture victims has been closed.

Betty Hamilton

WORKERS PRESS deeply regrets to announce the recent death of Betty Hamilton at the age of 90.

A lifelong socialist, she became a follower of Leon Trotsky and of the International Left Opposition within the Communist International in the late 1920s; she supported the historic decision to launch the Fourth International in 1938.

Born in French-speaking Switzerland in 1904, Betty came to Britain in the early 1930s and was later an active member of the Workers International League, one of the forerunners of the Revolutionary Communist Party launched in 1944.

In 1959 she helped to found the Socialist Labour League, the predecessor of the Workers Revolutionary Party.

Workers Press hopes to publish a full appreciation of her life and work in the near future.

WORKERS PRESS IS THE PAPER OF THE WORKERS REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

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

Dead and buried?

THERE were spectres at the feast when the Queen and President Mitterrand opened the Channel tunnel. Ten workers killed during its construction were remembered by relatives, friends and supporters of the Construction Safety Campaign. They weren't mentioned by the capitalist media. Nor by 'Union News' (April), paper of the Amalgamated Engineering and Electrical Union (AEEU), whose front page featured opera-singer Luciano Pavarotti — the first 'Le Shuttle' train was named after him — above a lead story entitled 'Channel Tunnel tribute to AEEU'.

This wasn't from workers satisfied with their union's fight on safety, but from Eurotunnel chief Sir Clastair Morton, who says: 'It has been a magnificent enterprise for everyone involved.' It hasn't been for the eight workers killed on the British side, and the two — at least — on the French, nor their families, nor the many workers injured.

Time was when engineering and electrical workers, whatever their union leadership, had union journals which were a good read, informative and reflecting, to an extent, a working-class point of view, countering the employers' media. 'Union News' is more like the sort of crap some companies push out, and probably gets binned just as quickly.

'Dynamic future for Rover'; Hoover sweeps up Camberslang rubbish' (praising the sell-out of pay and conditions to undercut workers overseas); 'Eve celebrates with Sanyo' — a senior shop steward 'represented the company and the AEEU' at a conference in Spain; and 'Vauxhall's chart tops', advertising the new Cavalier and Astra. The company sponsored the union's stand at last year's TUC and Labour Party conferences.

'General Motors and the AEEU are working to develop a partnership', says AEEU executive councillor Roger Butler. 'The company is the most profitable and successful UK motor manufacturer and this can only continue if the partnership is developed based upon full consultation and agreement and also mutual respect,' he adds.

Is the old engineering union's socialist vision of ending the wage system dead and buried, like the construction workers sacrificed to a magnificent enterprise?

Trade unionism is still not all partnership and roses, however. As AEEU 'Union News' briefly reports, members at Caterpillar in Leicester are threatened with loss of collective-bargaining rights, and the government is tearing up its agreement with unions at the Ministry of Defence.

AEEU executive councillor Jackie Crystal says: 'This is yet another example of how the government treats trade unions and our members with dismissive contempt.' I wonder why.

Sez Des II

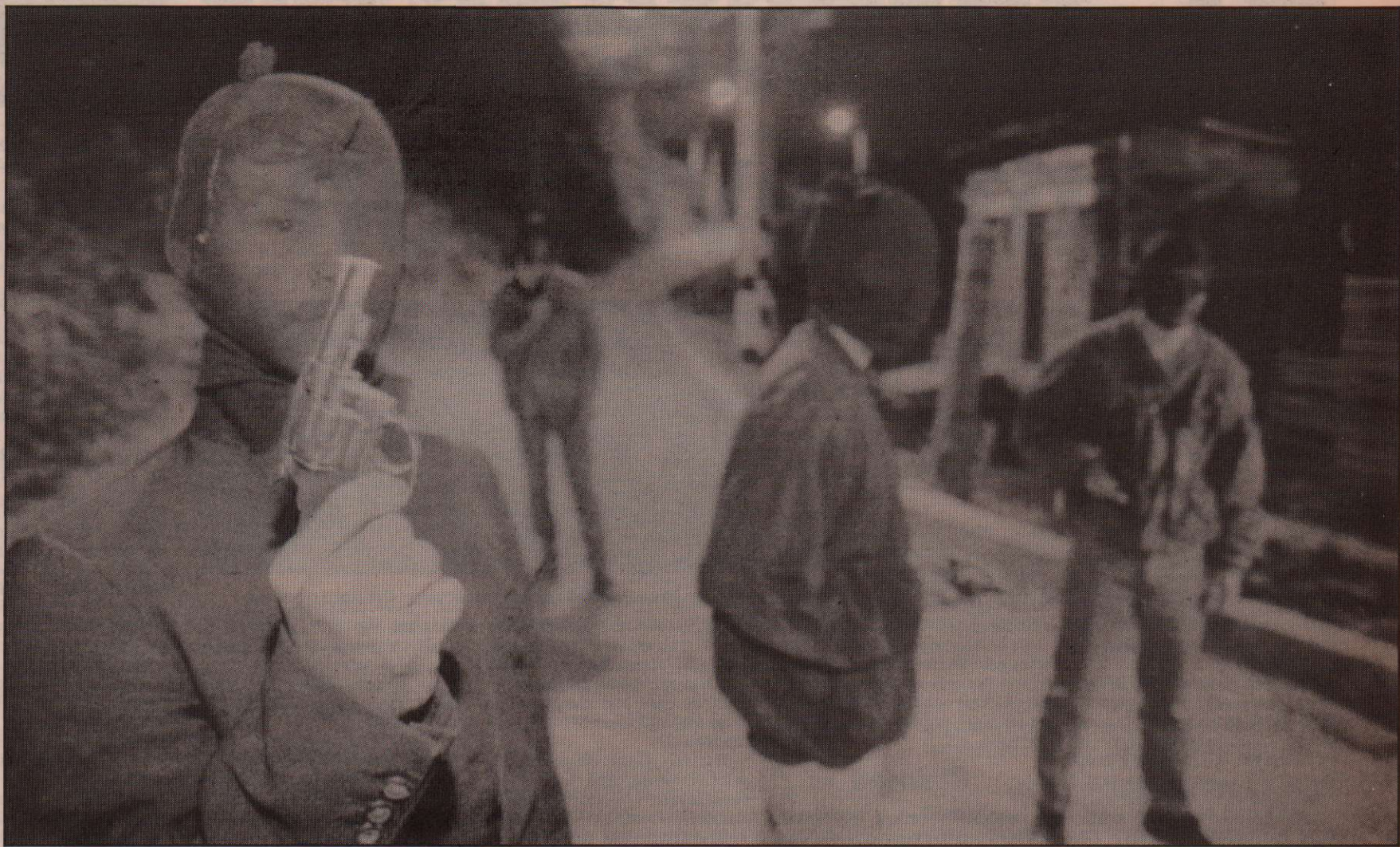
ES WILSON, the £100,000-a-year Shelter man and 'Friend of the Earth' whose PR firm is handling the TUC's 'relaunch' ('Sez Des', 'Inside Left' last week), is off to fresh fields — to help put them under concrete.

