

# 'ALL-OUT WAR' WARNING IN BOSNIA

**BOSNIAN foreign minister Irfan Ljubijankic has warned that all-out war could soon break out again following Serbian president Milosevic's refusal to recognise Bosnia or Croatia.**

'The only language Milosevic understands is force,' the Bosnian minister said at the start of a two-day visit to Britain last week. Calling for a resumption of United Nations sanctions on links with Serbia, he said only a lifting of the international arms embargo on Bosnia would have a decisive effect.

Despite — or because of — continuing efforts by the great powers' 'contact group' on Bosnia to appease Milosevic, the Serbian regime has hardened its position, letting its nationalist ally in Bosnia, Radovan Karadzic, call the tune.

With UN forces' collusion it has continued helping Serb forces attacking the Bihac area of Bosnia. These Serb forces are operating from parts of Croatia which are under UN 'protection'.

While Ljubijankic was arriving in London, British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd and European Union ministers met in Brussels to offer Croatia privileged trade links if it agrees to back down on its call for UN troops to withdraw.

The UN forces' mandate in Croatia expires at the end of this month. The European Union governments fear resumption of war between Croatia and Serbia if the Croatian government moves against Serb forces in the Krajina region.

'We want to bring what pressure we can to bear on all concerned to maintain the peace,' Hurd said.

In Belgrade, Milosevic, who has recently enjoyed visits from US and Russian ministers and a Russian trade deal to include oil and gas supplies, threatened that if UN forces had to quit Croatia, he would demand they abandon 'protected areas' in Bosnia too.

## Threat

Reporting this threat (and referring to Bosnia's multi-cultural capital, Sarajevo, as a 'Muslim enclave') BBC Radio Four's 'Today' programme (Tuesday, 7 March) noted that Bosnia's foreign minister was in

BY CHARLIE POTTINS

London and had warned of the war danger.

'On the line we have the European Union's mediator Lord Owen', the announcer continued.

Owen, whose partition plan played a big part in encouraging this war, and who seems to have a guaranteed slot on the BBC programme, spoke of 'maintaining the cessation of hostilities' that had been achieved.

While he was speaking, Serb Chetnik snipers resumed their killing of civilians in Sarajevo, where they had also halted aid convoys.

Heavy fighting continued around Bihac, where pro-Serb forces loyal to local warlord Fikret Abdic claimed they had regained ground east of Velika Kladusa. Thousands of civilians are starving in Bihac as the Serb forces won't let relief supplies through.

In the past month, UN observers have noted Serb aircraft and helicopter flights near Bosnian towns like Zenica and Srebrenica, as well as unidentified planes circling near Tuzla airport.

The signs are both sides are gearing up before the UN-brokered ceasefire expires. The UN announced a 'big breakthrough' in getting supplies through to besieged Srebrenica — seven tons of food for its own troops.

Bosnian and Croat military leaders announced last week that they were setting up a joint command.

'I have been waiting for this for two years — uniting our forces for the anti-fascist battle,' said General Rasim Delic of the Bosnia and Hercegovina army.

Serb forces in Bosnia and the Krajina set up a joint command in Banja Luka last month. Radovan Karadzic said it would be the first 'practical step towards the unification of the two Serb states.'

## Wedge

Karadzic has also visited the Posavina area north of Tuzla, where Serb forces hold a wedge of territory serving both to blockade the working-class Bosnian town from the north, and as a channel for arms and supplies from Serbia to the Serb-held Krajina. Karadzic stressed the vital importance of the area to his plans.

Thousands of Bosnian Muslims and Croats, victims of Serb fascist terror and 'ethnic cleansing', have had to flee from Banja Luka and the Serb-held areas of Posavina, many of them into Tuzla.

This working-class city and mining area, with its mixed population, remains a bastion of resistance in every sense — against Serb aggression, against racist divisions, and against the reactionary policies of Bosnian president Izetbegovic and his Muslim clerics.

The UN and EU peace plans would leave the aggressors holding the gains of war and ethnic cleansing.

The imperialists, fascists and Stalinists want to carve up Bosnia and the Balkans, and destroy what Tuzla stands for.

Bosnian workers fighting for multi-cultural democracy are in the front line for all of us against fascism. The working-class movement must rally to their side with everything we can give. The enemy threatens all out war — we must render all out solidarity!



Bosnian miner Resad Husagic (right) from Tuzla marches last week on a British miners' demonstration on the tenth anniversary of the 1984-85 strike. The event was organised by Notts National Union of Mineworkers. Husagic later spoke at the rally. Photo: Faruk Ibrahimovic

## A private's diary

WHILE the diplomats were practising their double-talk, private Francois Cremieux's diary told a different story of the war in Bosnia.

The 25-year-old soldier, serving with the French contingent of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR), was based at Velika Kladusa, in the Bihac enclave.

His diary, excerpts from which were published last month in the weekend supplement of 'Liberation', tells of the French military's ignorance about the causes of the war, and the arrogance of officers who tell Bosnian fighters they are not soldiers, yet allow their own

men to be humiliated by Serb nationalists.

Cremieux also describes the implicit corruption of a humanitarian relief operation which has well-stocked food stores for its own men while UN units hand out barely adequate food 'donations' and allegedly engage in black marketeering.

Cremieux reveals, in his entry for 25 September 1994, that 'the French battalion was to be replaced by a Bangladeshi battalion at the beginning of October, to avoid a handover in November when UNPROFOR was forecasting an explosion of the conflict in the Bihac pocket'. So they knew about it in adv-

ance. Unprepared, poorly-armed Bangladeshi troops were left to be trapped by the Serb offensive, and even had to be fed by local people.

The soldier's diary also shows the French soldiery engaging repeatedly in racist smears and right-wing attitudes, particularly against the Muslims.

Also included in the soldiers' repertoire were extreme-right-wing songs and anti-Semitic remarks about supporters of Bosnia in France, in particular sneering at the French philosopher Bernard-Henri Levy, who has made two films on the war and the siege of Sarajevo.

## Tom Stratton: a man of principle and integrity

A MEMORIAL meeting to Tom Stratton was held at Ruskin House, Croydon on 3 March.

Tom, who died at the age of 72 on 11 December 1994, had decided that there would be no funeral service. So this meeting was the first occasion on which his family, friends and comrades could come together to remember him and celebrate his fight for socialism.

It was with great pride that we members of the WRP joined with fellow trades unionists and heard them speak of our comrade and friend as a credit to the workers' move-

ment — a man of principle and integrity, with an indomitable fighting spirit and — above all that he was an internationalist.

'Tom Stratton was never content to merely discuss the immediate issues, he always talked politics,' said one after the other, and 'Tom was not in the least sectarian, he always spoke and acted for the whole working class', and 'Tom was utterly reliable — the sort of comrade you wanted with you in a fight'.

Speakers included John Barlow, secretary of the Croydon branch of the building

workers' union (UCATT), Mike Kavanagh of the engineering workers' (AEEU) retired members section, Ted Knight, chairman of the Croydon trades council, John Holmes ex-shop steward at the Newmarks factory in New Addington, a member of the AEEU district committee, and Terry Matlock, his son-in-law.

The Trades Council will plant a shrub or tree in memory of Tom Stratton in the garden of Ruskin House, the traditional meeting place for trade unions in Croydon.

Dot and Peter Gibson

## Scottish Trades Union Congress PUBLIC MEETINGS 'Bosnia — trades unions under siege'

GLASGOW: Thursday 16 March, 7.30pm, TGWU Halls, 290 Bath Street

EDINBURGH: Friday 17 March, 7.30pm, Edinburgh City Chambers

Speakers include: Fikreta Sjercic and Ivca Segal (Tuzla Region Trade Union Committee), Resad Husagic (Tuzla Miners Union), Bill Speirs (Scottish TUC) ALL WELCOME

### Public meetings of Tuzla (Bosnia) trade union delegation

13 March: Leicester. Secular Hall. Humberstone Gate. 7.30pm.

14 March: Manchester Town Hall. 7pm.

15 March: Liverpool. Transport and General Workers' Union offices, Islington. 7pm.

16-17 March: Scotland (see above).

20 March: Newcastle (venue to be announced).

All meetings are organised by local trades union organisations.

# Fears of Mexican melt-down

**INCREASING** turmoil in the currency markets last week provided compelling evidence of growing tensions in world capitalism. Despite the intervention of 17 central banks, the US dollar sank to a new record post-war low.

And on Monday the Spanish and Portuguese currencies were forced to devalue — putting another nail in the coffin of the European Monetary System and a single European currency. What do these developments signify?

\* \* \* \* \*

WHEN the Stalinist bureaucracies collapsed in 1989, we were told that the future for capitalism was rosy. With trade liberalisation, the deregulation of financial markets and the international trend towards the privatisation of state-controlled industries, capital poured into areas of the world previously considered to be out of bounds for the funds of the big financial institutions.

Between 1986 and 1993, some \$200 billion flowed into these so-called 'emerging markets' — Latin America, South-East Asia, eastern Europe and parts of Africa and the Middle East — lured by the prospects of cheap exploitable workers and easy profits.

The first seismic shock to this strategy came with the crash of the Mexican economy last December.

The Mexican government had accepted the terms of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) — Mexico would supply cheap labour in return for US investment — and had been rewarded with full membership of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, the club of 'advanced' capitalist nations.

But such illusions were shattered in December. The Mexican peso collapsed, causing a massive flight of capital from the country. As one angry demonstrator in Mexico City put it: 'We went to bed with one foot in the First World and woke up with one foot in the Fourth World.'

\* \* \* \* \*

WHILE the crash was initially sparked by the Zapatista uprising in the Mexican state of Chiapas, the effects reverberated around the world.

Stock markets and currencies were rocked in as far afield as Thailand and Indonesia, as investors grasped the implications for the whole imperialist strategy.

After weeks of arm-twisting, central banks, under pressure from the US, came up with a rescue package of more than \$50 billion, an unprecedented sum — far larger than the amounts handed over to the Yeltsin government to prop up the Russian economy.

With Mexico breathing down its neck geographically and socially, the US feels distinctly uncomfortable. The imperialists fear that events in Mexico will be repeated across the globe in a chain reaction involving all of the supposedly 'emerging markets'.

In 1982, Mexico was the first country to default on its loans, triggering the world debt crisis which brought the banking system to the edge of the abyss. Today, despite the banks' widespread cancellation of such 'non-performing' loans, Mexico's external debt is twice what it was in 1982.

The \$50 billion bail-out by the central banks can never be repaid and the imperialists know it. That is why the loan has been secured on Mexico's oil reserves — expropriated from the US imperialists in 1938 to become the state-owned company Petroleos Mexicanos (Pemex).

