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International workers' movement must force govts and big business to pay RWANDA: WHO IS GUILTY?

REFUGEES from Rwanda are dying at the rate of one person a minute from cholera and other diseases. The sick are climbing under their mats so that others can wrap their dead bodies more easily. Corpses are lying so closely packed by the side of the road that tyre marks are visible where vehicles have been forced to drive over them.

The response of world leaders is an insult to those thousands of human beings who have died in the most horrific conditions. US President Clinton has offered £200 million to alleviate the disaster, and the British minister for overseas development, Lynda Chalker, proposes £6.5 million. To put these sums into perspective, Clinton's offer is worth 0.4 per cent of the European fighter aircraft project (cost £50 billion).

Fled

British doctor Steve Collins, treating the refugees who have fled across the border to Goma, Zaire, told the 'Evening Standard' (26 July): 'For Operation Desert Storm during the Gulf War a huge amount of logistic back-up was in place incredibly quickly. I wonder why the world community cannot move quite

FROM THE WORKERS INTERNATIONAL

so quickly for this kind of operation. This is more serious than anything I have ever seen. The death-rate is phenomenal.'

All the possible charity, voluntary aid, relief agencies' work in the world — even multiplied a thousand times — will not save the lives of the millions of men, women and children now facing extinction in Rwanda.

In the open, under the equatorial sun on the Zairean border, they stand, hundreds of thousands of refugees — nowhere to go, nothing to eat, no water.

The only people who possess the emergency supplies necessary to save these lives are the great multinational companies of Europe, North America and Japan and the governments which serve them. These companies publish profit figures of

billions. These governments have budgets of billions — much of it for military expenditure.

Unless some of this untold wealth is spent — now! — millions will die, today and tomorrow.

In every one of the 'Great Powers' in Europe, North America and Japan, the trades unions and political parties of the working class must organise now to demand that governments mount massive emergency operations — whatever the cost — to save the people of Rwanda.

The working-class movement will win behind it millions of working people, the majority of the population, for such an initiative.

It means organising demonstrations and representations and preparing strike action if necessary to force this action by the governments.

It means industrial action — from non-co-operation, to strikes and occupations — to force the great multinationals, monopolies and banks, especial-

ly those which invest in Africa, to disgorge the money, supplies and transport necessary for this international operation.

It means demanding that governments commandeer the necessary fuel, aircraft, vehicles and food, medical and building supplies. Until now, the governments of the 'Great Powers' have done this kind of thing only for war, for their own interests, to conquer more Rwandas.

In Britain, every trade unionist should fight for the TUC and its international department to bring these demands immediately before the government — the same in every union.

Workers Aid organises convoys to Tuzla in Bosnia. These take material aid, as part of the fight to sustain the workers of Bosnia, while preparing with them to reconstruct the international solidarity of the working class — the only basis for a solution in the former Yugoslavia.

The scale of the problem in

Rwanda, and the resources available to Workers Aid — given the extreme urgency of the situation — don't allow the same operation. What can we do, except fight for the whole strength of the workers' movement internationally to begin to work on the problem?

It means organising and exerting the strength of the working class to force those who have the wealth to give some of it up.

Gain

We know very well that even if they are forced to respond, they will give as little as they can, they will want to make money out of it and gain further power over these countries for themselves, and they will come back to the working people of their own countries and the world to make us pay in the end. We know this and we say that a fight to save Rwanda will prepare us better to meet these problems when they come.

As for the supplies to be sent, we should demand at every

stage that the people of Rwanda themselves, helped physically by workers from Africa and the rest of the world, have centred not the multinationals and bourgeois governments.

We know also that some will tell us that it is 'not enough' to use 'pressure' to make the imperialists do this, you have to overthrow them. Yes, but our fellow workers are dying in Rwanda today, and we must do what we can to force governments and exploiters to intervene by sending supplies. This will bring us a big step nearer to being able to overthrow them.

It is just such international action and consciousness that is necessary to take us closer to that day.

And so we say that this proposal is not utopian. Who has any other proposal for what the workers' movement should do? Should we do nothing? Should we accept the message of capitalist media and the system behind it: that it is all so awful?

● TURN TO BACK PAGE

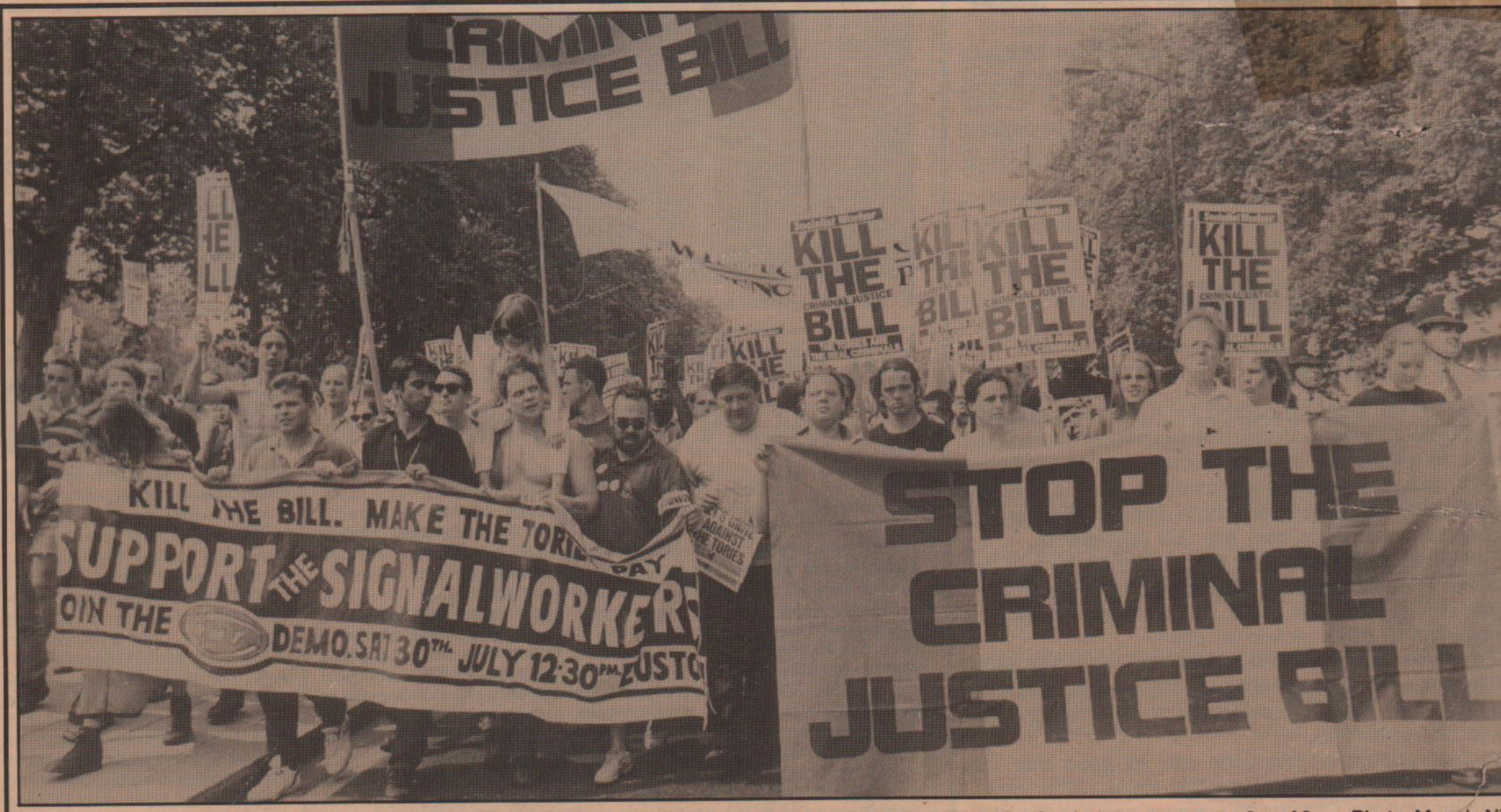
Picket the Overseas Development Agency to demand help for Rwanda!

34 Victoria Street, London SW1E, near Victoria Station, 5pm, Friday 29 July.

Demonstrate for the signal workers

Saturday 30 July 12.30pm, Grafton Place, London W1 (near Euston station) Rally at Camden town hall ● See page 8

Workers Press is taking a short break, but will be back on 20 August. So please send in your articles/reports.



50,000 protested against the Criminal Justice Bill in London, last Sunday, but there was only a handful of union banners — pages 2 and 3. Photo: Maggie N

On other pages: Capitalist market destroys medical research, p3; Public health in east London, p4

Workers Press

Unite against the Criminal Justice Bill

THE challenge facing the movement against the Criminal Justice Bill is to forge a fighting alliance between those in the trades unions who are working to renew their organisations and the generation that has grown up in the social decay of the 1980's and are seeking a way to break out of it.

There has been no real attempt to take the struggle against the Bill into the trade union and labour movement as part of the fight against the bureaucracy that obstructs the uniting of the working class.

It is no longer possible to describe as a 'betrayal' the Labour Party's position in the face of the Tory government's fight on civil rights encapsulated in this Bill. To 'betray' you at least have to appear to be on the side you betray.

Before becoming the newly-crowned Labour leader, Tony Blair said in one House of Commons debate on the Bill: 'We do not oppose the strengthening of the criminal justice system — on the contrary, we support measures that actively strengthen that system.'

But the whole new generation of young people involved in the campaign against this Bill don't expect any help from Labour anyway.

The march was clear proof that large numbers of young people do understand very clearly that the Criminal Justice Bill is an attack on the rights of ordinary people who want to have a say in how their lives are run.

'We will march and we will picket — Criminal Justice, you can stick it!' was one defiant chant.

These young people know that the bill, if it becomes law, will severely limit their ability to oppose the vandalism that capital inflicts on the environment and on people's lives in the name of profit.

They know that squatting, whether as a protest, as a way out of the rat-race, or as a way for homeless and jobless people to find shelter, will be viciously suppressed under the proposed legislation.

They know that the law of trespass will be changed to protect landowners and to persecute hunt-saboteurs and travellers.

They very well understand the implications of the new laws for the whole of society. The Winston Silcott campaign was quite rightly present. Yet despite the call to 'build the coalition against the Criminal Justice Bill' many others were not.

But the force of the campaign against the Bill is weakened by an individualist, idealist ideology brewed from mysticism and left-over 1960s semi-anarchism.

This can only be tackled by bringing the anti-Bill forces into one movement for a whole series of struggles against the state:

- With the many community groups that came out of the anti-poll tax and anti-pit closures fights.
- With refugee and immigrant groups and those who have been opposing the Asylum Bill, one-year-old last Tuesday, and who have been at the forefront of the civil rights movement against detention and repatriation.
- With those fighting against cuts in public services.
- With the unemployed and their organisations.
- With those who want to fight for real international working-class solidarity as expressed in Workers Aid for Bosnia.
- With Marxists struggling to rebuild the international consciousness of the working class whose task is to overthrow capitalism.