Two years ago, when Wilson masterminded the Liberal Democrats' election campaign, their manifesto called for airport development around London to be curbed. This autumn he's to join the British Airports Authority, which is campaigning for massive expansion at Heathrow airport.

As they say in the business, 'nothing convinces like sincerity — if you can fake it, you're made'.

Charlie Pottins

Self-protection . . . youth in Medellin, Colombia, armed against killer gangs hired by the rich. Worldwide, 40m children are abandoned or homeless



AFL-CIO protests breaches of Mexican workers' rights

THE US union federation, AFL-CIO, is filing a complaint against Sony Electronics for allegedly violating the labour rights of Mexican workers.

The federation complains that workers were sacked for union activity at a Sony-owned plant in Nuevo Laredo in January, and that the firm played a substantial part in staging fraudulent union elections last month, and called riot police to put down a peaceful demonstration.

According to the 'Financial Times' (11 May), this is the third complaint against foreign companies in Mexico made by the AFL-CIO to the US labour department's National Administration Office, which was set up to implement the

labour terms of the North American Free Trade Agreement. The other two complaints were against General Electric and Honeywell.

'However,' says the 'FT', 'the alleged violations are not punishable by sanctions, and it is not clear what the next step would be if the complaints were upheld.'

IN THE American paper 'Socialist Action', an article by Sylvia Weinstein, headed 'New World Order is making children an endangered species', says that:

'The whole world has been a hell for youth. A record 40 million children are abandoned or homeless . . . In Nairobi, the street population

of homeless children rose from 16,000 in 1989 to 25,000 today. In Manila, 75,000 children are homeless. In India, the cities of Bombay, Calcutta and New Delhi each have 100,000 homeless children. The population is experiencing spectacular growth in Eastern Europe. . . .

'200 million child labourers work in slavery, forced child labour or debt bondage, an ILO study reported.

'Slave raiders in Asia, Africa and Latin America kidnap or buy children into life-long bondage. Slaves as young as six years old work up to 18 hours a day. In Haiti, more than 100,000 children, known as "restaveks", have been sold or given away to work as domestics.'

'Sunday Express' attacks Bo

— and it's all in a shameful tradi

BY DAVID DORFMANN

WOUNDED children were being evacuated from the Bosnian town of Gorazde, where the hospital had been destroyed by Serb Chetnik shelling. And the head of the UN force in Bosnia, Britain's General Rose, whose SAS men were flown out by French Puma helicopters while civilian aid workers were left under fire, made his disgusting attack on the ill-armed Bosnians for 'cowardice'.

The British government, whose Royal Ordnance factories supplied the Chetniks' high-powered sniper rifles and cluster-bombs, refuses to let the Bosnians have even mine-detectors.

Horror

But, on Sunday 1 May, Bosnians made front-page 'news' in the Tory 'Sunday Express', which claimed to have found a new horror: 'Anger over 150,000 UK Bosnians', the headline screamed. MPs were calling for action. Thousands of Bosnians were threatening to invade Britain, said the 'Sunday Express', and were reinforcing '150,000 Muslims, Serbs and Croats' already here as refugees from the war, 'mostly living on state hand-outs'.

The truth? British policy towards asylum-seekers has been

among the worst in Europe. A spokesperson for the British Refugee Council's Home Office-funded Bosnia Project says the government has agreed to accept 1,500 ex-detainees and their dependants under a quota programme. Altogether this should bring the number of Bosnians in Britain to about 7,000. Many of these people have suffered so-called ethnic cleansing and torture at the hands of Croat or Serb fascists. What do they face in Britain?

■ In February last year 'Wandsworth Borough News' revealed that the Tory 'flagship', Wandsworth council, had secretly vetoed the temporary use of an empty old people's home to house Bosnian refugees, men needing rest and recuperation after torture in Serb-run camps. Wandsworth Tories were worried the refugees' presence might hit property prices in one of the south London borough's more 'select' roads.

■ In December, 39-year-old Lejla Ibrahimovic, a Bosnian refugee from Brcko, where she had been a shopworker, committed suicide in the room in Birmingham where she was living with her two small children. Birmingham's Labour council had said it had too many homeless to be able to offer housing to Bosnians.

Lejla swallowed a bottle of sleeping pills in despair after a long

unsuccessful fight with the Home Office for her husband, Safet, a textile worker, to be allowed to join her.

■ Mina Smajic, bombed out of her home in Vitez, central Bosnia, came to Britain with her three children, and was accommodated at a private refugee project at Epsom, Surrey. The Home Office refused to allow her husband, Avdo, to come over from Germany, even though another Bosnian living in Guildford was prepared to join his parents in Berlin as a 'swap'.

If it wasn't for the policies pursued by Britain and its allies, which the 'Sunday Express' supports, these Bosnians might not have been forced from their country. Most want to go home when Bosnia is free. But as if they've not suffered enough from racists, the Tory 'Express', keen to stir jingo anti-refugee hysteria as a diversion from the government's problems, picks on the Bosnians.