The bail-out has bought imperialism some breathing space, but no more than that. The various currency crises last week indicate bigger things to come.

# Fight closure of Turkish paper

'ALINTERI' is a weekly Turkish workers' newspaper, established in October 1993 and published in Istanbul. It has offices in Turkey, Germany, Britain, France, and Switzerland.

It has a circulation of 10,000 in Turkey. It is a left-wing working-class newspaper that is also sympathetic to the struggles of all oppressed nations as well as the Kurdish national struggles.

The political slant of 'Alinteri' has meant that since it started operation it has been under the scrutiny of the Turkish government, and particularly its security arm, as have other left-wing newspapers.

It has been the subject of surveillance, harassment, confiscations and raids. Further, a number of its journalists and some of its distributors have been arrested.

Out of 41 issues, 21 have been confiscated by the Istanbul state security court, on the grounds that some of its articles were propaganda for communism and some portrayed Turkish citizens as Kurds which is considered an 'act of separatism'.

Pressure has recently been increased. 'Alinteri's' editor, Saliha Yaptatek, was arrested on 9 February by the Istanbul security court. On the same day, the Adana and Antakya offices were raided by police and papers taken away.

Finally, on 20 February 'Alinteri' was closed by the Istanbul state security court for a month.

This anti-democratic decision will not stop 'Alinteri's' stand for the working class and the struggles of all oppressed nations. It will fight against this decision on the basis of democracy.

We call on all democratic organisations to send solidarity messages to 'Alinteri' against this anti-democratic decision.

For 'Alinteri' London office, telephone 071-249 8740. Fax: 071-361 9675.

'Alinteri'  
London N16

# Vampires are not just trendy

TOM OWEN's film reviews irritate me intensely. Tom's attitude to popular culture strikes me as elitist and rather smirking — his review of 'Interview

with the Vampire' (25 February) keeps insisting how clichéd and trendy this film is, and 'all that you get from vampire movies is a pain in the neck!'

I disagree absolutely. I see the vampire as a fascinating symbol in popular culture, with its overtones of sexual transgression, and the overturn of the social and biological order.

Tom also says that these films play on the 'latent fears . . . of the middle classes'. Maybe big-budget horror does, but most horror films are watched by audiences who are young, male and working class.

It's unclear what exactly these audiences find in horror, but I think it's more than a trendy thrill. Horror shows dark forces rising up from the underworld and desecrating the complacent face of bourgeois society.

Tom points out the black farce in 'Interview' — I thought the director was giving us a disturbing parody of the bourgeois family. I also thought Tom Cruise was a revelation in the role as the dandy Lestat — some of his jokes are excellent: 'God kills indiscriminately, and so shall we.' The little-girl vampire, played by 12-year-old Kirsten Dunst, is an absolutely chilling creation.

I am not claiming that 'Interview' is a modern masterpiece. I just think that horror should be taken seriously as one of the key genres in popular culture today — in which the 1980s and 1990s have seen an extraordinary renaissance.

Like heavy-metal rock music, horror is plebeian and uncouth, but its energy is volcanic. Isn't there a message here about its working-class audience?

Roger Horrocks  
Fulham

# Maintaining British rule in north

THE framework document of the Irish-British governments, like all previous proposals to supposedly resolve the partition of Ireland and the conflict in the British-occupied six counties, is a clever attempt by imperialism and its collaborators in the south of Ireland to maintain partition and neutralise the resistance of the nationalist working class to continued British rule in the north.

It is also about stabilising capitalism and British imperial interests in Ireland.

The 100-seat elected assembly proposed for the six counties is to be the new non-sectarian Stormont. This reborn Stormont will have powers over education, health and housing and, in effect, will be treated

like any other region of the UK.

British partition will remain a reality. The Unionists on their own are no longer sufficient for imperialism to maintain its interests in and control of the north of Ireland. Imperialism now needs the help and active collaboration of the leadership of Sinn Fein and the IRA in order to maintain its rule in the north.

Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness as the principal leadership of the republican movement are only too willing to get on board the 'peace' bus, the political process, call it what you like.

It is a 'peace' bus driven by imperialism and its interests in Ireland. Adams and McGuinness, like previous nationalist leaders in Ireland, are nothing but stooges of imperialist intrigue and manipulation and undoubtedly they will be praised, perhaps even rewarded, by imperialism for their tireless efforts on its behalf as it attempts to bring about a more stable, sanitised even, democratic and non-sectarian Stormont.

But dress it up as you like, call it what you will, it will still be the British-occupied, oppressed and controlled six counties of the north of Ireland.

Only socialism and the working class in Ireland can truly free it from imperialism and resolve the national question. Something the government in the south and Adams and the Social Democratic and Labour Party's John Hume in the north are unable to bring about.

Charlie Walsh  
London SW1

# Clause Four of a sham

AS ONE who looks forward to and enjoys Peter Fryer's articles, it is sad that my first letter to Workers Press on his 'Personal Column' is a critical one. Not that I disagree with his column of 25 February as a whole, but I cannot allow his comments on those of us who have opposed the WRP's position on the Clause Four issue to go unchallenged.

Peter says that those of us who write letters to Workers Press in opposition are advocating washing our hands of the debate in the Labour Party. This is not so. None of the letters I have seen calls for an end to the debate. My own letter (3 December) actually says it should continue.

What we oppose is a campaign by the WRP to retain a clause which in the Labour Party constitution is a sham. The present Labour Party is a sham and a successful campaign to retain this clause would only serve to perpetuate

this sham. Peter invites us to 'profitably ponder' a quotation from Marx and Engels. If he had continued the quote, we would read the following:

'The immediate aim of the communists is the same as that of all proletarian parties: formation of the proletariat into a class, overthrow of bourgeois supremacy, conquest of political power by the proletariat.'

Can Peter tell us when this has ever been the position of the Labour Party or a Labour government?

Marx and Engels are clearly equating communists with proletarian parties with similar aims and principles. Peter quotes Marx and Engels from 1848: 'The communists do not form a separate party opposed to other working-class parties. What does this mean when taken in the context of historical political developments?'

Does it mean that communists should have ignored the break-up of the previous international, the scramble by the so-called workers' parties to rally round their own bourgeoisie? What does it mean in the context of building Trotskyist parties, the founding of the Fourth International? Should the WRP not have been formed? Should everyone have stuck with the Labour Party? I suspect that if Marx and Engels had lived in this period we might well have had other quotes.

I would suggest to Peter that rather than campaign for the constitution of a discredited party which does not in any way measure up to the criteria for the proletarian party mentioned by Marx and Engels (in the passage Peter quotes), we should campaign with those members of the Labour Party and others, who see the necessity of building the proletarian party.

Nick Brown  
Newcastle

# Continuous criticism

FOR the information of Terry Brothstone and others, one can do many things with a continuity, however one cannot re-establish a continuity. The meaning of the words does not allow it.

Thus, even though the statement 'The fight is to re-establish the continuity of working-class consciousness and internationalism' (3 February) might sound as if it is exactly the sort of pro-socialist policy we would support, it is essentially meaningless.

The publication of such sentences that do not convey sense does a disservice to you cause.

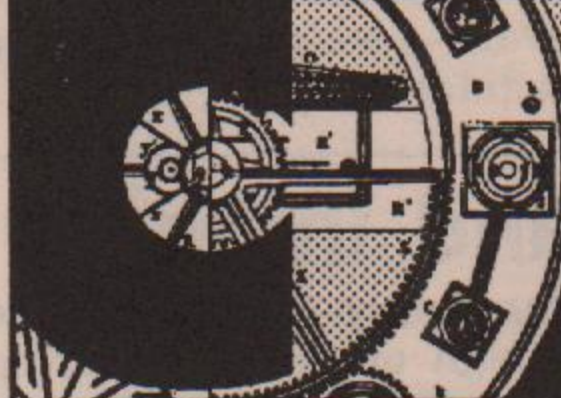
P. Edgar  
Colchester, Essex

## Coming soon

**THURSDAY 25 MARCH:** Demonstration in support of sacked TGWU bus drivers. 10am, Central Park, Chelmsford.

**SATURDAY 1 APRIL:** Groundswell: a day for independent unemployed activists to get together and sort it out. East Oxford Community Centre, Princes Street, Oxford. Organised by Oxford Unemployed Workers' & Claimants' Union. Tel: 0865 723750. Fax: 0865 724317.

**SATURDAY 27 MAY:** African Liberation Day march, 'Not just charity but complete liberation'. Organised by the African Liberation Support Campaign. 1pm, Kennington Park, London SE11. Rally at Trafalgar Sq. Details: 071-924 9033.



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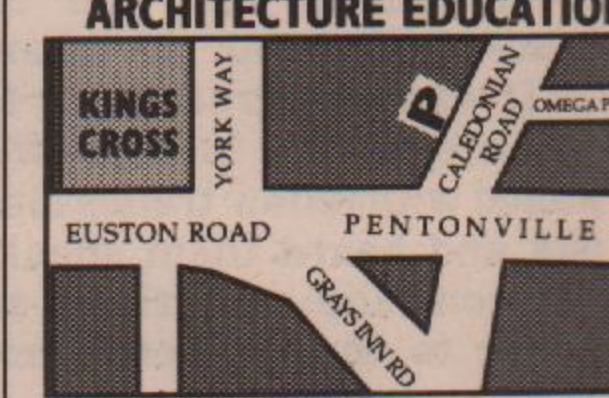
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# Asbestos alert for site workers

A NEW report has warned that as many as one in 40 of all men in their 50s who have been exposed to asbestos dust while working in the building trade may die of the cancer mesothelioma.

Professor Julian Peto, Cancer Research Campaign professor of epidemiology at the Institute of Cancer Research, London University, author of the report along with members of the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), said:

'Roughly one in 100 of all British men now aged about 50 will die of mesothelioma. Building workers — particularly plumbers, gas fitters, carpenters and electricians — will account for about a third of all these deaths.'

'However, if building workers and various other high-risk groups are not included, the mesothelioma risk to the rest of the population is very much lower.'

Mesothelioma is a cancer of the covering of the lungs and the lining of the chest cavity. It can also affect the abdomen. There is no effective treatment and the disease will, in most cases, lead to death within a year of diagnosis.

The disease is responsible for the deaths of 1,000 people each year in the UK. The majority of these deaths are linked to exposure to asbestos.

It is estimated that for every death from mesothelioma there is a death from asbestos-related lung cancer. Asbestos is responsible for some 3,000 deaths each year from these two diseases and asbestosis.

The new report suggests that deaths from mesothelioma will rise, with a peak of 5,000 deaths annually from asbestos-related diseases.