Constitutional cretinism

CHARTER 88, a group calling for a written constitution, made a rather incongruous contribution to last weekend's Criminal Justice demonstration. A Charter 88 speaker told demonstrators that a written constitution would protect them against the kind of attack on civil rights that the Bill represents.

But Charter 88 must know that the democracy of the German Weimar Republic was 'protected' by just such a document, and that Hitler used clause 48 of that constitution to seize dictatorial power.

They must also have heard that the French Republic possessed a written constitution in 1958 when de Gaulle assumed wide-ranging presidential powers that amounted to dictatorial rule.

In fact, written constitutions are so good that the French have had no less than five since 1972!

By the time the Charter 88 speaker assured the rally that the Association of Chief Police Officers was against the Criminal Justice Bill — implicitly drawing the conclusion that the 'force' supported the demonstrators — no

Letters

A breath of fresh air

DAVID EYRE and Jim Young's exchange (Workers Press, 9 and 23 July) has blown fresh air through the paper.

I hope the fact that it blows from Caledonia will not deter English readers. Gordon Brown is still the bellows for the Blair organ. The Scots will rule you yet.

Young did not address Eyre's defence of the word 'utopian' in respect of a 'Scottish road to socialism'. Maybe we can discuss this in future.

Young quotes Engels's 1891 critique of the Erfurt programme being prepared by the German Social Democratic Party.

Engels thought this an advance on the Gotha programme criticised by Marx in 1875. Interesting today is that it discussed presenting the working class and its potential allies with a programme based on socialist analysis and answering practical questions that workers ask political parties.

With the 'Blajorisation' of the Labour Party and the Communist Party's collapse, politically-conscious workers and middle-class people in Britain today must seek to create a party that shows itself able to do precisely these things.

Engels, dealing with the state form the Social Democrats should advocate for German electors (and disenfranchised

potential supporters), wrote: 'The proletariat [in establishing authority] can only use the form of the one and indivisible republic. In . . . the United States, the federal republic is . . . on the whole, a necessity, although in the Eastern states it is already becoming a hindrance.'

'[The federal republic] would be a step forward in Britain where the two islands are peopled by four nations and, in spite of a single Parliament, three different systems of legislation already exist side by side. In little Switzerland, it has long been a hindrance . . . For Germany federalisation on the Swiss model would be an enormous step backward.'

'Two points distinguish a union state from a completely unified state: first, that each member state, each canton, has its own . . . legislative and judicial system, and second, that alongside a popular chamber there is also a federal chamber, in which each canton . . . votes

'The first [Germans] have . . . overcome, and we shall not be so childish as to reintroduce it, the second we have in the Bundesrat [second chamber] and we could well do without it, since our "federal state" generally constitutes a transition to a unified state. The revolution of 1866 and 1870 must not be reversed from above but supplanted and improved from below' [emphasis added].

Terry Brotherstone
Edinburgh

Fundamental matters

BRIAN PEARCE (Letters 16 July) seems to be developing reactionary barnacles on his bottom in his old age. He attacks my article on World War II (Workers Press, 2 July) because I wrote approvingly of those 'hindering the Anglo-American war effort'.

Actually, I would write with equal approval of those hindering the German war effort.

As a revolutionary socialist I supported neither imperialist camp. Our struggle was — and remains — the class struggle.

Brian Pearce appears to believe freedom of speech popped out of the barrel of an American gun. Without its big bang, I could not express my opinions today, he says.

By contrast, I thought that all our rights, stretching back as far as the early trades unions and Chartism, were won as a result of a fight against the capitalist state and the employing class.

That also applied after World War II.

After the end of hostilities, the Labour government continued to use wartime emergency regulation 1305. Under that, seven dockers from London and Merseyside were imprisoned. Only a massive port strike secured not only their release but the abolition of Order 1305 as well. Likewise Labour Home

Secretary Morrison imposed a ban on May Day processions in London until unpopularity made it unenforceable.

The post-war position in countries like Italy was even worse.

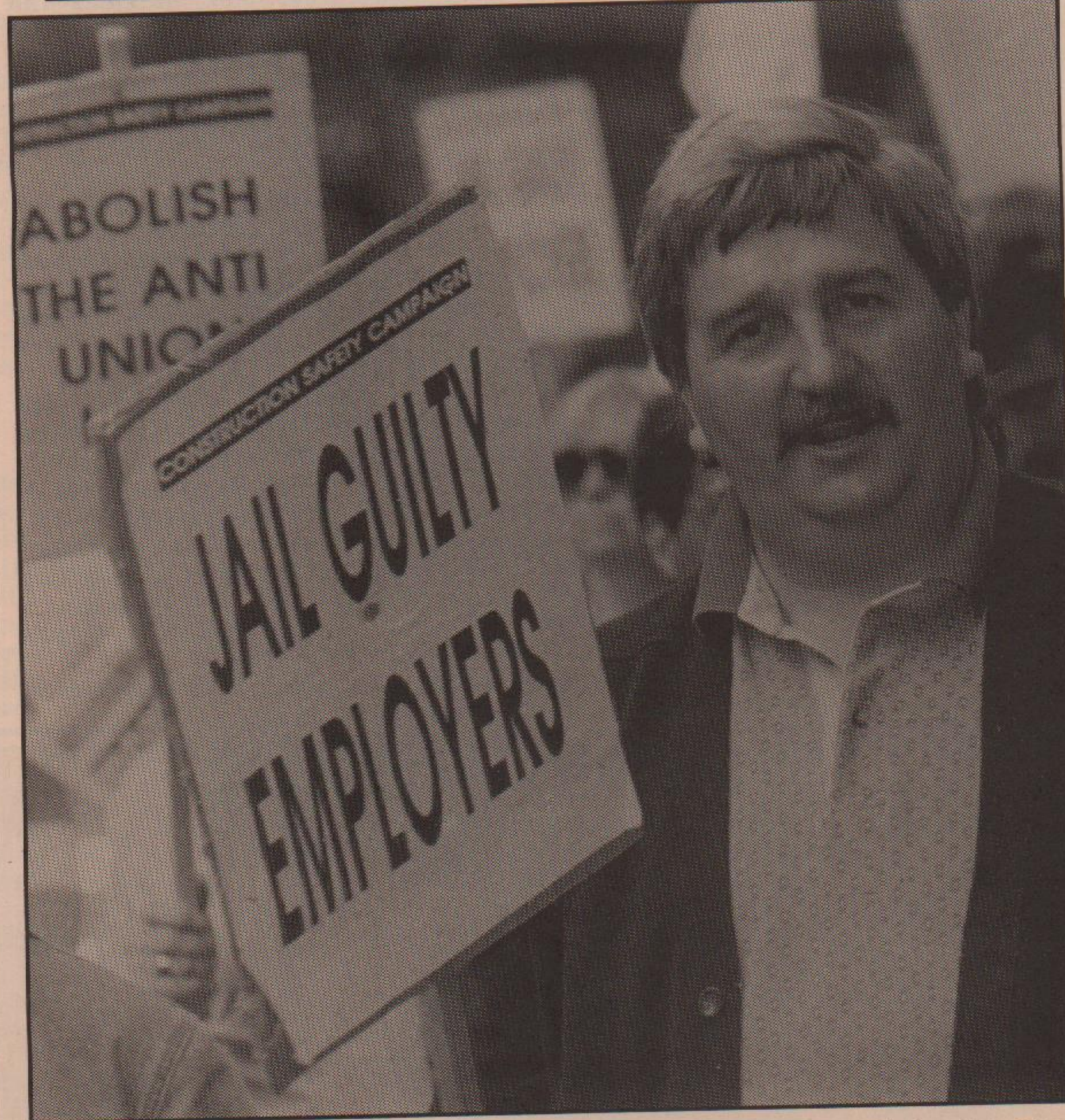
In January 1946 the Italian writer Ignazio Silone came to London to appeal to the British Labour Party for support. The Italian police, the same under Allied military administration as under Mussolini, had joined forces with armed fascist bands. The homes of 60,000 anti-fascists, he said, had been blown up.

In the Far East, where I gather Brian Pearce was stationed, the Allies' aim was to restore traditional colonial rule. Though they had surrendered, Japanese troops were employed to maintain law and order. It led to a vicious civil war in the Dutch East Indies, now Indonesia, and well over 50 years of carnage in Indo-China, now Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos.

Speaking in the House of Commons in December 1945, a rising star of the parliamentary left, the young Lieutenant James Callaghan MP, made a slashing attack on the Labour government's colonial policy. He declared it was not one of liberation; rather, the old chains were being reimposed.

I find it distressing that today Brian Pearce does not seem as left as Callaghan was in 1945.

Raymond Challinor
Whitley Bay, Tyne & Wear



Employers exploit refugees and endanger all site workers

Photo: Alan Clark

Blaming the real enemy

WITH regard to last week's report by Jackie Vance, 'Bosnian "slave labour" on London sites' (Workers Press, 23 July), there are a couple of points I'd like to stress.

Firstly, the exploitation of casual labour picked up by the lorryload from places like Cricklewood and Camden Town, has gone on for a long time. If the unions had fought harder during the boom years, we'd not have the problems we have now. As it is, the Tory government is saying it is up to the individual worker to agree a price with the employer.

In other words, it's government policy to have workers fighting to undercut each other, so the employers can impose what pay and conditions they like. (This isn't quite slavery, because a slave-master had to house and feed his property, however badly, whereas it's all one to a capitalist boss whether you starve in the gutter so long as there's someone to take your place tomorrow.)

The second point is that, as a report on farm labour in last week's 'Big Issue' makes clear, Bosnian and other workers are being driven to accept low wages and harsh exploitation by the government's policy of denying them refugee status or work permits, so they accept whatever's going.

Capitalist 'law and order' turns a blind eye to employers' rackets while terrorising working people. We need a strategy which unites trades unionists and immigrant workers, and clears out the exploiters, by whatever means are necessary. The first thing is to blame the real enemy, the employers and their state.

Colin Pendleton
London SW3

WORKERS PRESS £3,000 MONTHLY FUND

In so far for July: £2,479.56

A FANTASTIC contribution of £500 has come in from a long-time Trotskyist and supporter of Workers Press in Japan! And slightly nearer to Workers Press's offices, a supporter in north-west London says: 'Please find enclosed £50 to cover subscription and something for the fund — many thanks for all the great reading!'

Encouragements like these give us a big lift. In the next two weeks there won't be a new Workers Press. We hope you'll miss us in that time. But on top of that we still need your financial support as the bills don't just go away. There's rent on the office, phone bills, and past printing bills. There's also a whole collection of 'wolves' that we have to fend off from the door week-by-week. August is a difficult time for getting finance in because many people are on holiday. I myself will be on the road to Bosnia, along with others.

Please remember us before you go away and send us an extra contribution. While we're away, try and think of ways you can contribute more to the paper: money, time, reports, pictures, letters, holding fund-raising events, and so on. Also think of how we can make new supporters of the paper from our contacts, how we can get new contacts from people we don't even know, etc.