Dirty

'Express' newspapers have done this kind of dirty work before. In 1933, not long after Hitler became Reichchancellor of Germany, the 'Daily Express' reported that two Jews arriving in Britain were 'the first of the 60,000 of their race who had fled from Germany' (21 April 1933). Nothing like that number of

German Jews were coming to Britain, but the game was on: once people are worried about numbers, your racist is halfway there.

'Britons — Help Britons' was the headline on 21 October 1933 for a 'Daily Express' story claiming: 'British Jews are actively resisting the influx of foreign refugees who take jobs which British Jews should hold. . . . There are many unemployed British Jews. Their slogan is: "Britons — Help Britons" . . .'

By now, we're all familiar with the kind of anti-immigrant propaganda that tries to conceal its racialism by claiming 'their own people don't want them coming here'. The only real information in this 'Express' story was that the secretary of the Catering Trades Association had sent them a request he had received from the Jewish Refugee Committee to help one person. The rest, including the attitude of British Jews, and the slogan, was 'creative' journalism — in other words, they made it up.

On 19 June 1938, the 'Sunday Express' warned of 'an influx of foreign Jews. They are over-running the country. They are trying to enter the medical profession in great numbers. They wish to practise as dentists. Worst of all, many of them are holding themselves out to the public as psychoanalysts . . .'

These, it said, could gain a sinis-

Peasant leader assassinated in Paraguay

THE Paraguayan government has been accused of plotting the assassination of a prominent member of the peasant movement in that country. Estaban Balbuena, known as 'Neco', was murdered on 19 April. He was a leading member of the Workers Party, section of the International Workers League (LIT) in Paraguay.

Neco's killing came a fortnight before a general strike paralysed the capital, Asunción, on 2 May. He had been helping peasants who were occupying the land, and had been among those who denounced a statement from a member of the government, Armino Galeano Jacabo, threatening to 'cut off the life of all those peasant leaders who did not align themselves with the Colorado Party'. The Colorado Party is the ruling party in Paraguay.

The Central Trade Union Committee, which organised the general strike, issued a statement denouncing the assassination and demanding that the culprits be brought to justice.

BILL HUNTER, who is just back from a trip to Latin America, reports on the murder of a workers' and peasants' leader in Paraguay

During the strike, tanks came onto the streets and another peasant was killed in the demonstrations.

Paraguay's nationwide peasant association has called for a demonstration against the killing for later this month. It says that the killing was a deliberate political act and that the government was almost certainly involved. In the demonstration on 2 May the peasants marched under banners demanding: 'Bring the killers to justice.'

Killing

The killing of peasants and the planned murder of their leaders is a feature in most Latin American countries. Estaban Balbuena is not the first member of the Workers Party to be murdered by the landlords. Two years ago another

member was stabbed to death.

The latest murder has brought a stream of protests from leaders of the peasants' and workers' movements and from those defending human rights. Ernesto Gradella, a Trotskyist federal deputy in Brazil and leader of the Workers Socialist Party (United) — the PST(U) — delivered the protest of 39 Brazilian federal deputies from 12 different parties to the Paraguayan ambassador in Brazil.

In Argentina, there have been condemnations from the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo, the Grandmothers of the Plaza de Mayo, the Families of the Detained and Disappeared for Political Reasons, the Ecumenical Movement for Human Rights, the League for Human Rights, the Movement to Socialism (MAS), the Workers Party (PO), the Workers Socialist Party (PST), the

Movement of Socialist Workers (MST), and workers' leaders in Buenos Aires, Rosario and Misiones.

In Mexico, the assassination has been condemned by the trade union federations — UGT and CGT — many trade union leaders, individual artists and intellectuals.

Uprising

There is no doubt that the ready response given in Mexico to the events in Paraguay arises because of the widespread backing from among the poor and oppressed to the recent uprising of the Zapatista Army of National Liberation, and their opposition to the terror unleashed by the Mexican army.

In Bolivia there have been the same expressions of solidarity, which arise because of the peasant struggles there.

The Paraguayan Workers Party and the LIT's international executive committee are asking workers' and peasants' organisations throughout the world, and all those

who stand for the defence of human rights, to:

■ Condemn the killing of Estaban Balbuena by sending messages to the Paraguayan government in Asunción, Paraguay, and/or to the Paraguayan ambassador in their particular country to demand the punishment of the assassins.

■ Send all information and statements to the press of their particular country.

■ Inform the Workers Party in Paraguay of their actions — make sure this is done before 19 May, when a memorial meeting to comrade Neco will be held.

■ Messages of support and reports should be sent to the Workers Party: telephone/fax Asunción (from Britain, 010 595 21) 44 71 17.

Resolutions to the Paraguayan government should be addressed to: Sr Juan Carlos Wasmosy, Presidente de la Republic del Paraguay, Asunción, Paraguay.

Bill Hunter is a member of the International Workers League (LIT).

Bosnians tion

er 'ascendancy over their patients'. In case the thought of these Svengalis didn't terrify 'Sunday Express' readers enough, there was a more immediate danger: aliens who can hardly speak English are now driving London taxis and forcing British drivers off the streets.' Needless to say, the paper wasn't proposing to print a Yiddish or German-language edition of the 'Highway Code'.

Baying

In the 1930s, newspapers like the 'Express' tried to divert anger over capitalist depression and unemployment onto Jewish refugees, thereby encouraging Hitler to believe he could get away with worse persecution. In the 1970s, 'Express' papers were part of the baying press that whipped up hysteria against a 'flood' of Asians from east Africa who were going to enter Britain.

If tabloid sensationalism was followed by skinhead race attacks in Asian people's homes, or their children, well, one must not blame the 'honourable' profession of the British journalists, must one?

Bosnians fleeing fascism may be shocked and bewildered to find themselves targeted now by the 'free', billionaire press in Britain. We in the workers' and anti-racist movement have no excuse to be surprised, or to fail to defend them.



Bosnian Serb troops pose for the camera . . . before their murderous assault on the town of Gorazde, during which its hospital was destroyed

Reading myself in

ONE of the first things a young journalist has to learn is the imperative need, on returning to the office after a period without access to one's own paper, to 'read oneself in'.

This means reading carefully through every missed issue before venturing to write a single line. And woe betide the novice whose ignorance of a 'running story', or failure to grasp some topical allusion, betrays that the 'reading in' has been done lazily or incompetently.