## Risk

Although asbestos use declined sharply after its peak years in the 1960s and 1970s, many buildings still contain asbestos materials. Professor Peto warned that workers may still be at risk as 'substantial exposure may still be occurring in the building renovation and maintenance trades'.

Many workers still have to work in environments with asbestos present. Asbestos need not be worked on directly to produce dust: the vibrations from hammering, cutting or drilling may produce dust from nearby asbestos.

Peto acknowledges that there are no data yet for inci-

dences of disease among specialist asbestos-removal workers. 'The bulk of the work started too recently for asbestos-related diseases to have emerged,' he said.

Indeed the very long time-span between the first exposure to asbestos dust and the appear-

ance of the symptoms of an asbestos-related disease made identifying the hazards of asbestos difficult in the first place.

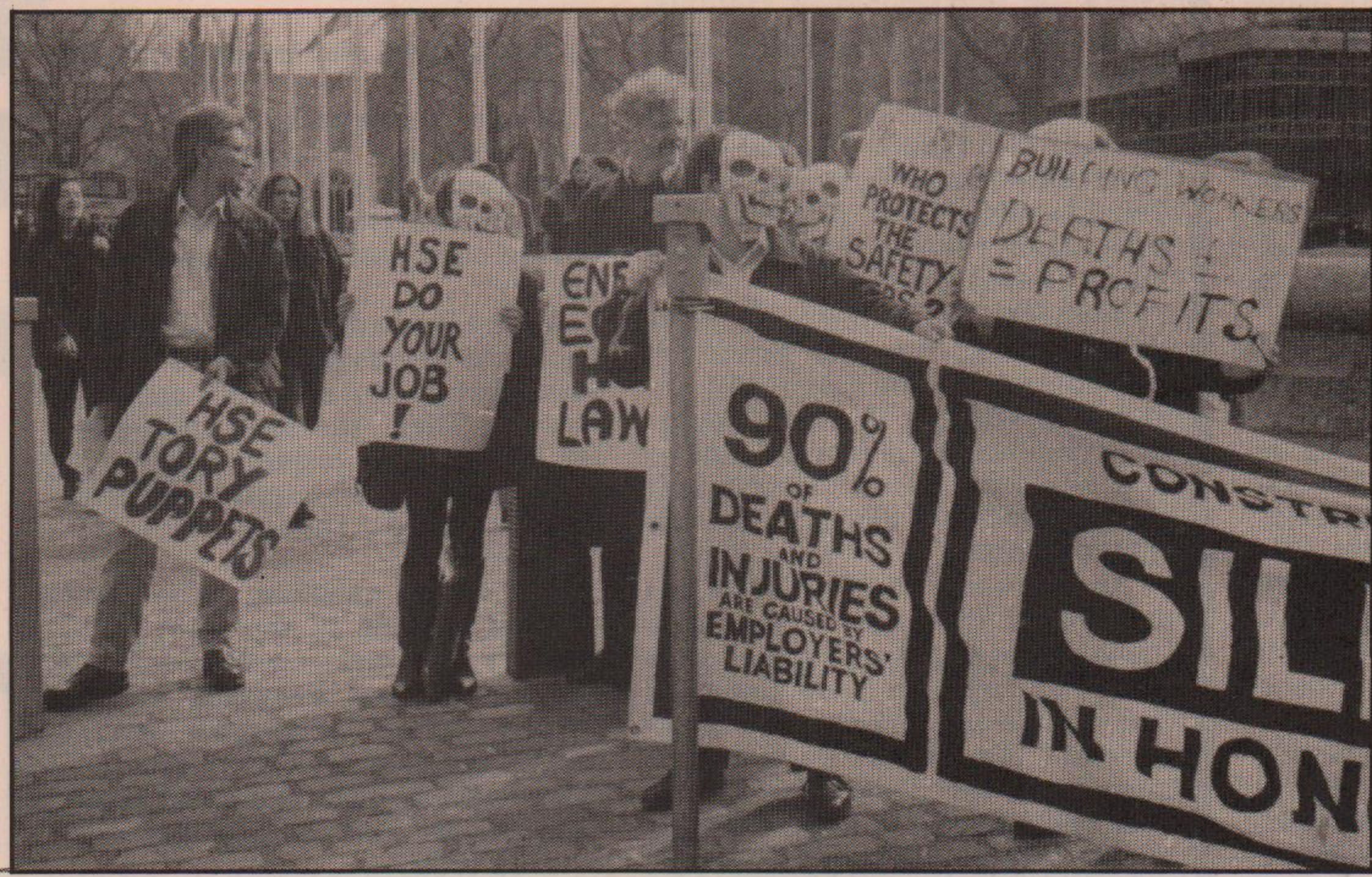
Dr Peter Graham, the HSE's senior health policy official, pointed out that 'the majority of people now dying of such disease will have been first ex-

posed to asbestos before 1960'.

It is for this reason that the HSE has launched a campaign to create greater awareness among building workers of the dangers of asbestos. Professor Peto's report suggests that deaths from mesothelioma will continue to escalate until 2010,

or possibly even until 2025.

The HSE is calling for building workers to establish whether asbestos is present before they start work. If it is, workers are advised to ensure that they are wearing the right sort of mask.



Site safety campaigners on a past protest against the HSE: executive shares asbestos guilt

## Wartime victims still waiting for recognition

THEY were producing protective gear against a wartime menace that didn't come.

Instead, they endangered their own lives. Of 1,200 women who made gas masks at Boots' factory in Nottingham during World War II, 200 have died from various forms of asbestos-related cancer, and 70 from mesothelioma.

A two day conference will be held in Nottingham on the weekend of 18 and 19 March, organised by Mike Ward, of the Asbestos Related Diseases Association, who exposed the scandal of Boots' workers contracting asbestos-related diseases.

Details from Mike Ward, 13 Teesbrook Drive, Nottingham NG8 2JL. Tel: 0602 855131

# Guilt of govt, employers and HSE Danger warned of 10 years ago

## FROM CONSTRUCTION SAFETY CAMPAIGN

'THE government, business, Health & Safety Executive and experts are all guilty of playing their part in the mass murder of people at work and in the community,' said Construction Safety Campaign secretary Tony O'Brien in response to the report by Professor Peto, of the Institute of Cancer Research, and the HSE.

'Despite clear evidence of the risk they allowed asbestos into our workplaces, homes and public buildings. Their complacency has caused the deaths of thousands.'

CSC chair Rose Dunn added:

'As our economy falls, deregulation of health and safety at work continues and our housing stock, schools and public buildings continue to fall into disrepair, it will be construction workers, tenants and their children, and other groups of workers that will pay with their lives.'

The CSC and other campaign groups have demanded a total ban on asbestos, both in Britain and the rest of the world.

Recent evidence from the US shows that one in five long-term demolition workers have X-ray evidence of asbestos disease.

The CSC has called for government cash for the provision of occupational health services

for the construction trades. This is to discover the real extent of damage to workers' health in an industry least likely to provide occupational health care.

Workers who complain about asbestos exposures do not get controls or masks — they get sacked.

The CSC says workers have the right to a safe working environment and to be able to raise questions of safety without fear of the sack.

Without proper policing of the industry by the HSE and without proper punishments for guilty employers, things will not improve. No construction employer guilty over safety has ever received a prison sentence.

## FROM THE LONDON HAZARDS CENTRE

THE Health & Safety Executive and asbestos expert professor Julian Peto's recognition of the 'startling new fact of growing mesothelioma [cancer] danger from asbestos dust' comes ten years too late.

A decade ago, the London Hazards Centre warned that experts, including professor Peto, were grossly underestimating the risk from asbestos dust.

The tens of thousands of deaths that have already occurred, and the potentially hundreds of thousands of deaths to come, could have been

prevented by the government and its adviser. Now they are doing too little, too late.

Most of the published information has concentrated on the asbestos cancer, mesothelioma. Mesothelioma is an incurable cancer, exclusively caused by asbestos. Death from mesothelioma can take up to 18 months and is extremely painful, causing great distress to the victims and their families.

But, many more workers die of other cancers caused by asbestos and become lost in the general cancer statistics.

Professor Peto and the HSE have persistently said the risk is negligible to people who live or work in buildings containing

asbestos. Recent deaths of teachers and others with no 'occupational' exposure reveal this to be nonsense.

Are we to wait another ten years before they admit environmental exposure to asbestos is dangerous?

A recent press report showed there was a 25 per cent increase in a British company's imports of roof slates containing asbestos last year compared with 1993. This is thought to be part of a wider trend.

The asbestos industry continues to lobby the World Health Organisation heavily to get it to say asbestos is not as dangerous as all truly independent research has concluded.

## School pupils forced to work for peanuts

MANY teenagers still at school or in other full-time education are doing paid 'adult' jobs for miserably low pay and at all times of the week. Some earn less than £1 an hour.

A survey by 'Labour Research', published in its March issue, says that last year there were 309,409 16- and 17-year-olds in full-time education who were employed part-time.

And 35 per cent of those aged 13 to 17 in education are in part-time employment — a proportion five times higher than in the European Union as a whole.

Four out of five of those responding to the 'Labour Research' survey of young people attending youth clubs had done paid work in the past year.

Top occupation for girls was shop work, followed by jobs in bars, hotels, and restaurants. Boys did more door-to-door delivery.

'No longer can these sorts of

jobs be known as "Saturday work"', 'Labour Review' points out. 'A whole range of working patterns was described, with the majority working a combination of weekdays (before or after school) and parts of the weekend.'

Girls earned £2.24 an hour on average, boys £2.15. But pay for 12-year-olds was only £1.55 an hour.

## Lowest

And one in six was working for less than £1 an hour. These included children doing newspaper and other deliveries, babysitting, and shop work.

Lowest hourly rates were 30p an hour earned by a 15-year-old boy working in a shop in the Worcester area, and two young people earning 42p an hour: a 13-year-old boy in a Worcester shop and a 15-year-old girl babysitting in the Leeds area.

## Fat cats probe fat cats

THE 11-strong study group set up by the Confederation of British Industry to investigate top executives' pay includes seven top industrialists who between them have a total annual income of £3,900,000.

The group is headed by Marks & Spencer chairman Sir Richard Greenbury, who last year received a 5.9 per cent pay rise which jacked up his basic salary to £629,588 a year.

## Bonus

On top of that he received a £59,350 bonus, £2,015 in dividends, and a further £465,057 in profit on share options taken up and sold during the year. This brought his total income for the year from Marks & Spencer to £1,156,010.

Greenbury is also a non-executive director of Lloyds Bank and the pharmaceuticals giant Zeneca. He also sits on the remuneration committee of each of those two concerns, which

decides what the company's top executives should be paid.