Mike Cooke

Please send money, payable to 'Workers Press', to: PO Box 735,

Coming soon

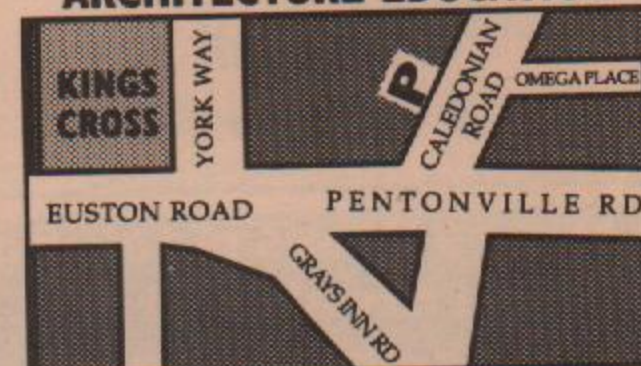
SATURDAY 30 JULY: RMT demonstration in support of the signal workers. Assemble 12.30pm, Grafton Place, off Euston Square, Euston station, London NW1. Rally at Camden Town Hall.

SATURDAY-SUNDAY 24-25 SEPTEMBER: 'Towards a Working Class Politics'. Coventry conference of the Revolutionary Socialist Network. Addresses major issues for socialists attempting to analyse the political situation in Britain and advance the workers' movement. The final session is intended to produce practical results — both political and organisational. Contact for booking form: Dave Spencer, 17 Winifred Avenue, Earlsdon, Coventry CU5 6JT (tel: 0203 676614). Starts on the Saturday at 10.30am, Barras Green social club, Coventry Street, Coventry CV2 4NA. Cost £4/£1



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Marchers fight criminal injustice

THE PROTEST march against the Criminal Justice and Public Order Bill brought an estimated 35,000 cheerful and defiant demonstrators to central London last Sunday.

The mainly young marchers were drawn from environmental campaigns such as that against the M11 link road in East London, from travellers, from those who organise and enjoy rave parties, from hunt saboteurs and from rambles.

Jugglers and clowns enlivened the proceedings while hunt saboteurs kept up a sporadic wail of hunting horns.

The joint organisers were Advance Party, who have been involved in opposing moves to end rave parties, and the Socialist Workers Party.

'We will march and we will picket — Criminal Justice, you can stick it!' was one of the slogans shouted on the route from Hyde Park through Victoria and up Whitehall to Trafalgar Square.

Although individual trades unionists made their way to Hyde Park, there were very few organised delegations. Tower Hamlets UNISON, Thames Television BECTU and Barnsley GMB were honourable exceptions.

University term is over, but Bradford University Student's Union got a delegation together. This highlighted the absence of other students' banners.

The SWP brought speakers from the hospital campaigns against cuts, from the UCW postal workers' union, and some others. Others leafleted for this weekend's railway workers' march in London. The Winston Silcott campaign was also present.

There were mocking cries of 'aliens, aliens!' as David Icke

BY BOB ARCHER

spoke at the rally about 'Pinochio politicians' and 'secret governments' who were turning people into robots. But, the 'Save The World Club Rap', with not a dissimilar message, however, drew applause for a call to 'start in your own back yard'.

And Charter 88 attended the pre-march rally to assure the demonstrators that a written constitution would protect them against the kind of attack on civil rights that the Bill represents.

The Charter 88 speaker also tried to convince demonstrators that the Association of Chief Police Officers was against the Criminal Justice Bill!

Emblazoned

Travellers from the West Country brought a banner emblazoned with the name of Norton-Radstock.

'We're travellers', they told Workers Press. 'We've been persecuted since the beginning of time. They never leave travelling people alone.'

'This Act will be genocide. This Act means that you cannot protest, so they can pass any law they want. We're against anyone, Labour or Tory, passing a law like this.'

'We say to the police: "What about our rights?". They say: "You don't have any rights".'

'If you don't have any rights, you aren't human.'

■ See editorial, page 2.



Thousands of young people joined last Sunday's protest against the Criminal Justice Bill

Sefton UNISON members defy courts

BY STUART CARTER

ABOUT 300 trades unionists demonstrated outside Manchester Crown Court last week in support of two UNISON stewards who are being persecuted under the anti-union laws. Amongst the banners outside the court were UNISON banners from Islington, Camden, Rotherham and Leeds.

Nigel Flanagan and Martin Murphy led a successful strike by 1,200 UNISON members against Sefton council's plans to privatise services. Members voted to strike, but on 27 June the High Court ordered that no action should be taken until a postal ballot had been held.

Strike

Rather than allow the law courts to interfere with the defence of jobs and services the council workers decided to go ahead with the strike. They forced the council to back down. Now the council is using the anti-union laws to prosecute Flanagan and Murphy who face fines or even imprisonment.

UNISON national officials have repudiated the strike instead of mobilising support for the officers of Sefton No. 1 branch. The judge adjourned the case until next week, when there will be further demonstrations outside the court.

For messages of support and further information call 051-928 6140 or fax 051-928 0298.

Capitalist market destroys medical research

LONDON is being destroyed as a world centre of medical research, thanks to 'reforms' in the health service. This is the opinion of a leading gene specialist who is among five top medical researchers who are leaving the NHS.

Professor Bob Williamson of St Mary's Hospital, Paddington, blamed the growth of a competitive business ethic for the undermining of research.

'The NHS reforms mean that on both the research and the medical fronts we are being asked to accept a competitive business ethic instead of a co-operative and caring ethic', says Williamson, who is about to take up a post at the University of Melbourne in Australia.

Williamson is the best-known

of five researchers believed to be planning to quit London. Professor Martin Bobrow, director of the Paediatric Research Unit at Guy's hospital is going to Cambridge, while Professor Katy Davies announced some months ago that she would not be taking up a post at the £21 million clinical sciences centre at Hammersmith hospital, preferring instead to return to Oxford.

One of the five going abroad is Professor Lucio Lazzatto, head of haematology at Hammersmith hospital who is bound for New York. 'What the government is doing to the NHS is

suicidal' he said. 'They are repudiating its research base.'

Professor Keith Johnson is the fifth top-flight researcher said to be about to leave London, although this is yet to be confirmed officially.

Condemning the NHS 'reforms', Williamson said: 'The result is that when I screen people for the cystic fibrosis gene I have to spend weeks collecting their postal codes to reclaim a few pounds from their GPs.'

The standard of the marketplace was not appropriate for the conduct of medical work, he added.

The Thomlinson Committee

that was set up to examine provision of hospital services in the capital is widely regarded as a threat because of the closure of hospitals and the difficulty of supporting those who do major research and thus have high costs, making it difficult for them to compete in the market for patients.

The protests of these eminent specialists highlight the real role of the capitalist market. It is presented by the supporters of capitalism as both a device that allocates resources in the most rational way possible, and something that brings freedom.

Opposite

On both counts it brings the very opposite results. In the craziest, irrational manner it destroys facilities that have been built up over generations. Once leading research centres are broken up they cannot be put back together again.

Scientific investigation is not an individual act, as advocates of the market protest. Every researcher's work is based on the achievements, both past and present, of the whole scientific community in the field of endeavour concerned.

That is why Williamson is absolutely right to insist that the work of scientists can only be fully realised under conditions of real mutual collaboration and not in the rat race that is the capitalist market where the achievements of individual scientists are treated as forms of private property.

Such collaboration will only be fully achieved under socialism.

Consultant quits and accuses trust of fiddling performance figures

THE HEAD of Bury General Hospital's Casualty Department quit last week in protest over poor standards and staffing levels.

Donald McKechnie said he had resigned from his £51,000 a year post after 10 years 'banging my head against a brick wall'.

He also accused management at Bury health area trust of submitting rigged figures to the Department of Health, who are compiling league tables of hospital waiting times.

The Trust claim a survey showed 98 per cent of patients were seen within five minutes of arrival in casualty. Mr McKechnie said the survey was conducted over three days, and during this time the hospital brought in an extra night sister to assess patients arriving.

Mr McKechnie told local papers 'We did a test ourselves last November — 38 per cent of patients were seen within five minutes, and nothing like the 98 per cent that is being claimed. They are basically fiddling the figures.'

Served

Mr McKechnie served on a working party on staffing levels in accident and emergency departments. He said that according to recommendations, the Bury department, which deals with 50,000 patients a year, should have another consultant, five more doctors and six more nurses.

Mr McKechnie said that patients with less serious injuries were suffering and staff were working under great stress.

Mr McKechnie's wife Margaret told local papers: 'Basically we are Tories, and I was looking forward to the health service reforms. But they have gone over the top. I fear management may attempt to discredit him professionally because basically what he has done is correct.'

Mr McKechnie, a member of the globe-trotting South Manchester Accident Rescue team and club doctor for Bury FC and Salford Rugby League club, said: 'It has come to a point where I can no longer compromise my professional standards.'

The Trust's chief executive denied that figures had been fixed, but the local community health council said they are not convinced, and will probably call in the Health Service Commissioner to investigate.

Towards a Working Class Politics

SATURDAY-SUNDAY 24-25 SEPTEMBER

Organised by the Revolutionary Socialist Network (formerly Bristol Marxist Forum)

Addresses major issues for socialists attempting to analyse the political situation in Britain and advance the workers' movement. The final session is intended to produce practical results — both political and organisational.

A bulletin will be circulated prior to the conference containing contributions to the sessions. These must be kept short, non-academic and typed, or written in black ink. They should arrive before 6 August.

Sessions on: The Labour Party; The Trade Union Question; Racism, Fascism and Socialism; The Breaking up of the British State, or 'The British Road to Socialism?'; Towards a Working Class Politics.

Contact for booking form: Dave Spencer, 17 Winifred Avenue, Earlsdon, Coventry CV5 6JT (tel: 0203 676614).

Starts on the Saturday at 10.30am, Barras Green social club, Coventry Street, Coventry CV2 4NA. Cost £4/£1 unwaged.

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Inside left Values

TER 'non-political' fundraising and 'non-political' trade unionism, how about 'non-political' politics? Labour leader Tony Blair has been talking about his party's 'values'. The long-established left Labour weekly, 'Tribune', was given a date when it applied for a free stall at this year's Labour Party conference.

Sorry, 'Tribune' was told, you're too political'. The conference arrangements committee had done sums on the value of foyer space, and decided it wants commercial exhibitors.

Labour headquarters at Walworth Road now has a 'corporate relations' adviser, Nikki Lewis, formerly with City PR firm Deweigerson. How long before Labour follows the example of Tory MPs and rents out parliamentary questions time?

And from selling out, to selling out. Labour-controlled Hackney, East London, the 'poorest borough in Britain', which appointed a £10,000 a year tourism officer this year, has shown further entrepreneurial acumen by winning a contract to advise Slovakia on privatising public services and housing.

To a Labour MP

Dear Syd,
Nice to hear from you, and thanks for asking about the strange correspondence you received from the International Communist Party (ICP), in Rotherham. I expect you've read Workers Aid to Bosnia's reply to their accusation of 'gun-running', and the story about the satellite dish?