I missed 12 consecutive issues of Workers Press and have just had the interesting experience of catching up on what I missed. Besides making me prouder than ever of my association with the paper, this has given me an unusual perspective on it and has led me to some very definite conclusions.

Our paper's consistent internationalism; its strong weekly emphasis on the Bosnians' struggle against 'ethnic cleansing' and on the activities of Workers Aid for Bosnia; and its reiterated call for a new leadership in the British and international working class: these put Workers Press head and shoulders above all those other publications that claim to be advancing a 'left' viewpoint.

Now, I'm not in the business of handing my colleagues either bouquets or brickbats — what the old 'Freethinker' used to call sugar plums and acid drops — but can't help confessing that I laughed aloud, not once but many times, while reading the contributions of Bronwen Handyside and Charlie Pottins.

I was also highly amused to find that it wasn't long before my valiant stand-in 'John Fordun' was getting his pound of Flett.

Is there a place for humour in a workers' paper? There certainly is, and for my money we should have more of it — including, as soon as possible, a regular weekly political cartoon.

This view isn't shared by everyone. When 'Two Nations' started, some people found it 'not political enough', rather as my good friend by correspondence John P. Mathieson finds 'John Fordun' lacking in politics (Letters, 23 April).

I'm bound to say I think these criticisms suggest a narrow understanding of what politics is, and of what the role of a working-class newspaper is.

It's not merely that human beings 'don't live by politics alone', as Trotsky put it in a celebrated article written in the early years of the Soviet Union.

In fact everything to do with what is commonly referred to as 'culture' is fairly saturated with politics.

At the heart of all literary and artistic endeavour is individual and collective striving to make sense of an apparently senseless world — and that means essentially, does it not, a striving for political understanding? So culture is an area in which the sharpest of political lessons are to be learnt.

Does anyone seriously suggest that, for instance, Rex Dunn on Picasso and Goya and 'Short Cuts', Tom Owen on 'The House of the Spirits' and 'Silas Marner' and 'The Remains of the Day', do anything but strengthen this paper and help its struggle to bring new clarity and new leadership to the workers' movement?

Workers Press is beginning to take on board its responsibilities in this area. Since most young protesters are, as the 7 May editorial put it, 'repelled by the labour movement as it is presently led and organised', we have to find new ways of reaching them.

An informed discussion of cultural matters — and the occasional belly-laugh in the right place — are two such ways.

PERSONAL COLUMN

Low marks . . .

TO the normally careful Neal Ascherson for writing thus in last weekend's 'Independent on Sunday':

'When Karl Marx wrote in 1848 that "the spectre of Communism is haunting Europe", he used words without his usual accuracy. What made Victorian capitalists shiver was not a shade risen from the tomb but a premonition about the future.'

But 'spectre' doesn't mean only 'a shade risen from the tomb'; it also has the figurative meaning (and I quote 'The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary'): 'An object or source of dread or terror, imagined as an apparition.'

It was in precisely this sense that the word was used by Thomas Carlyle when he wrote of 'That same cloud-capt, fire-breathing Spectre of Democracy'.

I haven't had a chance to check the German original, but I'd bet a pound to a Pfennig that the word Englished as 'spectre' in the first sentence of the 'Manifest der Kommunistischen Partei' bore the same figurative sense, and that Marx and Engels were indeed using it with their 'usual accuracy'.

No marks . . .

TO Professor Anson Rabinbach, who teaches history at New York's Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art, for writing thus in last week's 'Times Literary Supplement':

'Karl Marx, . . . an admirer of Vaucanson, regarded the automata as clocks, situating them on the great divide between handicraft and modern industry.'

The learned professor seems to have in mind Marx's letter to Engels dated 28 January 1863. But if he reads that letter with a bit more care he will find that nowhere does its author say, or even hint, that he regards automata as clocks. It's the other way round, in fact: he regards the clock as the prototype, in theory and practice alike, of automata.

Here in context is Marx's reference to Jacques de Vaucanson (1709-1782), who invented various mechanical toys, including a life-sized faun that played the flute and a duck that flapped its wings, pecked at food, drank water, and even expelled a foul-smelling pellet from its rear end:

'Aside from the invention of gunpowder, the compass and printing — those necessary prerequisites of bourgeois progress — the two material bases upon which the preparatory work for mechanised industry in the sphere of manufacturing was done between the sixteenth and the mid-eighteenth century, i.e. the period during which manufacturing evolved from handicraft to big industry proper, were the clock and the mill. . . .

'The clock was the first automatic device to be used for practical purposes, and from it the whole theory of the production of regular motion evolved. By its very nature, it is based on a combination of the artist-craftsman's work and direct theory. . . .

'Nor can there be any doubt that it was the clock which, in the eighteenth century, first suggested the application of automatic devices (in fact, actuated by springs) in production.'

'It is historically demonstrable that Vaucanson's experiments in this field stimulated the imagination of English inventors to a remarkable extent.'

Peter Fryer

Television

Tears of recognition and joy

Review by Charlie Pottins

from some of the soldiers sent to put them down.

Produced by actress Trudi Styler and directed by Michael Apted, the programme's strength was not in any 'analysis', but in the *feeling* it evoked. It made me aware of how much we, especially those who came to politics in our youth — CND, Young Socialists, post-1968 student and Vietnam movements — had in common with those struggling on the other side of

those of recognition and joy.

'Taggart' (ITV, 14 May) was one of those stories where the suspect was an old lag who had been his schoolmate, and there was a maudlin ending. Personally I preferred the previous week's story, which brought ruthless property developers, harassment of tenants, bhangra music and a British National Party racist into the frame.

Taggart's theme song, 'No



'Family' upset some Dublin residents before it started

the world, if we'd only realised it.

I've no idea what the filmmakers' politics are, but full marks for the filmed image and sound that let their subject speak for itself. The title was from a Chinese story with the moral that people can eventually move mountains. Such tears as we wiped back were

Mean City', was the title of a novel which upset Glasgow's city fathers many years ago by depicting slums and razor gangs. In the 'city of culture' tough cop 'Taggart' gets dragged by his wife to classical concerts; but the trail of violence he follows can lead from winos and hoodlums on rundown estates to yuppies in posh wine bars.