Another member of the CBI study group, Sir Denys Henderson, for his chairmanships of Zeneca and of ICI received in 1993 a total of £832,066.

A third member of the group, Sir Iain Vallance, was paid £652,853 as chairman of British Telecom last year.

Defending his hefty pay packet in the 'Financial Times' recently, Vallance claimed it reflected 'distributive justice'.

## Glasgow protests CJA and M77

BY JOHN PORTER

SOME 2,000 demonstrators marched through Glasgow on 25 February against both the Criminal Justice Act (CJA) and the building of an extension to the M77 motorway through the south of the city. The motorway would cut through several working class areas as well as extensive park and woodland in the Pollok estate.

The illegal demonstration, called by the Scottish Alliance against the Criminal Justice Act, was the fourth in Glasgow in recent months. Three stewards on an earlier march were charged with being the organisers, but the charges were later dropped.

Campaigners against the motorway have set up five camps along its route aiming to

Demonstrate in support of sacked T&G Chelmsford bus drivers

Saturday 25 March  
10am

Central Park, Chelmsford

## GROUNDSWELL

A day for independent unemployed activists to get together and sort it out

Saturday 1 April

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Organised by Oxford Unemployed Workers & Claimants Union  
East Oxford Community Centre, Princes Street, Oxford OX4 1HU  
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## Checks show danger of Britain's buses

ONE in ten of the buses checked by the Department of Transport in 1994 was found to be defective.

Of the 29,686 buses and coaches checked at the roadside and in garages — despite a further cut in the number of DoT inspectors — 2,594 were so bad that they were immediately banned from use and taken off the road.

In London a full-scale in-

al's buses followed allegations by drivers and conductors that many vehicles are a danger to the travelling public.

At the end of 1994 the record of one London bus company was so bad that its operations licence was reduced from five years to six months. In the space of a few weeks there was a series of life-threatening accidents involving buses in London.

tion, and the rush to cut costs, the hours worked by drivers have increased.

Many drivers now work for five and a half hours without a break.

The increase in stress and illness caused by excessive hours may well contribute to the increase in accidents.

It is certainly the cause of 35-50 per cent of London's bus drivers leaving the job each

## Inside left

### Absence noted

CAUCASIAN protests in Britain against Yeltsin's war on Chechnya are notable for the absence from the streets of any of the larger left organisations or the peace movement. I am not alone in observing this.

'As a veteran protester against the Vietnam war in the '60s, I find it hard to understand why there have been no mass protests against the genocidal war being conducted by Russia against the Chechen people,' wrote Karl Dallas from Bradford in a letter to the 'Morning Star' (3 February).

It was not surprising the US and its allies in the United Nations had said nothing, Dallas wrote, since Yeltsin was their man. 'But what is surprising is the inaction on the left and within the peace movement,' he added.

'Is this a relic of the bad old days when it was felt that Russia always had right on its side...?' pondered Dallas. 'Is it because the oppressed people are Muslim?'

'Even if humanitarian instincts count for nothing, surely we should realise that failure to support them and their legitimate demands for self-determination plays into the hands of fundamentalist forces...'

Two letters to the same paper on 3 February took issue with his complaint about inaction. Joan R. Brooks, a leading member of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND), said the International Peace Bureau — 'the world's oldest and most comprehensive international peace network' — had put out 'strong protest statement' 'Morning Star' 14 February).

What's more, she wrote, 'the National Peace Council has held a vigil for the dead, urged protests to Yeltsin and Douglas Hurd, and sent a letter to shadow Foreign Secretary Robin Cook'.

From Manchester, J. Homeood wrote to say that Greater Manchester CND had passed a resolution congratulating the Committee of Soldiers' Mothers, expressing horror at the destruction of Grozny, the capital of Chechnya, and calling on Yeltsin to announce a ceasefire.

Concerned that 'Chechnya could not be used as an excuse to revive the cold war', Manchester CND had also decided to write to various world leaders on the need for peace.

Putting a stamp on an envelope doesn't require masses of people, and CND can afford the stamps!

But where are the big demonstrations that were mobilised over other international conflicts? The anachronistic concern about the 'cold war', when Western imperialists are backing Yeltsin's savage war, gives a clue to the politico-psychological obstacles in the way of action.

PEACE campaigners and old socialists aren't doing much, what about the rest of the left?

When the Soviet Union sent tanks into Czechoslovakia in 1968, the International Socialists, forerunners of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), were out there with Tories and Liberals to demonstrate against 'Russian imperialism', as they called it.

Nowadays, when Yeltsin is being supported by Western imperialism, these left protesters seem more concerned about the rights of lives being exported than of Chechens.

More than 24,000 people have been killed in Chechnya. Maybe the Caucasian community here isn't large enough to buy many papers. But the working class is international. Left groups that trail the 'little England' insularity of the petty bourgeoisie cannot claim to speak for the working class.

Charlie Pottins

**CLIFF SLAUGHTER, in this second article (see the first last week) on the campaign for Clause Four of the Labour Party's constitution, says the campaign is a vital issue as today's struggles develop without any parliamentary or trade-union solution, creating the conditions for a new workers' party**

MARXISTS should not stand aside from the struggle against Labour leader Tony Blair on Clause Four, because that fight is now one of the most important political issues through which the political consciousness of the working class will be developed.

Several comrades who have written in the Workers Press letters column do not agree. For example, according to one of them: 'It is obvious to all revolutionaries and to all advanced workers that the Labour Party has nothing to do with socialism.'

And the same correspondent has discovered that the 'storm in a teacup over Clause Four... is a means to fragment revolutionaries and advanced workers and to regenerate the Labour Party in the interests of the bourgeoisie'.

A fiendish plot indeed! I gather we are to conclude from this that Tony Blair is not really in favour of dropping Clause Four, but is doing all this in order to keep going the myth (useful to the bourgeoisie) that the Labour Party represents the working class and socialism. I don't believe it.

'Revolutionaries and advanced workers' who find the truth about the Labour Party so 'obvious' have to get rid of the idea that the socialist, political consciousness of the working class is something that we already have in our heads and that must be got into the heads of the other members of our class.

Last week's article said that this socialist, political class-consciousness means 'the understanding that the struggles of workers must be brought together in a class movement and directed against the enemy capitalist class as a class,

and tactics, and forms of organisation.'

These remarks are very general. We have to study how the movement of the class and its class-consciousness has developed during each particular stage in its history.

Today it would be foolish to expect that development to take the same form as in, say, 19th-century Britain. Then, the long struggles for trade union organisation took place with British capitalism, first in the field, internationally dominant.

Nor is it a question, as in continental Europe in the later 19th century, of mass working-class political parties, avowedly Marxist, preceding large-scale trade union organisation. To understand these national differences has been essential for Marxists, and is still so even today.

### Understanding tasks

BUT much has happened since then. Today, the working class in every country is faced with a task very different from anything in the past, that of *reconstructing* its class movement.

If we want to understand what this task means, we have to look again at the history of how our present situation and tasks came into existence. This means looking at not only the history of how the Labour Party and Clause Four originated, but also the history of how the international workers' movement took its present shape.

Why is the *reconstruction* of the working-class movement necessary? Because that movement, and especially its fundamental interna-

**'Marxists must also understand that, at any particular time, the whole picture of economic, political and ideological forces at work must be analysed and taken into account in developing programme, strategy and tactics, and forms of organisation.'**

one aimed at the overthrow of the power of capital and the establishing of the rule of the working class to begin the construction of socialism'.

It continued that this political class-consciousness 'will understand that such a struggle is international, that the revolution begins in one country but can be completed only internationally'.

The class-consciousness of the working class develops in its experiences and struggles. These struggles are not at all times the same for the whole class: some workers are organised, some not; some are employed, some not; some workers confront struggles with a long experience of past struggles and, perhaps, betrayals strapped to their backs, others come fresh to struggles; within the class there are different political parties and groups with different programmes and policies, and with different degrees of implantation and influence in the class, and some of these are agents of the enemy class.

Marxists must also understand that, at any particular time, the whole picture of economic, political and ideological forces at work must be analysed and taken into account in developing programme, strate-

gical, was systematically broken up for some three generations by Stalinism.

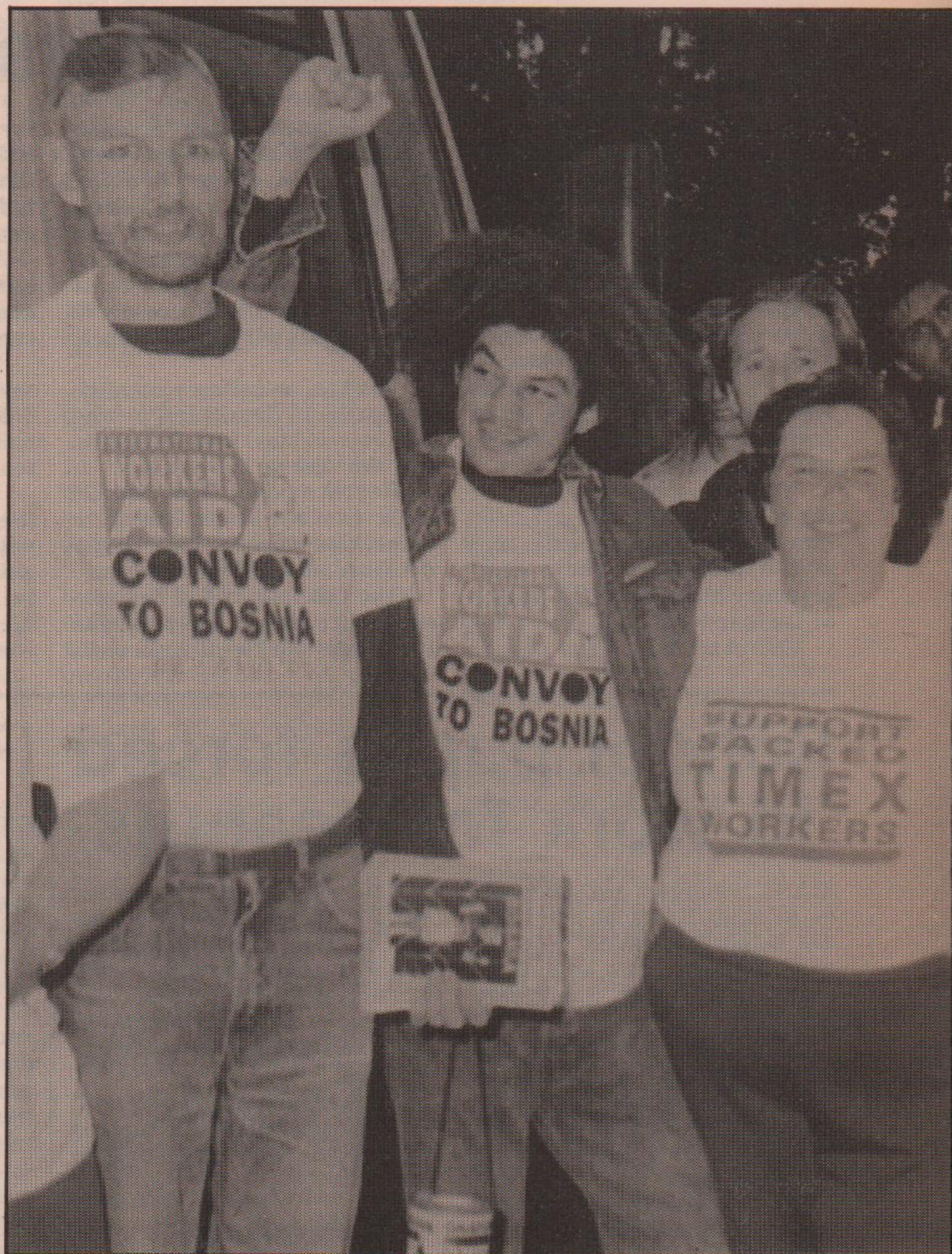
When the 1917 October Revolution inspired millions of workers in many countries to form new parties of the Communist (Third) International, it was the beginning of a great surge in working-class socialist consciousness, through which the grip of social-democracy and Labourism could be broken.