As regards the satellite dishes on the roof of your constituency, I don't think they presage a star-wars scenario, and after the poll-tax fiasco, I wouldn't advise the council to call in UN troops.

If you found time from your parliamentary duties to study the extensive booklet the ICP sent out, you were probably pleasantly surprised to learn from it that the ICP is 'an adjunct of the Labour Party trade union bureaucracy'. I notice the ICP's David Hyland doesn't mention this in his letter.

As to its suggestion that we might be part of a 'bourgeois coalition government of national salvation', never, obviously the ICP knows we are not vouchsafed to the rest of the party, but no, I wouldn't say it's a good career move!

It's more likely the Foreign Office will try to enlist the Hyland Fusiliers to stiffen the embargo against Bosnia than the WRP being called to Downing Street 'at some point in the future'.

And, you saw the 'Sunday Express' front-page stories attacking Bosnian refugees, and alleged 'gun-runners'? As an alert opponent of Workers Aid in the National Union of Teachers pointed out, rubber stamps, ink and blotting paper sent to Tuzla schoolchildren could be used to fire pellets at poor Serb children.

By the way, that fiver you owe me for thinking Margaret Beckett would get anywhere, you can donate to Workers Aid.

Regards,

Charlie Pottins

Following a report from East London and City health authority, BERNARD FRANKS details the appalling condition of public health in east London

The first annual public health report of the East London and the City health authority, created on 1 April 1993, is a damning exposure of the government's health and social policy.

The locality is shown to have the worst levels of sickness and disease in Britain, something blamed on the area being at the very top of the national poverty league — and the situation is deteriorating.

'If there were one "magic bullet" that could transform health in the East End, it would be to reduce the extreme poverty experienced by most East Londoners,' has said Dr Jacobson, the new authority's director of public health.

'The new [1991] census points to an unequivocal picture of worsening levels of poverty in East London, and we present in our Report the high levels of ill-health that are one of its many consequences,' says the report.

Deaths from cervical cancer in the region are 27 per cent above the national average; tuberculosis (TB) notifications are up by 37 per

cent nationally).

The report comments on the three London boroughs that, along with the City of London, make up the new authority: 'Evidence from the latest Census shows that not only do Tower Hamlets and Hackney rank as the top two deprived boroughs in the country, but that composite deprivation levels have worsened greatly in Newham (by 25 per cent) and Tower Hamlets (by 16 per cent).'

Meanwhile, government targets for improvements in selected areas of health — blood pressure, cancer, heart disease, drug use, HIV, mental illness, sexual health, TB and smoking — have not been backed by resources, except in the case of HIV and AIDS. A £200,000 commitment from the health authority towards prevention in these areas is declared 'less than a drop in the ocean'.

The new authority covers such well-known areas as Spitalfields, Wapping, and other parts of the Isle of Dogs and Docklands (including Canary Wharf). A culturally diverse region, it has traditionally been a haven for newly arrived immigrants and refugees. It includes a young, mobile sector but also a large number of elderly residents living alone, making a total population of 583,000.

The health authority's report 'Health in the East End' is in the great tradition of exposures of conditions in the capital: Frederick Engels's 'Condition of the Working Classes in England in 1844' (a revolutionary exposure); Henry Mayhew's four volumes on 'London Labour and the London Poor' (1851-62); Andrew Mearns's pamphlet 'The Bitter Cry of Outcast London' (1883); Charles Booth's incredible street-by-street, 17-volume 'Life and Labour of the People in London' (1903); Jack London's 'People of the Abyss' (1902); and Sylvia Pankhurst's 'Home Front' (a view of east London conditions during World War I).

Some of these publications had a huge impact, inspiring the labour and socialist movements and frightening the authorities.

'We are benevolent because we are in fright', acknowledged a writer in the 'Saturday Review' following the rush by the rich to subscribe

'Over 70 per cent of east Londoners exhibit one or more of the factors that contribute to the risk of heart problems.'

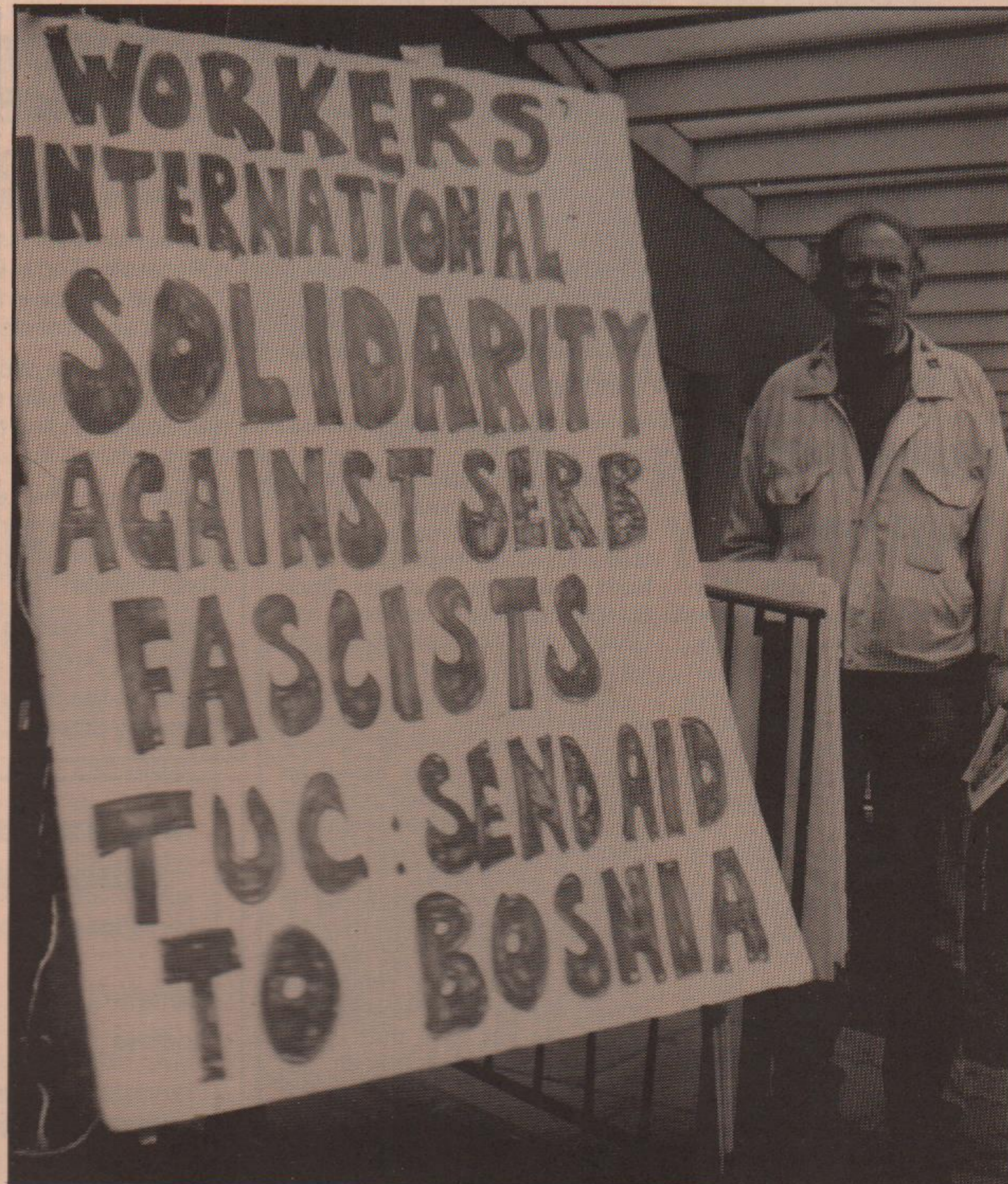
cent over a few years ago and are seven times the national rate; death rates from coronary heart disease are higher than average; deaths from lung cancer are 41 per cent above average for men and 31 per cent for women; and levels of most mental disorders 'are likely to be higher than nationally'.

These shock results are seen as a direct result of conditions which include 24 per cent male unemployment (11 per cent nationally); 20,000 homeless people (13,000 of whom are in temporary accommodation), with the real figure nearer 40,000; nearly 30 per cent of householders being on incomes below £4,500 a year (4 per cent nationally); and 25 per cent of local workers being semi-skilled or unskilled (18 per

Poverty sickness the East



East London has the worst levels of sickness and disease in Britain — bla



The Workers International has fought for workers' aid to Tuzla and Bosnia

Tuzla: a mu

This article by SEJFUDIN TOKIC, Bosnian MP for the Union of Bosnian Social Democrats, gives an insight into coming political struggles in an area of Bosnia-Herzegovina centred on the mining town of Tuzla in the north. It first appeared in 'War Report', June/July 1994.

RENOWNED for its pluralism and civil rights is Tuzla — Bosnia-Herzegovina's second largest city — which is destined to be either a relic of the past or a model upon which a multinational Bosnian state is to be built.

To believe the latter would be optimistic, but perhaps not unrealistic. Even now, Tuzla, which had a pre-war population of 120,000 but now has an estimated population of 200,000 (of whom roughly 80,000 are refugees), has preserved a great deal of what made Bosnia exceptional. Its multi-ethnicity and its rejection of divisions between the people are a sore point for all three of the ethnic/national oligarchies.

The fascist aims of Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic are based on the belief that a shared life is impossible and that territorial division is inevitable. Tuzla

stands as a glaring contradiction to this, and its survival makes the warring of the Serbs hard to explain. Karadzic's various proposals to Bosnian president Alija Izetbegovic for an exchange of territory in Tuzla are, in large part, an attempt to destroy the evidence that proves Karadzic's great lie.

Tuzla highlights the political failure of the Croatian nationalists too. Even ignoring the preferences of the city's historically 'cosmopolitan' centre, there is very little support, even in wholly Croatian villages, for the ethnic parties. In 1990, the social democrats won the elections; the nationalist Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) attracted only a small percentage (4 per cent) of the vote. In the greater Tuzla region, the social democrats, led by Tuzla's mayor, Selim Beslagic, and his Union of Bosnian Social

ty and ess in st End



ed on the area being at the top of the national poverty league

to charities for the poor after the appearance of Mearns's pamphlet. Booth, meanwhile, effectively blew away the view that poverty was a product of laziness and shirking, showing that more than 50 per cent of the poor were actively employed but were so low-paid that they must still be classed as impoverished.

The present report details an equally appalling situation across a range of health subjects today. So what has changed?

Cancer

ONE-QUARTER of all deaths in Britain are from cancers. Aside from the figures mentioned above for lung cancer and cervical cancer, cervical smear tests were carried out on only 62 per cent of women eligible for such tests in east London in the last five years, as against 80 per cent nationally.

A local study by the health authority has shown that test uptakes

'The rate of coronary illness is above average in east London and is one-third higher again in the area's Asian community.'

can be high where good administrative support exists and where access to a woman doctor is available. Breast-cancer screening is also low at 45 per cent, compared with 71 per cent nationally. True, skin-cancer incidence is very low indeed — few people in the area can afford extended holidays in the sun.