STUDENTS singing the 'Internationale'; a young couple marrying and celebrating with comrades in the middle of an open-air protest; a young woman in exile still tearfully blaming her own political 'mistakes' for the deaths of friends; and a young man still resisting in China, saying that he does not feel politically qualified, but since circumstances have placed him in that role . . .

As China's Stalinist bureaucracy beckons Western capitalists, offering profitable trade and investment, the capitalist media may be inclined to forgive and forget the Tiananmen Square massacre. In 'Moving the Mountain' (BBC2, 14 May), however, some of those who took part in the 1989 student democracy movement, culminating in the Beijing events, took us back to those heady days.

Inhuman

To begin with narrator Li Lu, in describing his childhood, when his parents were sent to labour camps and he was persecuted by his teachers, reminded us of the horrific, inhuman side of Mao's cultural revolution, to which some of us on the left turned a blind eye. It now seems more like the dark age of the Holy Inquisition than any communist utopia, and we too may feel inclined to weep for our errors.

Weaving together personal memories and evocative film, this first documentary in the new 'Fine Cut' series recalled the hopes placed on some Communist Party leaders, on Gorbachev's visit, and on Western media coverage; as well as the way the students gained support from ordinary citizens and workers, and even sympathy

Programme guide

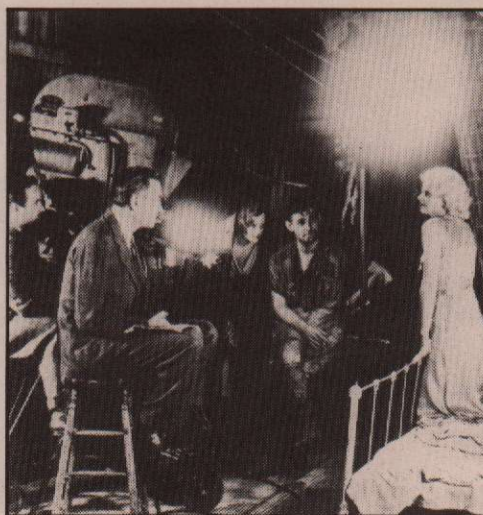
Saturday 21 May FINE CUT: 'The Time of Our Lives'.

Award-winning film which juxtaposes the life of a London East End family with the wider changes in Britain over the past 50 years (7.55pm, BBC2). 'Visions of Light: The Art of Cinematography'. Feature-length documentary containing clips and interviews with many of the world's most acclaimed practitioners, including Allen Daviau, Gordon Willis and Ernest Dickerson. A lucid and compelling portrait of the importance of cinematography in the creative process (10pm, Channel 4).

Sunday 22 May 'Innocence Lost'.

First of a two-part documentary on successive evenings about one of the most infamous child-abuse cases in the United States. The culmination

of a three-year-long examination of the history and prosecution of the case in a once peaceful church-going community in North Carolina (10pm, BBC2).



Harold Rosson lights Jean Harlow on the set of 'Red Dust' — 'Visions of Light', Saturday, C4

Monday 23 May GLOBAL IMAGE: 'The Drilling Fields'. In the oil-rich Niger Delta, battles have broken out between local communities and Nigeria's military dictatorship. For

30 years, the Ogoni people have quietly endured oppression and watched the effect of the oil operations on their environment. Now they have had enough (10.55pm, Channel 4).

Thursday 26 May THE BUSINESS: 'The Rise and Rise of Bill Gates'. New series starts by taking a look at how Gates became a billionaire of computer software and enquires why his company is currently under investigation by US Department of Justice (7.20pm, BBC2).

Friday 27 May EUROPE EXPRESS. The third programme in

Roddy Doyle's four-part drama 'Family' (BBC1, Sundays) upset some Dublin residents before it started. They felt their estate was bad enough without these fellows dragging burnt-out cars onto it just to make a movie.

And 'what will people think of us Irish?' one woman commented, recalling the outrage Sean O'Casey (not that I'm making a comparison) had to face 70 years ago. I found the attitudes convincingly portrayed by Sean McGinlay as Carlo familiar enough. You wouldn't have to go to Ireland to meet his kind.

Bullying

After the first episode (8 May), watching the face of a young lad (Barry Ward) as he realises his Dad's bullying is no joke, I was keen to see how his story developed.

And whatever the critics say about 'Family', the switchboards were busy at women's refuges after that first brutal episode, with women who recognised themselves in it.

'The Lost Steptoes' (BBC2, 11 May) took us back to an age of comparative innocence when an audience could roar at the Old Man saying 'He's a puff!' about a sleek-looking visitor. But the humour in this episode came from young Harold's naivety, his yearning to explore the world of culture beyond the scrapyards and the 'Skinner's Arms', something his new friend offers the possibility of.

Like his prized Meissen dish, Harold's romantic illusions are shattered; but even as he tries to put the pieces together, our sympathies are with him. Galton and Simpson may have thought they were just scripting a good sitcom, but I reckon they produced a work of art.

this eight-part series includes a report on the May Day celebrations in Erfurt, the eastern city hardest hit by Germany's post-unification economic slump (8pm, Channel 4).

Selected films

THE THIRD MAN (1949). Carol Reed's masterpiece based on the Graham Greene novel set in World War II Vienna. With Joseph Cotten, Trevor Howard and Orson Welles (Saturday, 11.45pm, Channel 4). **PRIVATE LIFE OF SHERLOCK HOLMES (1970).** Billy Wilder's long-neglected offbeat version of the famous detective in which the plot, for once, plays a secondary role. With Robert Stephens and Colin Blakely (Monday, 11.05pm, BBC1). **THE DARK AT THE TOP OF THE STAIRS (1960).** Robert Preston and Dorothy McGuire head an impressive cast in Delbert Mann's screen version of the William Inge play about troubles of a US Midwestern family (Wednesday, 4pm, BBC2). JJ

News shorts

Can you believe them?