It is necessary to understand how that advance was lost as a result of the work of Stalinism, if we are to grasp our own tasks today in reconstructing the working-class movement, above all its internationalism.

By the end of 1924 Stalin and his supporters in the Bolshevik Party had committed that party, founded on internationalism, to the middle-class utopia of 'socialism in one country', a notion taken from the right wing of German Social-Democracy.

This conservative and reactionary programme was a direct reflection of the interests of the bourgeoisie in the Soviet Union. They wanted above all a period of respite after the revolutionary turmoil. They wanted to consolidate the power of the state apparatus to

# Clause reb the v mov



Workers International has fought through the Workers Aid for Bosnia campaign

control and discipline the working class and its demands.

Stalin's political service was to 'deliver' the Bolshevik Party to these conservative social forces. With the programme of socialism in one country — the abandonment of the basic and principled line of the October revolution as only the first victory of the world revolution — Stalin and his faction prepared the way for the merging of the Bolshevik Party with the state bureaucracy.

This look back into the history of the Soviet Union may seem a long way from today's battle to defend Clause Four! And its relevance is not just that Stalin took his programme from the same reformist tradition from which the politics of the Labour leaders originate.

The important thing here is that the British working class today comes into struggles which do not have, even temporarily, any na-

tional, or parliamentary, or purely trade union solution.

If it is even to defend the gains of the past, which every day become more precarious, the working class in Britain needs to break out of its traditional narrow national, parliamentary and defensive trade-unionist politics.

Yet the Labour Party, which has until now been accepted by the majority of the working class as its traditional representative, is *more and more* tied to the so-called 'national interest', to the parliamentary establishment, to keeping the unions out of politics.

And in this 'national interest' the Labour Party quite naturally joins with the Tories in the attack on the working class's past gains, such as the right to strike.

Labour has given up nationalisation and any pledge to renationalise the privatised industries and services; it will not defend the already

# se 4 and uilding workers' ovement



for unconditional support for the Bosnian struggle for national independence

inadequate (and still class-ridden) education system or the National Health Service; it will use the anti-trade-union laws against strikers; it has abandoned full-employment and universal entitlement to benefits; it vies with the Tories to be the party of law and order.

Thus the Labour leadership is trying to take the working-class movement rapidly in the opposite direction to that which is urgently needed. And *this* is what has to be combatted in the campaign to defend Clause Four.

## Internationalism

WHAT the working-class movement in Britain needs is to discover in struggle the road to working-class internationalism. For nearly three-quarters of a century that road has been blocked by the existence and international dominance of the Stalinist bureaucracy.

As long ago as 1926 the British working class's fight to go beyond Labourism to revolutionary socialism was blocked by the Stalinist bureaucracy and its politics, which flowed from 'socialism in one country'.

In the General Strike of that year, the strength, militancy and organisation of the working class in its councils of action could have led to the defeat of the ruling class and to the establishment of workers' power. But that needed a Communist Party with a programme and strategy independent of the politics of the Labourite trade-union bureaucracy and the bourgeoisie which stood behind it.

The abandonment of revolutionary internationalism by the Stalinist bureaucracy had deprived the British Communist Party of such a line. As a result of their cultivation of illusions in the role of the 'left' of the Trades Union Congress general

council, the strike was betrayed, causing a historic setback for the British and the international working class.

From then until our own days the most militant workers, who could have been organised politically to take the lead in breaking the grip of Labour reformism on their class, were derailed and diverted time and again by the Stalinist politics of the Communist Party.

Now we are in a *new situation*, which arises from the collapse of the Stalinist bureaucracy.

It means *new opportunities* — first and foremost, that in different ways, on different issues, and through often very bitter experiences (Bosnia! Angola!) thousands of men and women are compelled to fight their way out of the situation created by the collapse of Stalinist regimes and parties and the disintegration of Stalinist ideology.

These struggles are *new*, unre-

cedented. There are no prescribed answers or formulas for dealing with them in the Marxist texts we know. They pose *new theoretical tasks*, and they *require* us to find every way of making a relation with the forces coming forward.

One such way is the fight for material aid through proletarian international solidarity with the workers of Bosnia. Another is the fight to join with the African revolutionary youth and liberation fighters to reconstruct the Fourth International throughout southern Africa. (This is taking place with the experience of the betrayals, and crimes of torture and imprisonment against their own members, of the South West Africa People's Organisation, the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), and the African National Congress and the South African Communist Party.)

And so is the fight against Tony Blair and the other leaders of the Labour Party, which is a fight for a new workers' party in Britain under conditions where Stalinism has disintegrated.

## Political independence

IN ALL of these three cases the question of questions is the class-consciousness and political independence of the working class, and the part played by Marxist leadership in achieving it. Let us look at each of the cases.

We in the Workers Revolutionary Party (section of the Workers International to Rebuild the Fourth International) tried to learn from the young fighters in Namibia, South Africa, and Angola as they fought their way out of the brutal Stalinist suppression of their re-

truths is now blinding them to reality.

In this period, the necessary class-consciousness of the working class, an internationalist consciousness, can and does develop only in and through the long and hard fight to emerge from the Stalinist-dominated past.

The course of this development has to be studied, engaged with. It is not known in advance. This is true of the fight against Blair on Clause Four and of the struggles in South Africa or in Bosnia.

Many workers in Tuzla, for example, may not at this time share our conviction that the so-called 'free market' represents, insofar as it any longer means anything at all, a capitalist world system in decline and threatening humanity with barbarism, and that the only alternative is a planned socialist economy. They find such a conclusion very difficult, above all because of their reaction against the bureaucratic tyranny of Stalinist 'planning'.

But *their class-consciousness* has begun to develop, and very powerfully, on the issue of defending their multi-cultural society against the reactionary forces released by disintegrating Stalinism!

And as this resistance meets up with the intervention of conscious revolutionary internationalists, in the form of Workers Aid and its support in the European working class, then they themselves are drawn into proletarian-internationalist organised work — as in the current tour by a Bosnia trade union delegation of Britain and France, a tour which will initiate a trade union aid convoy to Tuzla.

We can be confident that because of this work (and not some

'If it is even to defend the gains of the past, which every day become more precarious, the working class in Britain needs to break out of its traditional narrow national, parliamentary and defensive trade-unionist politics.'

volutionary struggle by SWAPO, the ANC and the MPLA.

With only very few exceptions (like the group around the journal 'Searchlight South Africa'), other groups calling themselves 'Trotskyists' (bringing Trotskyism, Marxism, into disrepute) attacked us and gave their support to the bourgeois-nationalist leaders and their Stalinist partners, claiming that there must be solidarity against imperialism.

We in the Workers International have fought for unconditional support for the Bosnian struggle for national independence, through proletarian internationalist aid to the town of Tuzla. We have found that new forces, particularly from among young people, are drawn to revolutionary politics through first participating practically in the work of these aid convoys of the Workers Aid for Bosnia campaign.

We have been attacked by some groups calling themselves 'Trotskyists', on the grounds that Bosnian national resistance to Greater Serbian nationalism and fascism is a nationalism no better than the nationalism of the oppressor, that both sides are 'capitalist restorationists', and so on. We have even been slandered by one group calling itself Trotskyist, and by some dinosaur-Stalinists, as gun-runners for the imperialists in Bosnia!

We have been attacked because Workers Aid convoys were organised and led through Europe by young men and women who understood the need to fight internationally against fascism in Bosnia but were, according to our critics, 'non-political'!

In reality they were 100 per cent more political, more revolutionary, than those whose addiction to 'Marxist' formulas and labels as fixed

abstract course of exchange of propaganda ideas about definitions of socialism) Bosnian and other east European workers will come back to the question of what kind of social and economic order will be established by a workers' revolution.

And they will do it on a *firm proletarian internationalist foundation* much more solid than any 'general' conviction of the superiority of socialist planned economy. Of course they will be helped to socialist conclusions by their actual experiences of the 'free market'.

There is here no 'ultimatism', no preconceptions about the course the development of class-consciousness will take in these new conditions which face the working class and which challenge us to make a development in Marxist theory and practice.

And all this applies equally to the movement building up to defend Clause Four against Blair and company. The fall of Stalinism means the trap that for decades laid in wait for workers breaking from Labourism is no more. It means also many left socialists are having to rethink their politics. Now capitalism has lost its main resource internationally and is less able to achieve some temporary stabilisation in which reformist moods can flourish.

Marxists must not stand aside from the struggle over Clause Four in the Labour Party and trades unions. They must understand that in *this* struggle against Blair a political development of class-consciousness has begun again in the class movement of the workers in Britain, under the new conditions we have outlined. And they must engage in it.

## Fresh light on British black history

THERE are few thrills to beat that of seeing for the first time a rare historical document you've been trying to find for years.

While writing 'Staying Power: The history of black people in Britain' (1984), I did my best to locate a copy of the 'Report on the Negro Population in London and Cardiff' by Nancie Sharpe. But I had no success.

This almost legendary 40,000-word document — 'an enquiry into the numbers and conditions of the coloured people of West Indian, African, or Asiatic origin in the ports of London and Cardiff' — was never printed, but carbon copies were circulated in the mid-1930s.