Heart disease

CORONARY illness is the nation's number one killer and Britain has the highest death toll in the world.

In turn, the rate is above average in east London and is one-third higher again in the area's Asian community. Angina, the chest pain resulting from heart disease, is 50 per cent above average.

Over 70 per cent of east Londoners exhibit one or more of the risk factors contributing to heart problems: poor diet (high fat, high sugar); obesity; smoking; drinking to excess; lack of exercise; high blood pressure; and diabetes.

The report reveals a 'considerable unmet demand for heart surgery', adding: 'We will not be able to meet the need within existing resources, yet substantial additional resources are unlikely to be available for secondary services in the foreseeable future.'

Ominously, the report warns that it will be 'assessing the cost of heart operations'.

HIV/AIDS

NEWHAM has the highest incidence of HIV in pregnant women in Britain — one in 200. City and Hackney has one in 500 and Tower Hamlets one in 1,300.

Mental health

A HIGH incidence of emotional disturbance and other mental disorders is put down to east London poverty and unemployment. The report confirms that mental health in this area of high unemployment has been poorly served for years, yet depression, suicide and attempted suicide increase tenfold among the jobless and are even higher among the long-term unemployed.

Homelessness is another factor. Twenty per cent of single, homeless people in the area are diagnosed schizophrenic and 15 per cent have drug or alcohol problems.

Young people are especially at risk. Three or four adolescents brought to Homerton hospital in any one week have tried to kill themselves.

Meanwhile, bed-and-breakfast accommodation has a devastating effect on children, causing disturbed sleep, poor eating, depression, temper tantrums, aggressive behaviour and bed-wetting.

Members of ethnic communities suffer the additional pressures of racism, while refugees (20,000 in Hackney alone) have also faced the trauma of being uprooted to escape oppression and then of resettlement in a strange culture. Surveys in the Isle of Dogs, Wapping, Bethnal Green and Globe Town found low levels of community support and poor availability of psychiatric beds, yet in a crisis there is little alternative to hospital.

Desperately needed are: a range of housing for mentally disturbed people, meaningful daytime activities, improved mental health education, improved out-of-hours help, better services for ethnic communities, better support

at all levels, an end to joblessness, and an end to poverty.

Tuberculosis

TB is on the increase in many Western countries — and in more virulent forms. In Britain, following a declining incidence since 1912, the numbers rose by 37 per cent in east London in the period 1986-93.

Doctors call for better screening and immunisation, but also point to the need to eliminate homelessness, overcrowded and damp housing — 'Newham contains some of the poorest-quality housing in the country' — and poor diet.

Other problems

■ In 1993, 520 cases of food poisoning were notified in east London, a rise from 18.8 per 100,000 people in 1985 to 90.7 per 100,000. There has been a general increase throughout the country.

■ There are an estimated 2,000 to 4,000 injecting drug users in the area.

■ Conception rates for females aged 11 to 15 are higher than average. Hackney's abortion rate is double the national figure.

■ Large numbers of elderly people living alone are in desperate need of central heating, help with household chores, chiropody and other personal support.

■ Accidents on the road and at home are at such a high level that there is an 'iceberg of injury and disability'.

■ Asthma hospitalisation rates are high for all age groups. According to some reports, the disease is threatening epidemic proportions, yet London hospitals do not have the bed capacity to cope with a major emergency.

Sadly, the report does not relate the statistics on disease in the area to the condition of the health services: the problems met by community-based provision and the crisis in the hospitals.

However, its authors are to be congratulated for stating unequivocally that their battle with ill-health constitutes 'a local war against poverty' which 'must be seen against the backdrop of government housing, employment and fiscal policy'.

■ The East London and the City health authority's first annual public health report is available from: Tradegar House, 97-99 Bow Road, London E3 2AN.

Multi-ethnic stronghold in Bosnia

Democrats (UBSD), continue to govern.

Tuzla also represents a threat to the Party of Democratic Action (SDA), the leading Muslim party in Bosnia-Herzegovina. At a meeting of the SDA's executive council this spring, just before the signing of the Washington agreement, Tuzla was targeted as a priority electoral region, where every effort was to be made to undermine Beslagic's political base — from manipulating the Bosnian Muslims' plight for the party's own ends, through using the dispersal of humanitarian aid for the purposes of blackmail, to smearing the authorities of 'red Tuzla'.

Avoided

During May there have been visits to Tuzla by a stream of members of the Bosnian presidency and leaders of the Islamic religious community (before, the city was avoided like the plague), while SDA leaders have literally been on guard in the town. Hundreds of posters with various political messages are daily being stuck on walls, although the front line is only 20 kilometres away.

Many of these posters are financed directly by different organisations in Arabic countries.

The nationalist parties as a rule declare all non-nationalists to be either 'disloyal Croats', 'treacherous Serbs', or 'bad Muslims'. However, this vilification of the whole of Tuzla only brings the people together even more in their resistance to aggressive totalitarianism and attempts to impose a

keep out their non-nationalist opponents. The federation accord recognises two nations — Croat and 'Bosniac' — and the HDZ and SDA want to be their respective representatives. The HDZ and SDA are relying on the support of former Communists in the Party of Democratic Change (SDP), led by Nijaz Durakovic, to marginalise mayor Beslagic.

For their part, the UBSD and

'The fascist aims of Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic are based on the belief that a shared life is impossible and that territorial division is inevitable. Tuzla stands as a glaring contradiction to this ...'

feeling of guilt for things they are proud of.

Although elections are scheduled for the coming autumn, under the newly adopted constitution of the Croat-Muslim Bosnia-Herzegovina federation, it is increasingly apparent that both the HDZ and the SDA are seeking to postpone them in an attempt to

Beslagic argue that the accord should be just one of the steps toward the reintegration of Bosnia-Herzegovina, and that Bosnia is not divisible, whether between the two or three nations. The social democrats have stepped up their activities, emphasising their support for a unitary, multi-ethnic Bosnia-Herzegovina and insisting

on the protection of the centuries-old Bosnian identity from being undermined by nationalist ideology.

Beslagic's UBSD has gained the backing of leading European social democrats, which has led to charges of outside interference. He is very popular among the electorate, with opinion polls consistently putting him ahead of president Izetbegovic.

Dominance

The HDZ and the SDA are not the only nationalist parties vying for dominance in Tuzla. The Liberal Bosniac Organisation (LBO) under Adil Zulfikarpasic is also active here. And two new Croat parties have sought to take advantage of the HDZ's weakness following its policy debacles in central Bosnia: the Republican Party and the Croatian Peasants' Party, led by Bosnian presidency members Stjepan Kljucic and Ivo Komsic respectively.

Tuzla has also witnessed the emergence of many smaller parties, like the Bosnian People's Party, the Party of Private Initia-

tive, the Bosnian Youth Union, and several spin-offs of the Croatian Party of Rights. The Serb Consultative Council, which has formed in opposition to Radovan Karadzic, is also attracting attention among moderate Serbs here.

And so, on the edge of the 'northern corridor' [the principal road route in northern Bosnia], where thousands of soldiers are poised for what could be Bosnia's next major battle, Tuzla lives its special life.

Memories

There is enough food and electricity in the town, industrial activity has resumed, and there are 15 different newspapers. The various election posters do not seem to excite its citizens. Their memories of the first multi-party elections in 1990 and the loud promises made to them of 'With us into Europe!' are too fresh in their minds.

As far as they can see, Europe exists less and less. Indeed, perhaps a united Europe's last hope is this city in northern Bosnia that continues to resist the attacks of national fascism.

A column about communism

SOME 20-odd years ago I spent 18 months with my family in a remote 'semi-derry' in the quiet hill country where Shropshire marches with Wales.

We had neither power nor piped water. Our light at night came from softly hissing Tilley lamps; our heating, from the fallen branches, generally on the damp side, that we spent hours gathering in the fields around; our water, from an ancient rusty pump that sucked it out of a deep well.

Advised and from time to time helped by a green-fingered friend, we grew our own vegetables with some success. Our Rhode Island Reds were less successful, but did yield us three or four eggs a week.

Though I was arrested and hauled back to London for 48 hours to answer a charge of non-payment of rates, this was the only interruption to a much-needed breathing-space during which we managed to get away from creditors and bailiffs and otherwise solve or side-step the problems that had beset us.

Our nearest neighbour, a mile or so up the track, was a struggling small farmer and caravan-dweller with whom we didn't altogether hit it off at first, when we failed to persuade him not to dump a succession of smashed-up cars into the stream that ran through the dingle in front of our cottage.

But when we turned up at sunrise every morning for a few weeks to help him pick his large crop of potatoes, in danger of rotting in the ground because he couldn't afford paid help, relations improved dramatically.

From then on, as long as we stayed there, we never had to buy another potato. And the friendship thus made has lasted to this day.

That was how I learnt a lesson I had long paid lip-service to but had not yet really taken on board: that few things bring people closer together than shared labour and a helping hand in time of trouble — or, in other words, a joint struggle of one sort or another: against a heartless boss or a greedy landlord or an overweening state, or simply against inexorable nature.

I WAS reminded the other day of this adventurous, if often uncomfortable, time in my life when an old friend — well, I've known him on and off since 1957 — started criticising Workers Press in general and this column in particular.

'You never, ever, write anything about socialism', he complained. 'Surely a socialist paper, and a socialist columnist, ought to be writing about socialism all the time.'

This is an irresistible challenge, as he must have well have known. But it turns out to be easier to accept it than to know precisely how to meet it.

For me, socialism — or, more exactly, communism — is essentially about straightening out human relationships that have become distorted, tangled, mystified, *dehumanised*, thanks to the division of humanity into classes defined by who owns what and who exploits whom.

The classic texts of communist literature talk about 'relations of production', and make it clear that these less than human — indeed, offensively *inhuman* — relations of production, which in their totality are the basis of capitalist society, are nobody's deliberate choice.

They are the past we have inherited. And it is these crazily inhuman relationships which, in the last analysis, are responsible for the crisis of misery and starvation which is steadily engulfing our planet, and which must be swept away if humanity is to avoid disaster.

I WAS not always like this. Most cultures have at least ves-

PERSONAL COLUMN

tiges of traditions dating from those early times before there was property in means of production — those times when people responded to simple human needs in a simple human way.

They welcomed strangers, fed the hungry, gave water to the thirsty, and cared for the sick. The community not only had a 'house-warming' feast when two young people started out in life together — they built them a new dwelling and made sure it was furnished with whatever cooking utensils and comforts were that culture's norm.

They shared fully both the hard times and the good things of life. They helped each other with the harvest and they freely gave away any surplus of seeds or fruit — as people still do in rural Shropshire and, I'm sure, in a lot of other places too.

That's what we used to call 'primitive' communism. Apart from its limited technology, it's hard to see what was so primitive about it.

For me, communism means a return to those truly human relationships of caring and sharing, but on 'a higher level' — i.e. on the basis of a modern technology that could, if properly organised and rationally planned, provide teeming abundance for every member of the human race without exception.