LONDON bus managers, in the run-up to their buy-out of the bus companies, have told the government that they are running 99.3 per cent of all planned mileage. This is well ahead of the government target of 98.5 per cent and is, it is claimed, an all-time record.

What is not understandable

is that, in spite of more buses being on the road, passengers are having to wait even longer for their buses to come along.

Passengers are now waiting an average of 6.48 minutes for the next bus, which is 1.82 minutes longer than schedules say they should wait.

This is a longer waiting period than three months ago, and longer than this time last year when, according to the claim, there were fewer buses on the road.

Could it be that the bus managers are not telling the government the truth about levels of bus service? Or are they putting extra buses into service when there is no one about to ride on them in order to increase the levels of service on paper? Clearly something is wrong,

which prompts the question: would you buy a used bus company from them? Answers on a postcard please . . .

Bus crash highlights poor safety

THE inquest last week into the death of a school-bus driver has underlined the woeful safety standard on buses and coaches.

The driver of the school bus was killed and 21 people, most of them schoolchildren, injured when their bus crashed in High Wycombe last October.

At the inquest in South Buckinghamshire the coroner was

told that the driver, aged 49, was banned from holding a public service vehicle (PSV) licence two years ago because of a heart condition. Pathologist Yoon Chia said it was most likely that the driver suffered a heart attack.

There is no legal requirement for a PSV licence for drivers of buses where passengers do not pay fares. There is, therefore, no check on the ability or fitness of those who drive schoolchildren, hospital patients, or old people's and community coaches.

But things will get worse. The government is now in consultation to lower safety and fitness standards further by deregulation. It will then be easier for bus and coach operators to force drivers to work longer hours and take shorter breaks.

South Africa: how the left voted

'AMANDLA!' proclaimed the back page of 'Socialist Worker' on 30 April. 'The cry of "Amandla" — "freedom now" — will echo round South Africa this week as millions of black South Africans prepare to celebrate their victory over racism and oppression.'

Had South African workers really won their freedom? The capitalist press was saying so, and Stalinist papers were also putting 'Amandla' in their headlines, so why should 'Socialist Worker' be any different?

In 1991 it hailed the defeat of the Moscow coup in 1991 as 'The Death of Communism' (forgetting for a moment that it had always previously called Russia 'state capitalist', even, during the 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia, 'imperialist'). Whichever way the wind blows, there you'll find 'Socialist Worker'!

Reporting from Johannesburg, Charlie Kimber enthused: 'As part of the ANC campaign, hundreds of trade union shop stewards have travelled to the factories and townships.' He described workers' enthusiasm at an ANC meeting. 'There is no tyranny so strong that it can withstand sustained protest from below,' Kimber concluded. 'This election is a victory for all of us.'

And the tyranny of capital over labour, reigning as surely under an African National Congress government as it did under the apartheid racists, will that too be overthrown merely by 'sustained protest'? Alongside was a report of workers in Transkei and elsewhere continuing strike actions against the advice of their leaders.

Not a hint was there in this report that the trade union leaders who were counselling restraint were the same ones urging full support for the ANC, which they had joined.

Inside, 'Socialist Worker' asked: 'Can the ANC deliver?' This was watered down from Charlie Kimber's piece on 23 April ('Can the ANC meet black workers' hopes?'), when he said there had to be 'a genuine socialist movement'. Now 'Socialist Worker' contented itself with observing that addressing the problems of unemployment and housing 'would need a major assault on the power of the giant corporations. But the ANC is committed to working alongside them.'

Opposing

Stopping short of answering its own question, 'Socialist Worker' said nothing about the part of the South African Communist Party (SACP) in defending class-collaboration and abandoning socialist aims, nor about workers opposing their leaders' political line, and challenging the ANC monopoly from the left.

By 14 May, having had time to sober up from the Mandela victory parties, 'Socialist Worker' was ready to offer some advice to South African workers, in its usual patronising manner:

'If South Africa's workers fight, they can beat back attacks from the bosses and the government. But they can also do much more. They can show that a completely different society is possible, one where workers have real democracy and control.'

The word 'socialism' didn't occur, except for a reference to its misuse by bourgeois nationalists in other African countries. South African workers' political experiences during almost a century of struggle weren't men-

Some left papers in Britain, full of advice before the South African elections, have been shy about reporting all the results. Standing in Natal/KwaZulu and Western Cape, Workers International candidates gained between them over 5,000 votes.

The centrist Workers List, standing nationally, obtained just over 4,000. CHARLIE POTTINS says some of the 'left' in Britain didn't so much take a stand on the South African polls, 'as perform a little dance'.

rades in South Africa stood as the Workers International to Rebuild the Fourth International. And their base in the South African working class is a damn sight more serious than 'Workers Power's' anywhere. What did Stockton propose?

'In the absence of a real workers' list, the only means available to class-conscious South African workers to register their protest would be by spoiling their ballot papers, writing in slogans against the sell-out, for a constituent assembly and for working-class power.' Were the long queues at the polling stations due to voters having to wait patiently while somebody transcribed 'The Communist Manifesto' and Trotsky's Transitional Programme onto their ballot paper?

Or did the following issue of 'Workers Power' reach them in time, with its call to 'Vote Workers List'? This 'new political formation's' leadership bore 'all the hallmarks of USFI-influenced centrism', 'Workers Power' acknowledged. (USFI refers to the United Secretariat of the Fourth International, the revisionist organisation led by Ernest Mandel.)

Assertion

What's more, said 'Workers Power', 'many of the transitional and class struggle elements' had been removed from its manifesto, leaving a 'completely reformist programme'. 'This signals the need for a struggle inside the WLP, to win it to the revolutionary programme of Trotskyism.'

The 'end of white minority rule' was 'half a revolution', according to 'Socialist Organiser' (28 April). It called for support for the Workers List, as an assertion of working-class political independence. 'The Workers List were right!' said its 5 May editorial. 'The rest of the left have — with a few incoherent exceptions — simply functioned as the pointless fifth wheel of the ANC's bandwagon.'

'Socialist Organiser' had not the honesty to mention the Workers International's intervention in this election, which was launched before WOSA and others decided to promote their Workers List. Denied the state funding the latter enjoyed, the Workers International succeeded in winning a higher vote. By 12 May, South Africa was relegated by 'Socialist Organiser' to an inside-page feature on Mandela, and the Workers List was forgotten.