That unique book 'The Peopling of London' (1994), reviewed here on 4 February, tells us that a copy of the Sharpe report is now on deposit at the London Borough of Newham's Local Studies Library, Water Lane, Stratford, E15 4NJ.

I was planning to go to Stratford and read it when Rozina Visram told me she had recently been given another copy, which she has kindly lent me.

This note is by way of a first brief account of the Sharpe report, which throws a flood of light on its subject and is essential reading for serious students of British black history between the two world wars, when the majority of black workers in Britain endured grinding poverty.

I don't know who Nancie Sharpe was, except that she also used the surname 'Hare', which may have been her married name. She was clearly both highly intelligent and deeply sympathetic to the communities she spent six months studying, and in this respect her work — apart from certain prejudices subscribed to by almost all white people in that period — stands head and shoulders above most other inter-war accounts of Britain's black communities.

Not that many other investigators crossed the bridge spanning the Glamorgan Canal in Cardiff and ventured into 'Tiger Bay', as the part of Bute Town where black people lived, along the side of Bute West Dock, was exotically known.

The savage anti-black riots in Cardiff just after World War I, during which beleaguered black seafarers warned that any attempt to invade 'Tiger Bay' itself would meet with armed resistance, had brought the settlement a short-lived spell of publicity.

The Sharpe report includes a carefully drawn manuscript plan of 'Tiger Bay', on a scale of 13in. to the mile, with each 'Negro family' shown by a red dot. There is a similar, smaller-scale, map showing 'Distribution of Negro Working Class Families in London', with concentrations in Stepney and Canning Town.

The report shows that '[a]s a whole, the families are poor', most being paid less than £2 15s (£2.75) a week in London, less than £2 10s (£2.50) in Cardiff.

It shows that '[o]vercrowding is very common'; that '[t]he housing conditions in which the coloured people in London live are very bad, worse than the overcrowding statistics show'; that 'the ordinary amenities of life are denied to many of the coloured people'; that '[t]he health of the coloured men and their children . . . is injured by insufficiency of nourishment during periods of unemployment'.

Admitting that 'colour prejudice' existed, Sharpe quotes a survey which asked private families in England the question: 'Would you let a good Negro live in your home?' Of 315 replies received, 254 said they

## PERSONAL COLUMN

would very definitely object; 47 were doubtful; and only 14 had no objection.

In a similar inquiry among British hotels, only 40 out of 170 said they had no 'colour bar'. 'An intermediate class also appeared who were willing to take Negroes — "but it would be five shillings extra for colour"'. Black lodgers were often charged more than white ones.

Sharpe is scathing about the prejudice shown towards black people by many of the officials with whom they had to come into contact.

Summing up, she does not mince her words: 'The whole economic situation of these families is an indictment of the society in which they live.'

Now, I don't think that British black history between the wars needs to be rewritten in the light of the Sharpe report. But it does give us far more information than was previously available about those deprived communities that were largely ignored at the time — sealed off, as it were, by indifference and racism.

With all its flaws, this unique report deserves attention, analysis and republication.

## House of disinformation

THERE was no Personal Column last week because the editor kindly agreed to let me have time off to finish a longer piece of writing.

As part of that job, I needed to check a reference in volume 14 of the 'Collected Works' of Marx and Engels. But I found to my chagrin that this volume is missing from its place in the British Library stacks.

So I rang the Marx Memorial Library to ask if I might consult their copy. Yes, said the person who answered the phone at Marx House, provided that I become a member — and that would cost me £6.

When I remember the many lectures I gave at Marx House in my youth — the last one, on British black history, as recently as 1984 — without ever asking, receiving, or expecting either fee or travelling expenses, I feel a trifle miffed at this surrender to market forces.

But another example of how Marx House conducts itself has left me more than just miffed.

A friend who is a member was in the library the other day. Glancing at the display they now have of 'left' periodicals, she noticed that Workers Press was missing.

'Why haven't you got Workers Press along with the others?' she asked.

'Oh, that one has ceased publication', replied the Marx House official, looking her straight in the eye.

## More Stalinana

A READER who was in Moscow recently brought back the latest Stalin joke and offers it as an addendum to this column's recent Stalin anecdotes.

It is 200 years from now. Stalin and Hitler meet, and can't agree which of them is more famous. So they come back to earth to find out.

They enter a large library and search in vain for any reference to Hitler and his career. At last, in a large encyclopaedia, they find an entry for 'Hitler, Adolf'. It reads: 'Petty tyrant of the Stalin era.'

Peter Fryer

# Negligence behind Kobe earthquake

**Expose the earthquake as a disaster caused by human neglect!**

**Fight against the strengthening of the state's 'emergency' powers!**

THE South Hyogo earthquake, which measured 7.2 on the Richter scale at 5.46am on 17 January, has caused a huge disaster with more than 5,000 people dead and 31,000 made homeless.

The Hanshin highway erupted like a billowing wave. Elevated sections of the Sanyo-Shinkansen express rail link between Osaka and Fukuoka collapsed. Many tall buildings crashed to the ground.

All transport links, communications and services — electricity, water, etc. — have broken into pieces. Fire engulfed the earthquake city for two days. The towns of Kobe, Sannomiya, Sumiyoshi and Nishinomiya were reduced to ashes as in the air raids of World War II.

This terrible disaster, which claimed more victims than any quake since the 1923 Kanto disaster, gave us a great shock. At the same time, we can't help feeling a great working-class rage against this disaster.

The Japanese ruling class had pretended that Japanese cities were safe up to the size of the 1994 Los Angeles earthquake. This myth was exploded in January. This was not simply a natural disaster. It was compounded by the negligence of the monopoly capitalists. And the sacrifices have fallen on to the working class.

Needless to say, the first question: is who caused this immense disaster? The next question is: among whom are the sacrifices going to be made and who is going to pay for the reconstruction?

## Ignored

First, the government and the monopoly capitalists have intentionally ignored various warnings about the possibility for an impending earthquake in Japan's western province.

There was a series of small-scale earthquakes near Kobe several months ago. Although these were said to be a sign of the next big quake, the ruling class paid no attention.

The bourgeoisie in western Japan had been carrying out large works to 'develop the west area's economy'. Included in the project are mainly:

- Opening the Kansai international airport on an artificial island.

- Developing the Osaka bay area.

- Constructing a new university city.

Kobe city was to have become 'the first city on the waterfront' and 'the new city of culture'.

On basis of this project, west Japan's bourgeoisie had inten-

The scale of the disaster from the massive earthquake that hit Japan's Hanshin province on 17 January this year was because of a disregard for safety by the government and the monopoly capitalists, says 'Liberation', paper of the Japanese Revolutionary Communist League (Revolutionary Marxist Faction). SHIN TANUMA has translated selected passages from a 'Liberation' article by the West Japan committee of the JRCL (RMF)



Homeless after the quake: workers making the sacrifices

ded to open the conference of the Asian-Pacific Economic Congress (APEC) in November, and develop this area as the centre of APEC with west Japan 'opened up to Asia' based on the '100 billion yen economic scheme'.

Because of this huge project, the environment around Osaka bay has been even further damaged.

The collapse of the Hanshin highway was caused by use of the 'pilt technique', which is cheaper than official methods for protecting the structure from earthquakes. These expose the bourgeoisie's mania for development and profiteering.

## Victims

Second, the victims of this disaster have been concentrated among those employed in medium-sized and small enterprises and among low-paid workers. And the bourgeoisie is going to make sure that all the contradictions caused by the disaster are going to fall on the working class.

The main destruction was

wrought among the small-scale enterprises and workers' residential areas in Hanshin province — the ordinary workers and people — not among the giant industrial complexes and the city infrastructure.

West Japan monopoly capital hit by the earthquake has begun its reconstruction by forcing workers in other provinces to step up production because of the 'emergency'. The big private transport companies announced proposals to increase fares soon after the disaster. They intend to tide over their temporary losses by plundering the people.

The small and medium-sized enterprises have been destroyed and the workers employed in them now have no jobs. Large-scale unemployment in the region is bound to be the result. So all the contradictions created by the earthquake are going to be imposed on the working class.

Unforgivably, the government and the Japanese ruling class intend to construct a new 'emergency control system' on the basis of the lessons they

have drawn from the earthquake. This will involve the strengthening of the powers of the prime minister and his office.

Also to be strengthened is co-operation with the US troops in Japan, and the Japanese 'defence force' is to be mobilised during emergencies.

There was control of the mass media during the recent disaster. Pictures of dead bodies were censored from TV. Reports of the size of the earthquake were revised upwards for several days after the quake. Damage to the new Kansai airport was hidden.

Such information management by the state was designed to hide these facts from Japanese people and those outside the country, and especially those coming to take part in November's APEC conference in Osaka. The new 'emergency control system' is nothing but another lever in strengthening the arm of the Japanese neofascist-type state structure.

Workers' movement leaders have fallen behind this framework for strengthening the emergency control system. The Japanese Communist Party is not going to oppose the mobilisation of the Japanese 'defence force' during emergencies. The Japanese Socialist Party, in the throes of a series of splits, is supporting the government.

## Rescue

The labour aristocracy of the 'Rengo' trade union federation is leading the workers to volunteer for rescue work in collaboration with the monopoly capitalists.

The essential class nature of the earthquake disaster has been hidden by both the bourgeoisie and the leaderships of the workers' movement. This shows the crisis of the Japanese class struggle.

**To all workers, students and citizens!**

**Fight to expose the class nature of this disaster!**

This disaster was caused by putting profiteering industry and city development before safety. The great number of victims was due to the incompetence of the government — it was unable to mount a rescue operation for 36 hours after the quake.

**Fight to support the workers and students on whom the weight of the disaster has been concentrated!**

**Fight to oppose the strengthening of the emergency control system, and oppose the rotten leaders of the Japanese workers' movement who are getting involved in the state's structures!**

**Integrate this fight with that against Japan's intention to send troops to the Golan Heights in the Middle East!**

**Oppose changing the constitution to allow the Japanese state to officially raise an army!**

## Letter

## More letters p.2

## Make the crisis terminal

RICHARD MINNS (Letters, 25 February) bases his scepticism over the idea that capitalism is in crisis on two false propositions. The first is that it is possible to have a crisis-free capitalism. The second is that all crises must be terminal.

Minns's belief in a crisis-free capitalism is based on the fact that banking has flourished in the last few years. It is true that finance capital has been making huge short-term profits through investment in futures, property and mergers. But

source in productive capital. It cannot go on without destroying its source.