What's more, communism will give people not only material abundance, but also time in which to develop themselves as all-round human beings, and the resources to do so.

For with a drastic reduction in the necessary hours of labour, everyone without exception will be freed from the constraints of having to do one specialised, often physically exhausting, and very often soul-destroying job for the whole of a lifetime.

Communism will strike every last fetter off human creativity. 'And above this ridge, new peaks will rise.'

HAUNTED, as all of us have been, by those television pictures of the anguish of the Rwandan refugees, some readers may feel more than usually inclined to dismiss this prospect as an airy-fairy Utopian vision.

But the deepening world crisis poses the alternatives more and more starkly. It's *either* this present chaos and madness, getting steadily and often dramatically worse before our eyes, or the communist alternative.

This is the knowledge, and the hope, that sustains those of us who see the rebuilding of the Fourth International as the only way forward.

Shome mishtakes, surely?

IN the latest issue (Summer 1994) of that provocative journal 'Casablanca', there is a reference to one 'Gerry Healey', former leader of the Workers Revolutionary Party.

In the latest issue (14 July 1994) of that unprovocative journal 'The New York Review of Books', there is an advertisement for a book entitled 'Garry Healy', showing how its subject allegedly 'developed Marxism as a creative method for analyzing and changing today's world'.

It has a foreword by Ken Livingstone MP, and a fold-out diagram, with laboriously handwritten correction, which alone is surely worth the asking price of £19.50 (sterling drafts only).

Peter Fryer

Rwanda: tribal myth

The following extracts on the situation in Rwanda, from an article by Ludo Martens in the 'Africa World Review' (May-September 1994), raise many issues from the viewpoint of Trotsky's analysis of semi-colonial countries, which in the epoch of imperialism find it impossible to

develop an 'independent' bourgeoisie. National self-determination in these countries requires the growing over of revolution into socialism. The concept of 'neo-colonialism' used by the author is an attempt to understand this.

Belgian instructors and have attended Belgian military training schools are precisely those who have turned to Nazi-type barbarity?'

THE future of the Rwandan Patriotic Front seems very uncertain. The RPF is a broad collection of nationalists who favour of radical change. It is a continuation of the tradition of popular struggles which started at the beginning of the 1960s.

But the RPF still has not established any clear plan about education, and organising and mobilising the masses; nor does it aim at, completely dismantling the structures of the neo-colonial state. As for its military forces, they are disciplined, competent and exemplary. But it is conducting a war for the people and not a people's war.

In these conditions, after its victory, will the RPF be able to prevent the emergence of 'bourgeois' influence within its membership?

In order to rule, the RPF will be compelled by the West to put up with this bourgeoisie, purged of its most compromising elements, which has been in power since 1962.

If the RPF accepts the economic support of the International Monetary Fund, will it be able to keep corruption out of its leadership and will it not find itself lost in the maze of intrigues and rivalries among various 'bourgeois' clans and rival imperial powers?

In Belgium, Erik Deryke, a social-democratic secretary of state, has already noted the limits of change: 'Africa is our natural commercial market. If we manage to establish economic processes here, then commercial outlets will develop for our good.'

And this social democrat, addressing the RPF, added: 'A new government will first have to show its competence, not only towards Belgium, but also towards donors, the World Bank and the IMF.'

Can the RPF break through those limits set by neo-colonialism without embarking on a genuinely popular revolution which aims at achieving total independence and socialism?

THE killings [in Rwanda] have nothing to do with the 'age-old' hostility between Tutsis and Hutus. This is a Belgian colonial myth. Pre-colonial society in Rwanda was made up of stable communities which had established laws and traditions enabling Tutsis and Hutus to live in peace side by side.

In the Kinyarwanda language, the word Hutu describes a subordinate role and not an ethnic group. The Tutsis were lords and masters, whereas the Hutus were vassals and servants. The social status of a Tutsi could change and he could become a Hutu.

At the time and following their 'divide-and-rule' policy, Belgian colonial authorities deepened the gap between Tutsis and Hutus and made the division both an ethnic and a racial one.

During the 1950s, when independence was in the air many young intellectuals, radical nationalists came from Tutsi origins. In 1959, Belgium organised a real Hutu counter-revolution, mobilising the mostly Catholic Hutu majority against the nationalists, on the pretext that it had to 'fight Tutsi feudalism'!

The colonial army, local administration and the Church formed a 'united front' with the Hutu majority based on an anti-Tutsi policy.

In the following years many Tutsis were massacred and more than half a million Rwandans had to flee their country. It is this Belgian approach, adopted since 1959, which lies behind these Nazi-type racist massacres committed lately by the Habyarimana clan.

NEO-COLONIALISM makes it impossible for any kind of

genuine independence and national development to take place. For example, coffee provides 62 per cent of Rwanda's external revenue. As prices plummeted in 1987, so did Rwanda's exchange rates. This led in 1990 to a £63 million loss (or 5 per cent drop) in its gross national product.

Official development aid amounted to £23 million but was a mere 30 per cent 'compensation' for what the West was taking from Rwanda via a drop in prices for basic commodities!

The gross domestic product fell by 17 per cent between 1987 and 1992. The national debt (the external debt) amounted to £545 million in 1991, and the per capita annual revenue was £174. Eighty-five per cent of Rwandans live beneath the poverty line and 33 per cent of children suffer from malnutrition.

The Rwandan bourgeoisie, which was born and brought up in the shadow of Belgium, has been a parasitic class. Totally linked to Belgium, the Habyarimana clan has been in control of

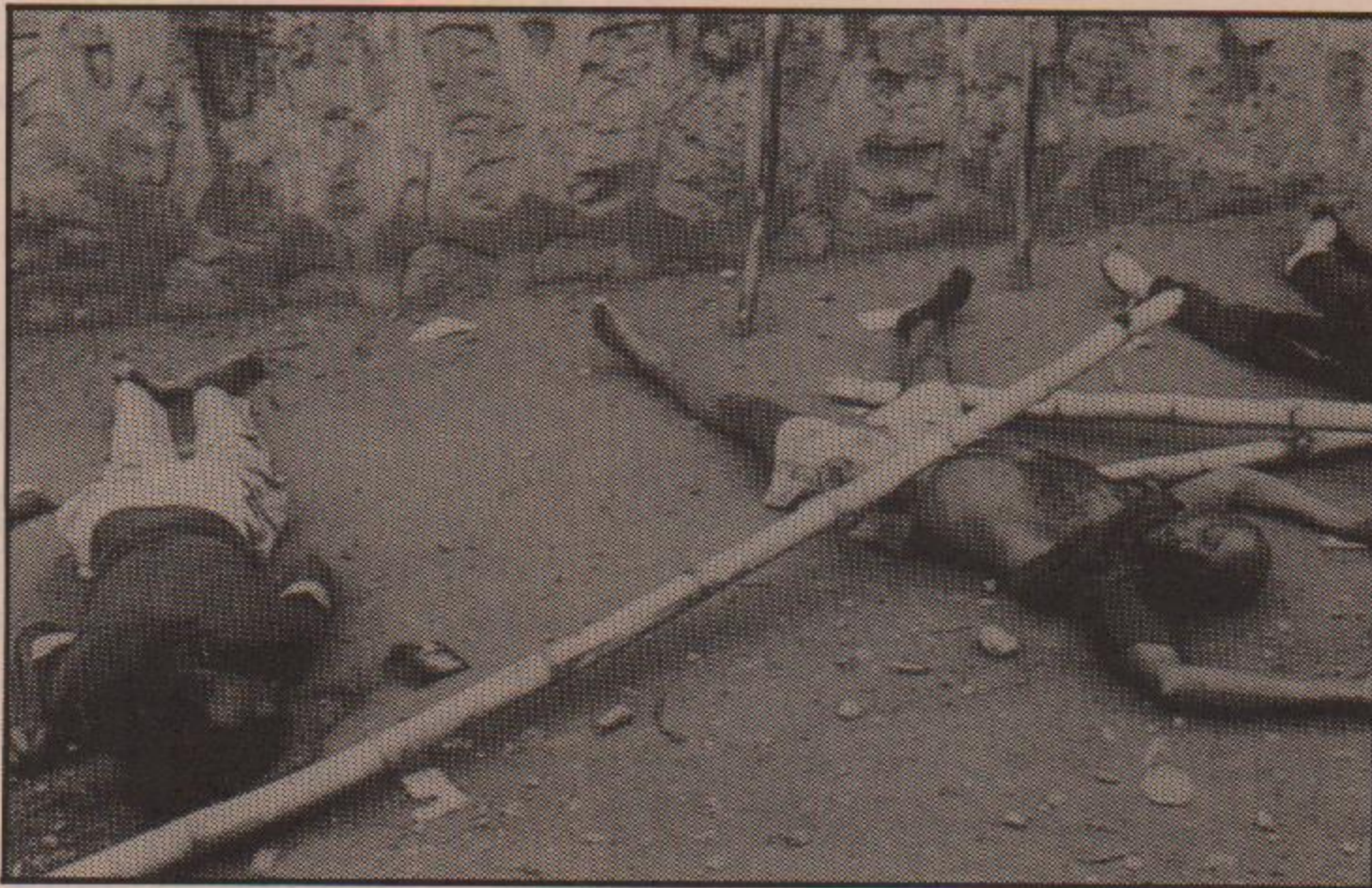
the main banks and import-export companies and involved in drug trafficking.

The wealth of the Habyarimana family is estimated at £45 million, equivalent to the total value of Rwandan exports to Belgium for a four-year period. It is only by creating a clan-based army, trained for repressions and killings, that this bourgeoisie has been able to maintain its dictatorial rule.

THE presidential guards and the extreme partisans in the army searched through every single house in some districts of Kigali, with lists of Tutsi and Hutu supporters of the opposition.

The guards are from the 100 per cent Hutu national guard, first set up in 1962 by Belgian colonel Guy Logiest and whose first commander was Juvenal Habyarimana. The presidential guards have always been part of an elite army, trained and supported by Belgium.

How is it that soldiers who have received training from



Colonial policy lies behind the Nazi-type racist massacres

Television

Wonderful World Cup football

Review by Roger Horrocks

MUFFLED drums beat in the Horrocks household; faces are wan; food can only be toyed with. Yes, the World Cup is over.

A month of sheer joy has come to an end. The final — between Italy and Brazil — pitted two of the world's most skilful teams against each other, and two phenomenally skilful players, Italy's Roberto Baggio and Brazil's magnificent Romario. Unfortunately, as so often, the final turned into a dreary defensive affair. But the whole tournament has been wonderful for football enthusiasts, although perhaps not for non-enthusiasts!

Bonanza

Paul Day showed in an article in Workers Press (9 July) how football is pumped up by big money — one reason the World Cup was held in America was to produce a commercial bonanza by means of advertising and sponsorship. The games shown on ITV were stuffed with commercials for Adidas, Nike, and so on. Sometimes you felt you could see the referee waiting to start a game because the TV companies hadn't finished their commercial breaks.