Most remarkable has been 'Socialist Outlook', however. On 30 April it squeezed in a brief: 'South Africa goes to the polls', promising the next issue would contain a detailed analysis, including 'the showings of the Workers List Party promoted by the Workers Organisation of Socialist Action (WOSA)'.

Like WOSA, 'Socialist Outlook's' affinities are with Mandel's 'United Secretariat'. But the two articles on the South African elections in its following issue, on 14 May, did not mention the Workers List at all.

Have the United Secretariat's friends in South Africa been dropped for doing badly, or for having the temerity to stand at all?



Capital's tyranny over labour will reign as surely under an ANC government as it did under the apartheid racists

tioned, nor what had happened to the workers' charter of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU); and for all 'Socialist Worker's' anachronistic slogan, 'Neither Washington nor Moscow', the SACP was left out of the story.

'Socialist Worker' could not bring itself to acknowledge that some South African workers had shown their readiness for revolutionary leadership by supporting Trotskyists in this election. Not that the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) is entirely ignorant on these matters.

Some time before the elections the South African magazine 'Work in Progress' had an article by Terry Bell, a member of the International Socialists of South Africa (ISSA), the SWP's co-thinkers, arguing against calls for a 'mass Workers Party'. Dismissing this as a 'recipe for reformism', Bell argued that revolutionaries must be 'at the forefront of campaigns

for social change', even calling for 'the construction of a revolutionary socialist party' — but meanwhile 'vote for the ANC'.

Bell's article was reprinted, with criticism, in 'Socialist Organiser' (21 April), and commented upon by Dave Stockton in 'Workers Power' ('Voting for the sell-out', April); but evidently it was considered too 'theoretical' for 'Socialist Worker' readers.

Some left-wing groups and papers didn't so much take a stand on the South African elections, as perform a little dance. Attacking the ANC, SACP and COSATU for capitulation, Jabu Masilela in 'Workers News' (March-April) criticised 'the left groupings' who continued 'to dogmatically oppose the struggle for a workers' party on the basis that socialists must be in the ANC'.

'Workers News' promised an extended report on the elections in its next issue. This should give them time

to explain how their allies in South Africa, now calling themselves 'Comrades for a Workers' Government', decided to ditch those with whom they had been talking about a 'workers' party', calling instead for 'Critical support for the ANC' ('Qina Msebenzi', April).

'Workers Power' (April) criticised the Marxist Workers Tendency (which tries 'Militant's' old entrism tactics within the ANC) and Terry Bell's International Socialists, and regretted that the Comrades for a Workers' Government had 'tragically' abandoned 'their principled stand'. But as for alternatives, the Workers List Party, supported by the Workers Organisation for Socialist Action (WOSA) was 'centrist', said Dave Stockton, and 'the WRP does not have any serious working-class base and is only standing in one or two regions'.

As we've pointed out before, 'the WRP' was not standing. Our com-

muster around 10,000 votes. Sheridan said he was not disappointed, for besides picking up these votes he got 50 members for his party.

My erstwhile friend and colleague in the old Communist Party, Willie Clarke, standing on a Scottish Communist Party ticket in West Fife, got his usual large majority over all his rivals, including Labour.

Of course, Willie is working class of mediocre intelligence, measured in bourgeois academic terms. He got media coverage, and when asked why he was standing as a communist he said: 'The Labour Party wants to continue and tinker with capitalism and I am a socialist.'

How does one explain this extraordinary election result? Of course, where he was standing is perhaps the reddest part of the UK, where Gallagher was an MP and communists dominated the unions and were the real voice of the working class when it was in trouble. Traditionally they voted communist, so Willie gets the verdict!

'Trotskyism', real or pseudo, has never taken root in industrial Fife. Even the Socialist Workers Party cannot form a branch. Militant put down small roots because of the miners' strike, but they too have died away.

John P. Mathieson
Fife



SWP anti-racist placards: where are the working-class warriors?

Letter

More letters on page 2

Where are the working-class warriors?

I NOTE that Tom Owen describes 'Socialist Organiser' as a "Trotskyist" ... middle-class entrism group' (Workers Press, 14 May). But aren't all the Trotskyist groups mainly middle class? What is the social composition of the WRP?

In the same issue Doug Kydd describes the Anti-Nazi League as 'middle-class warriors'. Where are the working-class warriors to be found?

In Scotland Professor John Foster stood as a Communist Party of Britain candidate in a working-class heartland in Glasgow and could not get 100 people to vote for him.

Tommy Sheridan's Militant Labour lost its representation on the Strathclyde regional council but was at least able to

Lula seeks to hold back the tide as . . . Mass discontent grows in Brazil

POLLS in Brazil are showing an increase in support for Luis Ignacio 'Lula' da Silva, the Workers Party candidate and front-runner for president. And members of the Convergência Socialista party report a swell of support for Lula in the factories.

Lula is now polling at 42 per cent. His nearest competitors went down from 21 to 16 per cent, 10 to 8 per cent, and 8 to 7 per cent.

BY A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Lula has been preparing for the expected victory of the Workers Party by visiting the US and other countries, assuring their rulers that he will be a 'responsible' president. This is in the face of the threat of extreme social tensions in Brazil.

The capitalist leaders' expectations have been shattered about a successful economic plan under the present Itamar government helping a bourgeois candidate.

Last year there was an increase of foreign investment in Brazil, but it had more to do with the influx of speculative capital than in any real strength.

The discontent of the millions of poor and exploited in the cities with their militant industrial concentrations, such as the 'ABC' belt in Sao Paulo, continued to increase under the plan.

So did the struggle of the peasants and their occupations of land. The Movement of the Landless (MST) is affiliated to the CUT trade union federation and has called a national 'Shout for the land' day.

Corruption

The corruption which ended the Collor presidency at the end of 1992 has continued. A judicial inquiry into a lottery run by the mafia in Rio de Janeiro has revealed this month that, between 1987 and March 1994, the gangsters distributed \$1,423,500 in bribes to 55 officials. And the real total of those bribed is a great deal more.