The short-term investments of finance capital are symptoms of crisis. Finance capital destroys fixed capital when it breaks up a company and sells off its most profitable parts. Fixed capital cannot realise its value in the productive process. Less value is available for variable capital and more workers are thrown out of production.

Finance capital is also unwilling to invest in new fixed capital that requires a long time to realise value. This disturbs the whole process of accumulation.

Minns understands 'crisis' as

solvable'. Such a crisis is resolvable for capital through barbarism and making short-term concessions to workers such as full employment.

From labour's perspective, a crisis cannot be resolved without taking complete charge of production. Such a resolution poses the end of capitalism. A terminal crisis of this nature took place shortly after the Bolshevik revolution.

The action being taken by capital to resolve the present crisis is another matter. These days there is little incentive for finance capital to invest in fixed and variable capital. The failure to 're-marketise' non-value forms of production in the former USSR is one example. The failure to make education and welfare in the West productive of value is another. The working class is too

and the short-term concessions are exhausted. Capitalism is in deep crisis. It requires a massive defeat of workers of the nature of world war, Stalinism, or fascism to resolve it, but these solutions are no longer politically acceptable.

Antagonisms between finance and productive capital are likely to intensify. This weakens the ruling class. But there will be no terminal crisis until a decent left emerges capable of leading the working class to complete political, economic and social power.

If the left is able to come to terms with its Stalinised past and become more civilised, humane and democratic, then perhaps we shall see the present crisis becoming terminal in our lifetimes.

Paul B. Smith

# Striving towards a new workers' party

# Confidence in victory

# of the working class

WE WOULD not be here at this meeting, any of us, if we were not convinced by Marx's discoveries 150 years ago. Nor if we were not confident, from the history of the workers' movement, that, in the terrible ordeals and struggles forced upon the working class of the world, the working class will win the fruits of its struggles and will dispense with those false leaders who have made sure until now that those fruits fell into enemy hands.

Confidence in the working class means, not some religious faith in the historical inevitability of the socialist revolution, but a confidence that Marx's scientific understanding of capitalism's insoluble contradictions can and must come together with the fighting capacity of the working class to emancipate itself.

This coming together — necessary for the very survival of humanity — we have to make happen. It does not happen automatically.

## Forces of destruction

OUR confidence in this capacity of the working class for revolutionary struggle, against oppression and the forces of destruction, has surely been reinforced in our experience. We are now beginning to see this capacity coming together with the conscious fight to reconstruct working-class internationalism.

Our comrades in the Workers Revolutionary Party of Namibia (a section of the Workers International to Rebuild the Fourth International) are now developing a real programme and policy based on the permanent revolution and the completion of the national-liberation struggle through the socialist revolution.

This party, which is proving itself a real focus for the struggle in southern Africa, from Angola to the Cape, was formed in struggle against tremendous odds — not only imperialist rule but the dead hand of Stalinist repression through the South West Africa People's Organisation (now the ruling party in Namibia).

Among our comrades there are many whose lives hung by a thread in SWAPO dungeons, subjected to years of torture and degradation, such as the Kali twins Ndamona and Panduleni. And in South Africa, our comrade Amos was one of the African National Congress members persecuted, tortured and incarcerated by the ANC-Stalinist machine during the struggle against apartheid.

**The main decision at the WRP's congress on 10-11 February was that the party was to strive for the formation of a new workers' party. We publish here a second extract from the written report submitted to the congress by WRP secretary Cliff Slaughter. The first extract appeared on 25 February**

An account of the experiences of one Angolan comrade has appeared in Workers Press (10 December 1994). She suffered years of oppression and danger of death, seeing her comrades fall one after another at the hands of the so-called national-liberators of the MPLA (Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola, now the ruling party). After 20 years of all this, she threw her experience and her conclusions into the WRP's campaign during the Namibian elections last year.

How could any of us not be deeply moved when she told us that when visiting a relative in the MPLA dungeons in Angola she saw with him prisoners from Namibia and South Africa, victims of SWAPO and the ANC?

After the abominations inflicted on her and her comrades by the international forces of Stalinism — the Soviet, east German and Cuban forces — she is now fighting to find a way to defend Cuba from US imperialism.

These are not small things, when we ask: can we be confident in the capacity of the working class, our class, to make the revolution? And when we ask: are there not now new forces who must be united in the revolutionary party?

Behind these comrades stand the millions upon millions condemned by imperialism to degrading conditions in the townships and hostels of South Africa, the shanty towns and the impoverished countryside of Brazil and Mexico.

There is no way of comprehending the workers' struggles, no way of placing them historically to guide our conscious practice, except through Marxism.

## Tasks posed

THE genius of Marx was to see that the capitalist mode of production, becoming ascendant in his day, was creating the conditions for the human race not only to subdue and work with the forces of nature, but also to free itself from the blind forces of history created unconsciously by humans themselves through class societies.

Marx saw that the instrument for

this transformation was the working class, dispossessed and created everywhere by the needs of capital itself.

Marxism has inspired the work of many scholars and fighters in all fields. But the core of Marxism, the centre of development of Marxism, lies in comprehending the development of the historical crisis of the capitalist system on the world arena in the 20th century and the tasks posed to the international working class. This is what the theory and programme of the permanent revolution represents.

In 1845, in 'The German Ideology', Marx explained for the very first time how the progress of human power over

that it is the uncontrolled exploitation of humans by humans that more and more turns the conquest of nature into something anti-human and anti-nature.

But this is on the one hand inevitable and on the other hand and at the same time the key to understanding that the future can be conquered and humanity can enter what Marx called 'the realm of freedom'.

'[T]he system [capitalism] breaks down at the point of its supreme power; for its maximum extension generates the need for restraint and conscious control — and with this, capital production is structurally incompatible,' Istvan Meszaros has written.

The result of this structural incompatibility is today's capitalist world, capitalism's last stage, a world system at its limits.

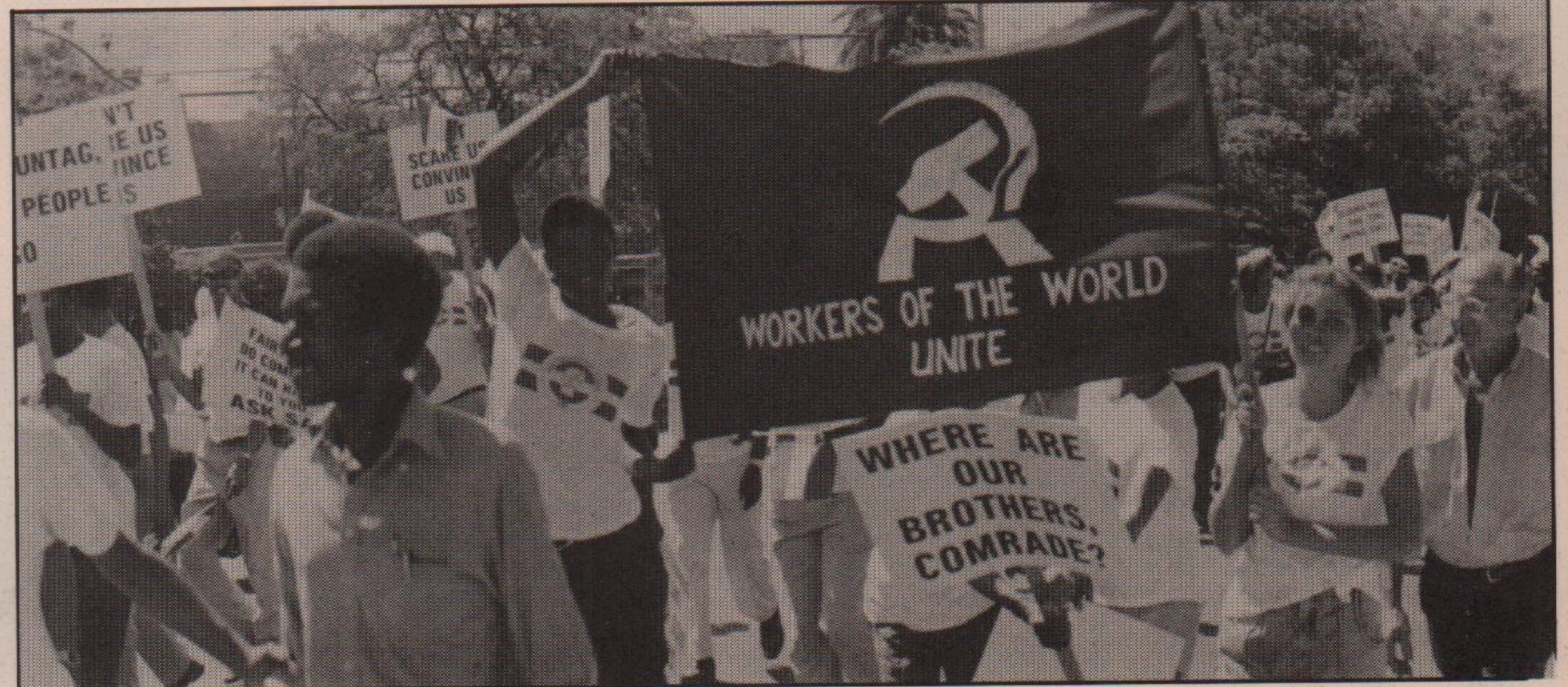
This does not mean that capitalism and the class struggle are the same all over the world. Uneven development

tant aspects. We have always known that the democratic revolution, including national independence, cannot be completed anywhere except through the dictatorship of the working class, and that the working class in power will not — cannot — stop short at democratic tasks but has to undertake socialist ones.

These socialist tasks cannot be completed except on the international arena, through the world revolution. Why? Trotsky answered this in a criticism of a draft programme of the Communist International:

'In the present epoch... capitalist development as a whole is faced with insurmountable obstacles and contradictions and beats in frenzy against them. It is precisely this that invests our epoch with its revolutionary character and the revolution with its permanent character' (emphasis added).

What the working class and its fighting spirit represents is the promise of freedom inherent in the pro-



WRP (Namibia) on a march during 1989: the party is becoming a real focus for the struggle in southern Africa

nature is inseparable from humanity's progressive enslavement by the spontaneous forces of social development.

The escape from the power of nature's spontaneous forces and the domination of humans by humans are two sides of the same contradictory process.

When today millions of people are rightly worried that the uncontrolled exploitation of nature will lead to its destruction, they are in danger of being misled by experts who do not see

is the most general law of its development. All the parts, the different countries, are parts of one system, but they are unevenly developed. To this capitalism apply the theories of the imperialist epoch as capitalism's last stage, that of the transition to socialism, and of permanent revolution.