This World Cup has also shown a truly dark side to the game — one Colombian player was shot dead on his return home — possibly involving

drugs gangs. And the great Argentinian player Diego Maradona went home in disgrace after a failed drugs test.

Football is of great interest historically and politically, especially in England where, in the 19th century, it developed along very clear class lines. The Football Association was originally founded by the public schools, which looked askance at the working-class clubs that formed in the big cities. But football became the working-class sport, and the middle and upper classes took refuge in rugby, tennis and cricket.

Football has been schizophrenic: it is the people's game, the great proletarian art-form, the carnival of skill and strength, yet it has also been used politically as a vehicle for nationalism, racism and sexism, and now we see it subject to huge commercial exploitation and hype.

The World Cup has been shown on both BBC and ITV, and certain differences between the two channels have stood out. Some ITV commentators have shown a parochial attitude towards foreign teams and players that has been embarrassing to listen to. The most infamous occasion involved the South Korean team: commentators made jokes about their names,

and even produced the old racist chestnut, that they all look alike. It's incredible that this garbage can still be heard on prime time TV.

But this example also shows how sports such as football have been associated with racism and, as feminists have shown, used as a means of denigrating and excluding women. It is vital that socialists are able to extract sport from this reactionary ideological background.

The working class can say legitimately: this is our game, and we refuse to let it be hijacked by the corrupt money-bags such as Robert Maxwell, who tried to buy and sell football clubs like candy bars.

Some wonderful games have been shown on TV in the past month — perhaps the finest being the Romania/Argentina game, full of great skill and desperate drama. This was also Maradona's swansong — probably the most talented player for a generation.

Football does make for superb television — the constant movement, the colour and noise, the athleticism of the players, the occasional flashes of beauty, the approach of full-time producing a dramatic crescendo.

I am sure certain memories

are permanently etched on my mind — who can forget the way Romario ripples through the opposing defences, the sublime geometry of the Romanian Hagi's passing, those ten minutes in the Italy/Bulgaria game when Baggio lifted the game to a dreamlike state of perfection. Many thanks to these great artists!

Fanatical

With good timing BBC2 has started a new series, A WHOLE DIFFERENT BALL GAME, looking at different societies through their sporting obsessions. The programme for 19 July, 'Brazil: A Nation in Football Boots', looked at the fanatical devotion to football in Brazil, and showed very clearly how football acts as a kind of narcotic. One young player on the beach said candidly: 'When I watch Brazil play, I forget the corruption and the killing of street-kids.' For many young children, football offers the only chance of a career, just as in America boxing and basketball have been the outlets for young black men.

This programme showed the wonderful ability that Brazilians have for football, but also how it is used as an 'opium of the people', channelling their energy and aggression, and helping them forget the poverty and oppression around them.

No compromise possible in Serbian-Bosnian war

A CRUCIAL point has been reached in the war in Bosnia. The carve-up cannot work; there is no possible compromise — the war has gone too far. Neither Bosnia nor Serbia can withdraw.

Three years of negotiations show the bankruptcy of Serbian policies. They have used divisions amongst the imperialist powers and the Stalino-fascist bloc. But they did not expect the Bosnian people to be able to hold out against them.

There is a real danger of generalised war in the Balkans. It only needs a spark to ignite the situation in Kosovo. The Kosovan leaders take a position of peaceful resistance; but police provocations mean that the people cannot avoid conflict.

A war in Kosovo means the involvement of Greece in support of Serbia, and Turkey could get involved against Serbia. Macedonia is now a US military base.

Serbia's President Milosevic is aware of the dangers, but his back is to the wall. The Serbian bureaucracy cannot openly confront the working class. But there are fascist gangs led by Siselj and Arkan. Serbia is only one step away from open dictatorship and it needs only a small transition for it to become a fascist dictatorship.

Cynical

Siselj and Arkan are openly cynical. 'Support a communist? Maybe today, but tomorrow is our turn!', they say.

Siselj should not be underestimated: there are lumpen elements ready to die under his leadership.

Milosevic is trying to end the war in Bosnia, but the situation is out of his control. He calls for Karadzic to accept the latest 'peace' plan in the hope that this stance will lead to a lifting of the embargo against Serbia to alleviate the situation at home.

The embargo means that the people are living on a tightrope. They cannot feed the children.

This article is based on a recent discussion between Workers Press and a member of the Workers International to Rebuild the Fourth International in Serbia



Kosovo: a war here means the involvement of Greece in support of Serbia, and Turkey could get involved against Serbia

Last year there was hyper-inflation, and the state bought foreign currency. Now there is relative stability but the cost of living is much higher.

Milosevic can only rule on the basis of an enormous strengthening of the state apparatus. The ideological explanation that Greater Serbia needs strong state forces has meant the imposition of a greatly increased, strongly armed police force which is more powerful than the army.

This police force, which mobilises those who are prepared to kill their mother and father for money, openly supports Siselj. There is no difference between the police, the gangsters and the fascist gangs who terrorise the people daily. In Serbia there are checkpoints, controls, and 45 DM on the spot

finances if you don't fasten your seatbelt.

The atmosphere is electric. The working class, which could not oppose Milosevic in the war, could stand up against him in the peace. There could be a unity of the workers in the countryside and those in heavy industry. What to do with the one million 'surplus' workers? The government has a 'plan':

- That 100,000 can return to the countryside.
- That 70,000-80,000 can go into small private enterprises which have no chance of success.
- But what of the remaining 700,000? It is a dangerous situation!

Serbia is not yet a fascist state. The working class has not been defeated.

A crucial problem is the present state of the working class.

Generally indoctrinated by fascism, becoming more and more oppressed in daily life, there is an accumulation of misery. There were lots of strikes in the past. Today there are no strikes and factories are closing. But it is the calm before the storm.

There is a deep feeling in the working class for a general strike. But the official unions give 100 per cent support to Milosevic.

The independent unions are not recognised by the government and have no negotiating rights. There are some good young officials, but so far, in practice, they have accepted unemployment by carrying out non-political economic struggles.

The formation of a party of the Fourth International could

change this situation, and develop the independent unions.

There are some 1,000 intellectuals, concentrated in Belgrade. They are honest democratic people. There is a great fear of the regime amongst them.

Every Saturday they have meetings at which lectures are given on films, poetry, on the war, etc. But these are like collective psychotherapy groups.

There are no young people, no students at these weekly meetings. These intellectuals speak well, they have a great deal of information, but they are ideologically impotent. They do not put forward, or try to tackle the problems of the working class in Serbia.

They only talk of the war in Bosnia. There is a need to deepen the discussion to fashion

these circles on the lines of the 'Petofi Circle' before the 1918 Hungarian Revolution. Such development would be the yearning of a rising movement.

The intellectuals have a great deal of information but the people of Serbia have very little. They have a deformed image — the press tell them the rumours of concentration camps and the bombing of Sarajevo are 'Western slanders'.

Tremendous

Amongst the working class there is a tremendous level of resignation — unknown in the history of the Balkans. Previous living standards were comparatively high. That life has broken up, and the struggles that began before the war have ceased. Now there is not even a standard against the attacks on living standards.

The political problem is that of the ideological failure of Stalinism. But the working class is not for the monarchy — they are not for privatisation.

Trades unionists say: 'We have built these enterprises over 50 years with our blood and sweat. We will not let the armchair profiteers buy them for a handful of rice.'

The third element is the youth. The left intelligentsia are dismissive of the urban youth. They say that they are apolitical. This is not true. These young people are not engaged in nationalism. They have to build their future. Many of them reject fascist barbarism.

Amongst these groups, the trades unionists, the intellectuals and the young people there is a response to the simple and logical positions of the Fourth International.

They are surprised and amazed when a member of Workers International speaks of the independence of the working class and the necessity for the reconstruction of consciousness through the struggle for a programme to meet the crisis.

Has the sun set on the SACP?

BY NELSON LANGA

IN 1991 Yevgeny Makhov, head of the Central Control Commission of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), indicated that the party was discussing the 'rehabilitation' of Leon Trotsky, who was murdered by Stalin's butchers.

Had not events in the then Soviet Union and eastern Europe overtaken the CPSU, such an act of rehabilitation would have presented an embarrassing problem for Stalinists the world over. The Kremlin-controlled South African Communist Party (SACP) would have been no exception.

Have events in South Africa overtaken the SACP too? Has the SACP placed socialism firmly on the agenda or has the SACP been placed on the capitalist agenda? For those in the SACP who do not know, a careful reading of Adrian Hadland's article on that organisation in the 'Business Day' (11 July 1994) would be illuminating.

For more serious people inside and outside the SACP placing the SACP in the political spectrum may be a confusing task, especially when its leaders shout on public platforms of the oppressed that 'socialism is the future' while on the other hand

they ask in conscience-salving rhetoric 'has socialism failed?'

The best possible indicator of the place of the SACP in the South African and international political spectrum lies in the attendance of some of its leaders at churches and synagogues. Like the biblical promise of a second coming the SACP's Kremlin-inspired formulation of the two-stage theory of struggle in South Africa is to believers more an act of faith than a theory of deliverance.

The two-stage theory postulated that there was a need for a two-stage approach to the struggle for socialism in this country: firstly the struggle to achieve a 'national democratic' state, and then the commencement of a socialist-inspired struggle once the first stage had been achieved.

Difference

The basic difference between the SACP and real socialists is that real socialists believe that the socialist struggle cannot be divorced from the struggle for liberation. Any notion of an exclusive nationalist struggle is anathema to real socialists. The struggle for socialism is one continuous uninterrupted struggle.

If one has to strip the two-stage theory bare it is nothing more than a feeble attempt to

clothe the theoretical fault lines of the analytical mistake that this country was a colony 'of a special type'.

The colonisation of this and other countries has more to do with the growth of imperial capital and capitalist expansion than with race. It is the continuation of this capitalist domination that concerns the South African and world socialist movement.

Despite the promises of 'left wing' (SACP and COSATU) leaders in the government of national unity (GNU) the interest of the working class cannot be met by them.

Whilst these elements of the GNU and their sidekicks who walk the corridors of power will claim that they are frustrated in their efforts at meeting working class interests and are hamstrung by 'nationalist' elements of government, the truth is that the betrayal of these interests occurred long before their ascent to power. This is nowhere more clearly illustrated than in the infantile calls for a moratorium on strike action and a strategic perspective on power sharing.

These more than anything else have brought about a 'sunset' for the SACP.

Touting the ANC-piloted flagship 'Reconstruction and Development Programme' (RDP) as a panacea for the

major evils of apartheid will not mitigate the betrayal that began long before the ascent to power of the National Party in 1948.

Just as the apartheid regime made martyrs of villains, the capitalists' assertion that the SACP is 'communist/socialist' enables it to pull off an ideological fraud as a result of the poverty of theory amongst leading members of mass-based organisations, especially those of the union movement.

By attempting to crush the orthodox Stalinist Harry Gwala, who is seen by many in the country, and especially in Natal, as a leader who has not sold out, the SACP hoped to deliver a powerful and fearful message for militants and real socialist revolutionaries that any left-wing opposition to the new order will be crushed.