At the beginning of May the procurator general of justice in Rio de Janeiro was demanding punishment of a further 123 officials, 60 of them from the military police. On 10 May he denounced 11 colonels, 11 majors, 20 captains and 3 lieutenants of the Rio military police.

A parliamentary commission of inquiry has found a web of corruption involving drugs and arms trafficking. Among the officials denounced is a colonel who, up to last year, was responsible for the security of Rio de Janeiro's tribunal of justice.

On 11 May in Sao Paulo there were seven strikes in progress, including underground and bus workers who paralysed the city for a day.

Others were a strike of federal police at airports and seaports that had lasted for over a month, during which time no passports were issued; a strike of teachers; a strike of health workers, including doctors; and a strike of gas and water workers.

Lula was interviewed by an Argentinian paper 'Pagina 12' on 4 May. In it he declared: 'I am more moderate; the people, the party and I have changed.'

He was very pleased with the advance of the Frente Grande in Argentina as a 'third political force' and an important step towards confronting the government of Carlos Menem.

He also gave his support to the Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR) between Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay; this is meant to be in full operation in 1995.

Favour

He assured the Argentinian financiers and manufacturers that their counterparts in Brazil were 'beginning to comprehend' that the plans of a Workers Party government in favour of 'popular consumption' would not 'damage their enterprises'.

He said that the 'strategic areas' of communications and petrol must be permanently in the hands of the state but declared that 'in no way' did he defend the 'statification' of the Brazilian economy.

Further, this was made clear in the jargon of the International Monetary Fund, which

heralds an intensification of the attacks on labour and unemployment:

'We cannot continue without change in the state enterprises, which must be efficient and have the number of employees that is really necessary.'

In the days following Lula had meetings with bankers, industrialists and capitalist politicians. A leading daily of Sao

Paulo, 'Folha de S. Paulo', said that it 'wanted to extract from Lula a clear statement on his positions on privatisation, foreign investment and a moratorium on the foreign debt'.

Assure

Lula could assure the paper that at least one of his positions is not that of 1989, when he also stood for president.

He declared for a moratorium on the foreign debt then.

Lula tries to hold back the tide of expectations in Brazil by promising reforms to the hungry, homeless and exploited masses who support him. In Argentina, he said:

'I think now the priority is to combat misery and unemployment; that people eat three times a day is our objective.'

But the scope for reform grows rapidly less. Imperialism, in a ruthless struggle for world markets, seeks more direct control in Brazil.

Lula has a value to foreign and domestic capitalists and landlords only insofar as he carries out the very programme of austerity that has brought the militant opposition of the Brazilian masses.



After the elections, reality in Soweto. Unemployment is rising in South Africa and people know the struggle is not over

Mandela takes up office but the cupboard's bare

BY CHARLIE POTTINS AND MIKE COOKE

SOUTH Africa's new president, Nelson Mandela, is moving into a near-empty office. Former occupant F.W. de Klerk hasn't quite stripped off the wallpaper to make the former Robbin Island prisoner feel at home, but he has ripped off almost everything else, bar the desk and an executive stationery set.

This will give Mandela the opportunity to buy new office equipment to suit his taste; but that's not all. Not wanting to worry Mandela unduly before the elections were over, De Klerk omitted to tell anyone outside his government about 60 billion rand (£11bn) of debt run up to settle apartheid-era bills, such as the pay-outs to top up civil service pension funds.

Problem

The national debt has risen from R155bn (£28bn) in March 1993 to about R200bn (£37bn) today, about 55 per cent of the country's gross domestic product.

There was also a problem with Pik Botha, former foreign

minister and now minister of energy and mineral affairs. He allegedly tried to persuade the African National Congress (ANC) to let him keep his office in the central government complex that houses the presidency and foreign ministry. The ANC did not use the usual South African methods for removing squatters.

Political violence has restarted, with 12 people shot dead in Thokoza, east of Johannesburg, when gunmen using AK-47 assault rifles burst into a house last weekend. Those killed were aged between 13 and 25.

Police had to move in to protect the ANC offices in Durban last Saturday after shots were fired and windows smashed in a demonstration by 200 young men demanding positions in the new security force.

And north of Pretoria, at the Wahlmanstall assembly point where 6,000 ANC-trained forces of its armed wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe, were supposed to be gathering for integration into the South African Defence Force, chief of staff Siphwe Nyanda arrived to review his troops and had his car stoned and burned.

The troops were demanding better food and pay at the camp.

Police arrested 15 suspected of being 'ringleaders'.

Apparently thousands more than had been expected 16,000 had turned up at the three assembly points. In the event, say reports, more than 23,000 turned up.

'They seem to be using the military as an employment agency for township rabble,' complained an official. 'Most have no military training whatsoever and are just expecting food and cash hand-outs in the name of the struggle.'

Soaring

Who can blame people looking for work going to the camps when unemployment is soaring in the 'new South Africa'?

Besides, many people know the struggle is not over; they know the white neo-Nazis are still armed, and they do not trust the ANC's deal with Chief Buthelezi's right-wing Inkatha party. They may see the army as a place where they can get their hands on guns.

Crowing over his election victory in Natal/KwaZulu, Buthelezi said: 'Never in the history of democracy has any party entered an election with just six days left to campaign

and then gone on to win.

Seldom in the history of democracy has there been so much evidence of ballot-rigging on such a scale, particularly in northern KwaZulu. Inkatha terrorism was backed by the South African security forces and according to some reports, British MI6 agents.

But it was Mandela's willingness to compromise that enabled Buthelezi to extend his tribalist fiefdom, and to take government office.

Although now part of the 'government of national unity' coalition, Buthelezi is already expressing scepticism at its programme:

'We fear that it may not work simply because it says it will provide everything to the people. Nowhere in the world has the state been able to provide for all the needs of a country's people.'

He is also asserting that he rules KwaZulu/Natal, and talking of 'Zulu independence'.

The real threat, which would explain British backing for Buthelezi, is of a backward imperialist-stooge regime dictating to the working class around Durban, and enabling the ANC to resist working-class demands elsewhere.

Workers Press

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