Permanent revolution is not only an 'opposite' of the 'two-stage' theory, which says that first must come the democratic revolution and only then the socialist. Not at all. The democratic revolution is one of its most impor-

ductive forces developed under capitalism.

These forces capitalism can only use if they give profit, if they sustain a system, capitalism, which contradicts the conscious and creative control of production as a whole: communism.

It is because it is this, and not only the struggle for wages and conditions of work, that Marx said: 'it is as a revolutionary class that the proletariat constitutes the greatest productive force in society.'

## Heroes of the Vietnam revolution

## 'Revolutionaries They Could Not Break'

By Ngo Van

### Revolutionaries They Could Not Break

Ngo Van

A worker and a Trotskyist, Ngo Van was imprisoned in the 1930s by the French colonial regime and in the 1940s by the Vietminh. His book, 'Revolutionaries They Could Not Break: The Fight for the Fourth International in Indochina 1930-1945', (translated by Harry Ratner) is now out from Index Books.

It is available at £11.95 plus postage from Index Books, 28 Charlotte Street, London W1P 1HJ. Phone 0171-636 3532. Fax 0171-274 8342.

## Bavarian engineering union leaders accept 3.8% deal to end pay dispute

BY BOB ARCHER

UNION leaders in Bavaria, southern Germany, agreed a 3.8 per cent wage deal with engineering employers on Monday, ending the dispute over pay and conditions. The claim had been for 6 per cent.

Employers had threatened striking workers that if the latest offer on wages and conditions was not accepted then they will start lock-outs.

Werner Neugebauer, a local leader of the IG Metall union, had warned that lock-outs would be met with protest strikes all over Bavaria followed by nation-wide strike action.

Last Saturday there were picket lines at the main factory entrances. But union leaders cancelled a planned extension of the strike on Monday to encourage negotiations.

The employers have been looking for concessions from the union on the planned introduction of the 35-hour week later this year.

Employers point out that when the 35-hour week was agreed it was not clear how much German reunification was going to cost industry.

The government has channelled huge funds into eastern Germany to stave off economic and social collapse there.

But workers have already shouldered their share of the burden in increased taxes and health and telephone charges.

The level of taxation has become a major political issue for the Conservative-Liberal coalition government.

Many even quite prosperous households are starting to suffer badly from the huge state-organised transfusion of money from west to east Germany, which has also meant a big cut

in public expenditure in the west.

Up to now the government has managed to maintain the flow while keeping unemployment from rocketing. It has also protected the Deutschmark and held back inflation.

But all this has been at the cost of 'solidarity payments' in one form or another from every individual and firm in west Germany.

## Pressure

The pressure is beginning to tell, and the Liberals seem to want to avoid new taxes while maintaining increased subsidies, for example for house-building and for students' grants.

Chemical workers may start strike action soon. They have threatened to walk out of talks if the employers do not improve on a 2.3 per cent wage offer.

Hans-Olaf Henkel, president of the Federation of German Industry (BDI), has warned workers against strikes, saying that the fall in the value of the dollar could make German industries uncompetitive on world markets.

This echoes the refrain of leading politicians such as Chancellor Helmut Kohl that factories and jobs will move to eastern Europe if German workers insist on pricing themselves out of work.

Leaving aside the anti-trade union propaganda in such statements, German engineering workers do face the consequences of imperialist crisis on a world scale.

A branch of the International Trade Union Solidarity Campaign must be built in Germany to help unite workers across national frontiers in the struggle to defend their wages and conditions.

# Rift in US unions reflects struggle below

**AMERICAN** trades unions are divided over a call for Lane Kirkland to quit as president of their federation, the 14-million strong American Federation of Labour-Congress of Industrial Organisations (AFL-CIO).

In an emotion-charged, closed session of its executive council recently at least ten of the 35 council members said it was time for Kirkland, the federation's president since 1979, to retire at or before October's biennial convention.

A 'Washington Post' report said 'influential members' had complained Kirkland was out of the country last year during a Senate debate on banning permanent strike replacements. They said he failed to mount a strong labour challenge on both the North American Free Trade Area (NAFTA) and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade talks. They accuse him of playing 'an insider's game' with the White House.

This is the first open rift in the council since the AFL-CIO was formed 40 years ago. Some leaders say the AFL-CIO needs to overhaul its structure, policies and programmes and become more responsive to the needs of working people. Beneath are bigger issues.

With numbers depleted by unemployment and union-busting, the American trade union movement is facing a major challenge on both industrial and political fronts.

On 30 January members of both houses of Congress, led by Senator Nancy Kassenbaum and Representative Steve Gunderson, introduced a bill — the 'Teamwork for Employees and Managers Act of 1995' — to legalise company unions.

This came two weeks after the Dunlop Commission report, which recommended that federal law be eased to allow company unions under employer control. The commission was initiated by the Clinton administration.

## Collided

The union leaders' policy of class-collaboration has collided with reality at Decatur, an Illinois town of 85,000. Some 7,000 workers, members of the United Auto Workers (UAW), United Paper Workers International Union, and United Rubber Workers, are either on strike or locked out at Caterpillar, Staley Manufacturing, and Bridgestone-Firestone.

These workers went through the sham of 'quality circles' and 'labour-management committees'. Today they are defending pay and conditions against the employers' attack, and fighting for their hard-earned right to belong to independent trades

BY VIC CHARLES

unions. They have faced injunctions banning pickets.

At the Japanese-owned Bridgestone-Firestone tyre plant 'permanent' scabs were brought in to replace strikers. Put to the test, AFL-CIO leaders have avoided mobilising any solidarity, and advised workers to comply fully with the law — however much it's weighted on the employers' side.

Mounting discontent of rank-and-file trades unionists with this leadership is making itself felt in the unions' leading councils, although the leaders expressing their unease with Kirkland haven't an answer.

## Strength

Three unions lined up against Kirkland — the Teamsters, American Federation of State County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), and Service Employees — have a combined vote of 3.4 million, based on their strength at the 1993 convention — more than 25 per cent of the total convention vote of 13.3 million.

At least seven other unions, including the UAW and the miners', steelworkers' and the oil and chemical workers' unions, may come in behind them. Kirkland has pledges of backing from the carpenters', electricians' and other building unions, as well as the food and commercial workers' and teachers' unions. This is short of the votes he needs to win.

But the anti-Kirkland coalition has no candidate to oppose him should he decide to run for re-election, despite the overwhelming vote of no confidence.

Tom Donahue, 66, current federation secretary-treasurer, is their most likely candidate, though he has said he would not challenge Kirkland if he decided to run again. Donahue has been under fire for claiming the Dunlop Commission report would help unions. In other words, he's another friend of the White House.

What workers need is more than the AFL-CIO bureaucrats, with or without Kirkland, can deliver: a fighting, democratic and independent trade union movement that turns its back on class-collaboration and corporatism, throws its weight behind workers' struggles like those at Decatur, and breaks with the capitalist Republicans and Democrats to establish a workers' party.

# American marines kill Somali children

**SOMALI** civilians, including children sleeping in their beds, were killed as US armoured amphibious vehicles evacuating marines from Mogadishu opened an indiscriminate barrage of cannon and rifle fire on the Somali capital.

The US forces had been serving in Somalia as a United Nations 'peacekeeping' force. As

the last marines climbed aboard combat hovercraft, gunners fired hundreds of rounds of cannon fire and machine-gun tracer bullets lighting up the night sky.

At the Benadir hospital in the centre of Mogadishu a father said three of his children had been wounded by American fire. His youngest son had been

killed when cannon shells burst in the children's bedroom.

The hospital said there had been 28 overnight admissions, mostly people with shrapnel wounds.

A spokesperson for General Aideded's Somali National Alliance, which seemed set to take over the country after US withdrawal, said 13 people had

been killed and 30 wounded. The Somalis denied that anyone had opened fire on the American forces.

During their 'peacemaking' mission the US forces put a price on Aideded's head, and made several attempts to wipe out the Somali leaders with air attacks, usually succeeding in killing civilians.

# Hamburg police in racist attacks

BY BOB ARCHER

LAST Saturday about 100 demonstrators protested outside police station No.11 at the main railway station in Hamburg, northern Germany.

The demonstration was organised by the African Students' organisation because the police station is at the centre of allegations about assaults on black people.

An unnamed police officer who was based at the station in 1992 and 1993 repeatedly reported to superior officers cases of excessive force used on black people and demanded they should face their responsibility to stop these attacks.

Nothing was done, so the policeman in question made the allegations public through a lawyer, Peter Wulf.

## Inhumane

A recent television report said that alleged drug-dealers under arrest at the police station were subjected to inhumane treatment, including two mock executions.

During arrest, black people had been allegedly attacked with tear-gas and insect-spray.

Three senior police officer in Hamburg, Heinz Krappen, Wolfgang Sielaff and Richard Peters, face disciplinary moves because they failed to act on the allegations or even alert responsible politicians.

The reports have caused a storm in Germany because in September 1994 Hamburg police were at the centre of accusations of xenophobia which led to the resignation of the socialist politician responsible for policing in the city, Werner Hackmann.

The demonstrators called for an end to police racism and for open borders and residence rights for all.



Demonstration organised by African students against brutal racist policing in Hamburg

# Two-faced Tories arming Indonesia

THE two-faced Tory government has approved the sale of Alvis armoured vehicles and Scorpion light tanks to Indonesia, claiming it doesn't think they would be used against people in East Timor.

The announcement came from trade minister Michael Heseltine in the Commons on 2 March.

The same day junior Foreign Office minister Alastair Goodland received Abilio Araujo, of the Front for East Timorese Independence, one group fighting Indonesian occupation.

Last month the government assured East Timorese resistance leader Jose Ramos that the British government did not recognise Indonesia's annexation of East Timor, which it occupied 20 years ago.

An Indonesian human rights commission has confirmed reports that six Timorese villagers were tortured and murdered by Indonesian troops in January.

Claiming that the arms deal had been approved only after a thorough assessment of whether the vehicles were likely

to be used for internal repression in Indonesia, or East Timor, Heseltine said:

'The Indonesian government has given assurances that the vehicles will not be deployed in East Timor nor used in any form of repression of civilians anywhere in Indonesia.'

## Prompted

This prompted Tapol, the Indonesian human rights campaign, to ask: 'So what are they for?' Indonesia had no external enemies threatening it, the

campaign pointed out.

'Last year tanks were out on the streets of Jakarta intimidating people against demonstrating, while President Clinton and other world leaders were in town for an Asia-Pacific summit,' said Tapol.

The British Coalition for East Timor said several hundred Scorpion tanks could be supplied under the deal.

Armoured vehicles were regularly used against civilians, and the Scorpions would be ideal for East Timor's terrain, the campaigners said.

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