Just as the SACP infiltrated its own nomenklatura-like bureaucrats into the top ranks of the union federation COSATU and attempted to kill workers' democracy in that organisation, it is now preparing the way to ensure that militants are prevented from getting in on local government platforms.

At the same time, and because of its own virtual non-existence at the grassroots level, the SACP is wooing the COSATU unions to canvass support for itself.

The first step to ensure that working-class interests are not compromised any further is by all socialist revolutionaries demanding that COSATU breaks from the tripartite alliance with the SACP and ANC.

Unholy

That unholy alliance can only serve to destroy the advances made by the unions in the last 20 years (when the SACP was not around).

The interests of the capitalists are irreconcilable with those of the working class: capitalists demand higher profits — workers demand a living wage.

Why is it important therefore for COSATU to get out of this alliance? The real danger that exists is that the union movement will be incorporated into the new order and have workers' interests placed last.

Already the unions are showing signs of bureaucratic control: workers are ignored, wage negotiations have not begun, unfair labour practices are going unchallenged, etc. Disturbingly, workers are turning to civic and other bodies for assistance.

Yet more alarming is the constant assertion by workers that union subscriptions are being paid for nothing. Is all this occurring by design?

When negotiations between

the apartheid regime and the 'liberation movement' were under way, one of the alliance partners, the ANC, appeared to have killed grassroots participation by virtually killing its branches.

Is the same tactic now being used on the unions in order that workers may be delivered on a platter to the capitalists? The experience over the lock-out clause during negotiations clearly illustrates this trend.

We in the Workers International to Rebuild the Fourth International present an alternative to the SACP.

As far back as 1938 the Fourth International became an alternative to the Stalinist control of the world socialist movement.

Whilst most South African Stalinists may have sat in the discomfort of exile, we, as workers, may not have had the benefit of reading massive tomes on revolution, nor had the chance to drop out of university and fall into the unions.

But we do have the benefit of knowing what a working life is and what the struggle for a living wage is all about.

Whilst we do not enjoy a materialist critique of those enjoying massive state salaries, we still stick to the Marxist belief that the emancipation of the working class is the task of the working class itself. This is it!

Signal workers — build the strike!

THE signal workers' struggle is the struggle of every worker in Britain and, immediately, of every worker in the public sector.

Once again, as workers come forward to demand their legitimate right to security and a living wage, they come up against the Tory government, hell-bent on breaking them and their union, for what use is a trade union that cannot fight to defend its members?

■ The government intervened to stop the rail bosses awarding a pay rise to the signal workers that had been agreed in negotiations.

■ The government has encouraged the use of supervisory grades to run signal boxes and other equipment despite repeated claims by rail workers that such people are not properly qualified and that passengers' lives could be at risk.

But this is a government in crisis. They speak and act not from a position of strength, but because they know that if the signal workers win their wage increase then all workers in the public sector will be lining up to confront the government.

Signal workers know they have justice on their side. For years their leaders agreed to 'productivity deals' which have seen numbers employed slashed while there have been no real rewards for their sacrifices.

That is why there is still great sympathy among the travelling public for the railworkers. Most of these people are in the same boat!

It is the strength of feeling among the rank-and-file that has forced Jimmy Knapp and other leaders of the RMT transport union to extend the strike action to two days a week.

This offensive spirit amongst the signal workers must be defended and strengthened. They are giving a lead. **Now the strike must be built.**

■ Other rail workers have rejected the bosses' paltry wages

BY THE EDITOR

offer. Let them join a united action with the signal workers.

Don't wait to see whether the signal workers win — they will win if all public service workers give them support now. And build the local support committees. Let's prove that Major is right when he fears this unity. This government is rotten and overdue for the same treatment they mete out to the workers.

The TUC managed to isolate the miners and allow the Tory government to butcher the National Union of Mineworkers. What they did to the NUM in 1992 they want to do to the rail workers today.

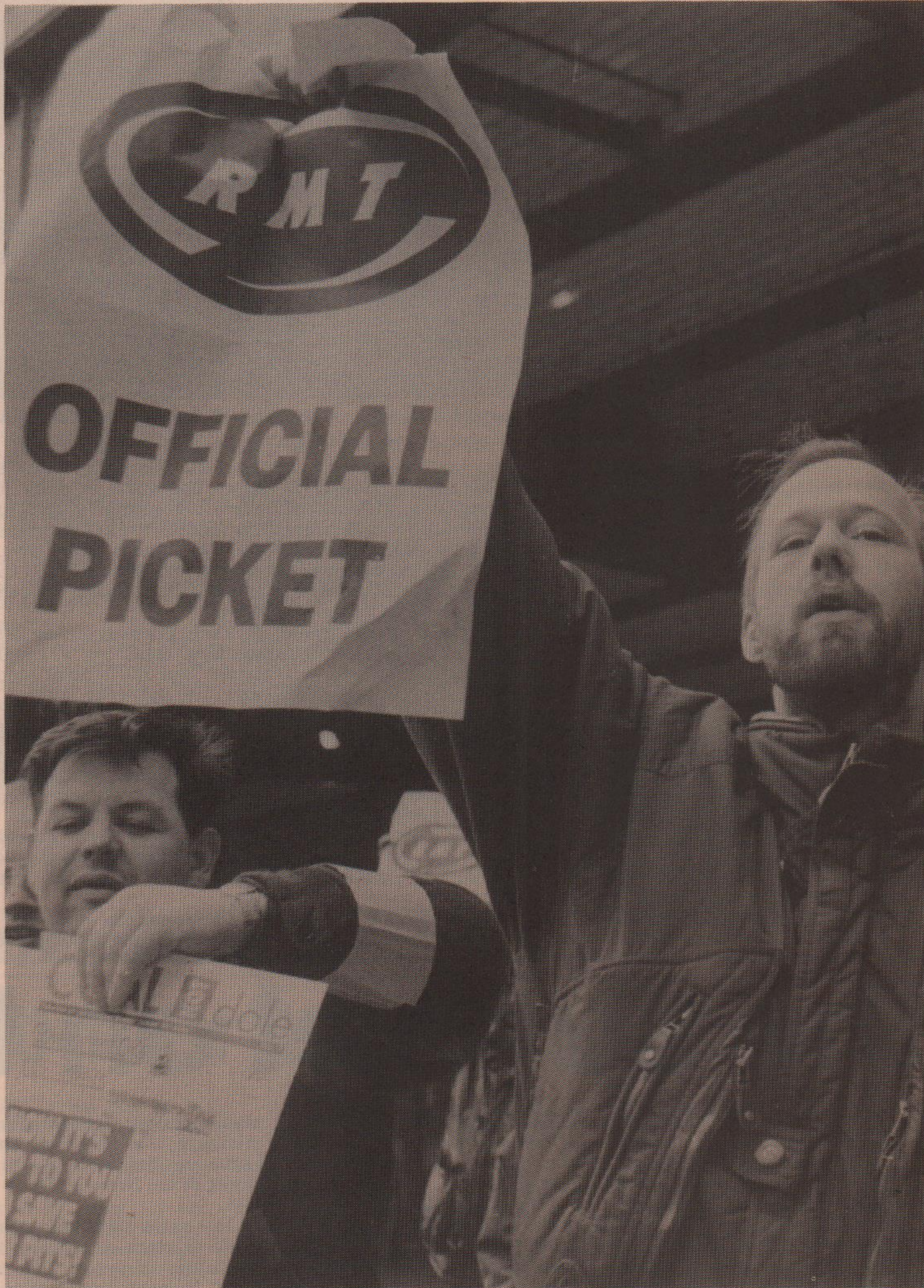
Now this same TUC invites Tory ministers and employers to its HQ, Congress House. The guest of honour at the last such cosy gathering was the then employment secretary David Hunt. This is the man spearheading the government's attack on the signal workers. And who welcomed him? President of the TUC, Jimmy Knapp!

Licking

New Labour leader Tony Blair says not a word in support of the signal workers. He and his friends are too busy licking the boots of their friends in the City.

From day one the signal strikers have been involved in a confrontation with the state and its battery of anti-union laws. These laws have been put in place in an attempt to destroy workers' unity and collective struggle. But what's new? The trade unions were built fighting against governments and bosses.

The values we need lie in the independent struggle of the working class to clear out these laws, remove the government, and in so doing clear out of the labour movement all those class collaborators who defend the bosses and their rule.



RMT members behind miners in 1992 : now TUC seeks to isolate signal workers Photo: Marg Nicol

'Build local support groups'

Rwanda guilt

● FROM FRONT PAGE that we are powerless to respond, powerless to act?

Let us call on the workers of every country to move their organisations to make these demands on their governments. In South Africa, for example, let the COSATU union federation tell the 'government of national unity', led by Mandela and De Klerk, to commandeer whatever is necessary from Anglo-American, De Beer and the rest of the multinationals.

The workers of South Africa will respond to such a call, as everybody knows.

In Britain, France, Belgium, Germany, the US, the ruling classes of these countries have built their vast wealth from the brutal exploitation of Africa — from the centuries-long slave trade, to the extraction of gold, diamonds and uranium and the production of rubber.

It is this exploitation and oppression of 500 years, and not 'inter-tribal conflict', that have kept Africa economically backward and starved to death or butchered millions in Somalia, Ethiopia, Algeria and Rwanda — just as in Vietnam, Malaysia, Cambodia and every corner of the world.

Yesterday, Friday 29 July the Workers International to Rebuild the Fourth International took the first step in starting the campaign with a picket of the Overseas Development Agency. There will be further meetings to build on this — see advert front page.

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Bosnia: please don't equate victim and executioner

ONE of former Yugoslavia's leading poets, a Bosnian Serb who remained in the besieged Bosnian capital Sarajevo, has slammed Europe's media and politicians for 'equating the victim and the executioner' when they fail to condemn Greater Serb nationalist aggression against Bosnia.

Siege

'Any idea that by leaving the claustrophobic environment of a city under siege I would have

an opportunity to define the meaning of Sarajevo's suffering now appears meaningless,' writes Goran Simic. 'The simple reason is that from Sarajevo I can see Europe better than Europe sees Sarajevo.'

'The world's repeated definition of the crime against Bosnia-Herzegovina as a "conflict among warring parties" — which freezes my blood — tells increasingly of a mass lobotomisation of public understanding,' Simic writes in the latest issue of the London literary and

political magazine 'Casablanca'.

'The recognition of fascism as fascism — now in its most terrible and tangible form rampant in Bosnia-Herzegovina, from ethnic cleansing of the Muslim people to concentration camps for all those who think differently — is being sidelined. The space is left free for exponents of the thesis that differences between people can be abolished by the argument of weapons. . . .

'In Sarajevo, humanity still

takes priority over nationality. This Sarajevo stubbornness is a defence of the principle of coexistence.

Killed

'The shells that have fallen on Sarajevo have also killed some of the 70,000 Serbs in the city who long ago denied [Bosnian Serb leader] Radovan Karadzic the right to represent them, and we shall choose to continue living in Sarajevo as Bosnians, as Europeans and as anti-fascists.'